COURSE SYLLABUS

Research and Evaluation Methods for Health Policy
PH 300.713, 3rd Term 2018-19

Instructor: Cassandra Crifasi, PhD, MPH – Assistant Professor
Hampton House 593; crifasi@jhu.edu

Class Sessions: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9-10:20am (Wolfe W3008)
Office Hours: By appointment

Teaching Assistants: Kelly Anderson (kelly.anderson@jhu.edu)
Mani Bérété Keïta (mberete1@jhu.edu)

This course introduces basic principles and methods for undertaking scientifically rigorous research with a special emphasis on evaluations of interventions to improve health and safety. We will focus on evaluations of policy, health care delivery systems, and public health programs. Topics include the relationship between health services research, health policy research, and health policy analysis; common research designs and their strengths and weaknesses; and internal and external validity with the intent of making students better consumers of research. Students will apply their knowledge to critique published studies, consider challenges/barriers to conducting health policy evaluations, and consider the research and policy implications of their work. Additionally, students will reflect on the role of the researcher and the importance of conducting research that meets the needs of stakeholders. The goal of the course is to help students to think critically and prepare them to write research proposals and synthesize findings into meaningful research and policy implications.

Learning Objectives
Upon successfully completing this course students will be able to:
1. Critique existing research evaluating a health policy or program
2. Develop a conceptual framework for a study showing the hypothesized causal variables and expected outcomes
3. Identify different types of study designs and their inherent threats to internal and external validity
4. Assess which methodology is most appropriate to evaluate a given health policy or program
5. Engage in reflection to ensure research follows ethical standards and meets stakeholder needs
6. Build an understanding of how a researcher can influence the design and conduct of a study
7. Understand and describe how research can influence policy and inform stakeholder goals
Grading Policy
Student evaluation in this course is based on lecture and lab participation, and a midterm and final assignment. It is critical that readings be completed prior to each class session.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Reflection</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Lab participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Midterm</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Final</td>
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Course Organization
Most sessions will generally follow one of two formats: 1) lecture followed by a short in-class activity, or 2) short lecture followed by a longer in-class activity. Throughout the lectures, formative assessments (e.g. multiple-choice questions using Poll Everywhere) will be used to check understanding for new content. Lab sessions are intended to give students practice in applying and critiquing the methods and are designed to reflect some major steps in conceptualizing, designing, and conducting health policy research and evaluation. Occasionally, students will be asked to write brief (2 min.) reflections of their learning on a topic or method to be submitted at the end of a class period.

Important Dates (also listed on class schedule)
**February 19** – midterm assignment: read the assigned article and assess the internal and external validity of the study. Instructions and the article will be distributed one week before the due date.

**March 14** – final assignment: 2-3 page critique of a journal article evaluating a policy or program related to public health. The critique should address issues related to study design and validity, and how a future evaluation could be improved. Instructions will be distributed two weeks before the due date.

All assignments are due via CoursePlus by 11:59pm on the due date

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
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| 1/22    | Introduction to Research and Evaluation Methods for Health Policy  
Dr. Crifasi | **Lecture**  
Remler & Van Ryzin, Chapter 1  
**Mini-Lab** - (no prep)  
Discussion of reasons for difference between observational and RCT findings |
| 1/24    | Research Ethics  
Dr. Holly Taylor | **Lecture**  
| 1/29    | Conceptualizing Health Policy Research  
Lab 1 – conceptual models  
Dr. Crifasi | **Lecture**  
Remler & Van Ryzin, Chapter 2  
**Lab**  
Review Lab Assignment  
Busch SH, Barry CL. New evidence on the effects of state mental health mandates. Inquiry 2008; 45:308-322 |
| 1/31    | Causal Inference  
Dr. Crifasi | **Lecture**  
Remler & Van Ryzin, Chapter 10  
**Discussion**  
| 2/5     | Threats to Internal Validity  
Dr. Crifasi | **Lecture**  
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment / Reading Material</th>
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| 2/7  | Lab 2 – Internal Validity                 | **Lab**  
Review Lab Assignment  
| 2/12 | External Validity                         | **Lecture**  
Remler & Van Ryzin: Chapter 5  
**Lab**  
Review Lab Assignment  
| 2/14 | Observational, Natural, and Quasi Experimental Study Designs | **Lecture**  
Remler & Van Ryzin: Chapters 11 & 13 (1st edition) or Chapters 12 & 15 (2nd edition) |
| 2/19 | Quantitative Methods                      | **Lecture**  
Remler & Van Ryzin, Chapters 9 and 10  
*Take Home Midterm Assignment due at 11:59pm* |
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Lecture/Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/28</td>
<td>Measuring Health Outcomes and Measurement Reliability/Validity</td>
<td>Dr. Crifasi</td>
<td>Remler &amp; Van Ryzin: Chapter 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>Lab 5 – Assessing Strengths and Weaknesses of Study Design</td>
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<td>Lab Review Lab Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/7</td>
<td>Qualitative and Implementation Research</td>
<td>Dr. Shannon Frattaroli</td>
<td>Lecture Remler &amp; Van Ryzin, Chapter 3</td>
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| 3/12 | Synthesizing Policy Evaluation and Translating Research into Policy  
Dr. Crifasi | **Lecture**  
Remler & Van Ryzin, Chapter 14, pages 468-476 |
| 3/14 | Review  
Course TAs | *Take Home Final Assignment due at 11:59pm |