Course Description
This is a seminar course in community-engaged evaluation and research. It is offered as a year-long seminar, for which students will receive .5 credits each semester. In this course, we will participate in a community-based evaluation project over the course of the year.

The students and faculty member will work closely with partners from Medford Family Network. MFN is a family support and parenting education program for children and caregivers in Medford. It is funded by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Grant), the Children’s Trust Fund (Massachusetts Family Center Grant), and the Friends of the Medford Family Network Corp.

The goal of the MFN is to create a strong web of support for all families of young children. This is accomplished by making community connections in three ways:

(1) connecting families to families;
(2) fostering family contact with community resources; and
(3) building collaborative relationships among community agencies.

This experience will allow you to develop a partnership with collaborators at MFN and also from the City of Medford. Through this partnership you will learn more about how community-based programing is conceived and implemented, including gaining a more nuanced understanding of the real world challenges associated with improving community health. You will also have an opportunity to develop an IRB application, work with our community collaborators to identify the best methods and tools to utilize to collect data from participants in their community in this community, conduct field work to collect this data, synthesize the data, and participate in dissemination activities (e.g., writing data summaries and delivering a presentation to the partners). Students will occasionally be required to travel to community sites for sessions. This is an excellent opportunity to learn the basics of field methods. The vision for this course is that students will develop a “research team” in which members will have varying roles and responsibilities.

Students who are interested will also have the optional opportunity to submit reflective writing developed during this course for publication consideration in a variety of journals including the Undergraduate Journal of Service Learning and Community Based Research (http://www.bk.psu.edu/Academics/33708.htm) with the support of their instructor.

Ultimately my goal is for students to gain an appreciation for the value and conduct of community based and community engaged research as a tool to improve community health.

Note: This course does not presume any prior research or evaluation experience nor does it presume a background in either quantitative or qualitative methods.
By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Learn about community health centers and how they play an important role in improving the health of populations they serve
- Understand barriers and facilitators of the implementation of community-based programming designed to improve community health settings
- Articulate the value of engaging community organizations in research and evaluation efforts
- Learn the basic steps in community engaged research and evaluation from conception of a question of interest, and development of data collection instruments for qualitative and quantitative data collection to field work, data analysis, and dissemination
- Create various dissemination products to share community engaged evaluation and research findings

Course Text and Readings
There is no required textbook for this course. All course readings will be drawn from the literature and online sources. All these materials will be posted on Trunk on the course website (trunk.tufts.edu). Students are expected to have completed the assigned readings prior to coming to the class at which they will be discussed or applied.

Assessment and Grading Policy
Because this course has a unique structure, student assessment is comprised of two key components:

1. Fieldwork (engagement in the research itself)
2. Classroom participation and engagement

Near the end of the semester, the student and faculty member will meet to discuss the student’s experience and engagement in the course. During this time, the faculty member will provide the student with feedback and the student and instructor will collectively determine the student’s course grade that best represents their work during the semester. The faculty member will provide the student with a self-assessment tool to guide this discussion.

As in all courses, class participation is also a critical component of your learning in this course and is highly encouraged. Participation is defined as follows:

- Class attendance and punctuality. If you cannot attend class, please notify me beforehand.
- Attentiveness, including refraining from texting and use of computers during class and in meetings with community partners.
- Completing readings before class and being prepared to apply them in discussions.
- Engagement/participation in-class discussion and engagement with partners in community-based meetings
- Engaging in respectful interactions with fellow students and faculty and community partners.

A Note about Team Based Learning
There is an emphasis in this class on team-based learning (TBL). This educational method allows learners to apply course concepts through thinking and problem solving in teams. It also nourishes life-long learning skills and strengthens interpersonal and team-interaction skills abilities. I recognize that not all students have prior experience with this type of learning and that group work comes with its rewards and potential challenges. Therefore, there will be an explicit conversation and opportunity, in an early semester class for students to discuss the parameters for group work prior to beginning their final project.

Use of Personal Electronics
In general, use of laptops, tablets or smartphones is not permitted in class or when visiting community partners. Please remember to turn off/silence your cell phones when class begins. I do recognize however that occasionally a laptop will be required, particularly during site visits. It is expected that students use these devices responsibly and only for course-related purposes.
Student Accessibility Services
Tufts is committed to providing support and equal access for all students so that they may fully realize their academic potential. If you need academic accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. All discussions will remain confidential. For specific accommodations (e.g., extra time on exams), you are responsible for making arrangements with the Student Accessibility Services office and notifying the instructor two weeks in advance to discuss their individual needs for accommodations.

Academic Integrity
Plagiarizing is defined as intentionally or unintentionally using someone else's words or thoughts without giving proper credit. When a source is not cited, it is assumed that the words thoughts and ideas are the sole product of the student. When a student uses material from another source, the extent and nature of the borrowing must, to avoid the charge of dishonesty, be fully and explicitly noted in the text or footnotes. Direct quotations must be differentiated from the text by using quotation marks or by indenting or single spacing and be accompanies by appropriate APA citation. It is the responsibility of the student to learn the proper forms of citation. The use of papers or other work obtained from commercial or other services is a clear case of plagiarism and is specifically prohibited. Handing in as one's own work a paper on which a student has received extensive help without acknowledging that help is plagiarism Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and it is reportable to the Dean. Please read the Academic Integrity Handbook at http://uss.tufts.edu/studentAffairs/documents/HandbookAcademicIntegrity.pdf

This syllabus is not a contract. The instructor reserves the right to alter the course requirements and/or assignments based on new materials, class discussions, discussions with the community partner or other legitimate pedagogical objectives.