ESM 228: Monitoring & Evaluation (S’19)
Instructor: Mark Buntaine (Bren 4422)
Class meetings: Mondays & Wednesdays 2-3:15 (Bren 1510)
Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description

Evidence-based programming and policy-making are now priorities for many non-profit organizations and public agencies, including those that deal with environment, energy, climate change, and natural resource management. At the heart of this approach is monitoring and evaluation, which help organizations learn about the effectiveness of policies and programs so that they can make better decisions about using scarce resources. This course provides an overview of the considerations and techniques involved in designing monitoring and evaluation systems within public and non-profit organizations that are designed to promote learning about the efficacy, effectiveness, and impact of policies and programs.

Student Evaluation

Participation: Your active participation is important for the success of this course. I expect that you will closely read all of the assigned articles and documents before coming to class and that you will be prepared to engage in all discussions and activities. I expect you to attend all course sessions. Talk to me beforehand if you need to miss class for a legitimate reason, otherwise absences will negatively affect your participation grade.

Practicums: The course is organized into four units, each of which culminates with a practicum where you will be asked to practice the skills discussed in that unit. The detailed instructions for the practicums will be laid out in separate documents. For each practicum, you are encouraged to work in teams of up to three individuals. We will spend the practicum sessions on active work, group Q&A, and lightning presentations. For each practicum, your group will turn in a written product.

Grading:
Participation 10%
P1: Theory of change 15%
P2: Measurement design 30%
P3: Impact evaluation design 30%
P4: Organizational M&E strategy 15%

Course Policies

Assignment completion policy: You must complete all assignments to pass the course.
Re-grades: I take student evaluation seriously and do not entertain requests to re-grade assignments unless I receive a formal, written request for a re-grade that compellingly documents a serious oversight on my part. A serious oversight on my part indicates that the entire assignment should receive further attention. Your score may go up or down if I decide that an assignment needs this kind of attention, so plan accordingly. That being said, I strongly encourage you to meet with me to discuss my feedback on your assignments.

Academic Honesty: I expect you to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. This means only turning in work that is your own and properly citing all information and ideas that you draw from others. Any assignment that does not adhere to UCSB academic honesty guidelines will not receive credit and will be referred to campus judicial procedures. See: http://judicialaffairs.sa.ucsb.edu/AcademicIntegrity.aspx

Reference Texts


Unit 1: Introduction

Session 1 (M 4/1) — Introduction & preliminaries


Session 2 (W 4/3) — Goals of M&E


Session 3 (M 4/8) — Theory of change


Session 4 (W 4/10) — Theory of change (practicum)

Examples of theories of change:
- Alaska Conservation Foundation
- Rare
- Marine Stewardship Council
- Ford Foundation
- WASH Alliance International


Assignment: Pick a future-oriented program or strategy for an organization that is intended to have an impact on outcomes you care about. Sketch out and justify a detailed theory of change that links the input and activities of the organization to the targeted outcomes and impacts.

Unit 2: Measurement

Session 5 (M 4/15) — Results framework & indicators


Example of indicator bank

Session 6 (W 4/17) — Interviews, surveys, and human subjects


Session 7 (M 4/22) - Sampling bias


Session 8 (W 4/24) - Sampling techniques


Session 9 (M 4/29) — Measurement strategy (practicum)

Example results frameworks / measurement strategies

Green Climate Fund
CGIAR
Canada National Energy Board
Food and Agriculture Organization
California Water

Assignment: Pick a future-oriented program or strategy for an organization that it intended to have an impact on outcomes you care about. Sketch out a detailed results framework for the program. Additionally, design a data collection instrument that will be used to measure the outcomes in your results framework.

Template (Gates Foundation)

Unit 3: Impact Evaluation

Session 10 (W 5/1) — Causal inference and counterfactuals


**Session 11 (M 5/6) — Randomized evaluations**


**Session 12 (W 5/8) — Design principles for randomized evaluations**


**Session 13 (M 5/13) - Power**


**Session 14 (W 5/15) — Design challenges of randomized evaluations**


**Session 15 (M 5/20) — Quasi-experimental techniques**


Session 16 (W 5/22) — Impact evaluation (practicum)

**Reading:** 3ie Impact Evaluation Database (read at least two impact evaluations of interest)

**Assignment:** Pick a program of interest that has yet to be implemented, but for which a full description or initial appraisal has be carefully documented. Design an impact evaluation for this program that can be used to estimate the impacts of the program. The impact evaluation should address: (1) treatment; (2) randomization; (3) sample; (4) power; and (5) contingencies.

**Unit 4: Building Monitoring & Evaluation Systems**

Session 17 (W 5/29) — Formative, process and performance evaluations


Session 18 (M 6/3) — Developing organizational M&E strategies


Session 19 (W 6/5) — Organizational M&E strategy (practicum)


**Assignment:** design an organizational M&E strategy for an organization that you might like to work for. Identify the key questions that an M&E strategy could answer and discuss how you will utilize scarce resources for achieving the learning or accountability objectives of the organization.