SW683: Evaluation in Social Work

Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisites: SW522 or Permission of the Instructor

Semester: Spring/Summer 2014
Meets: Monday, 1:00-5:00pm
Location: Room 3752 SSWB

Instructor: Addie Weaver, PhD, MSW
Office: 3751 SSW
Phone: 734-615-2122
Email: weaverad@umich.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday, 11:00am-1:00pm
Or By Appointment

Course Description:
This course will cover beginning level evaluation that builds on basic research knowledge as a method of assessing social work practice and strengthening clients, communities and their social programs as well as the systems that serve clients and communities. It addresses the evaluation of promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation services. Students will learn to assess and apply evaluation methods from various perspectives, including scientific, ethical, multicultural, and social justice perspectives.

Course Content:
This course will focus on the direct application of the analytical skills associated with developing and implementing evaluation designs that are appropriate for social work practice. Students will examine the evaluation of social work programs with particular attention to dimensions of diversity (ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender [including gender identity and gender expression], marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation). Students will be introduced to models of evaluation derived from social science and social work theory and research. They will learn to apply these models as they develop skills in critically assessing evaluation methods within the social context.

Course Objectives:
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and choose the type of evaluation that is appropriate to answer questions consonant with a program’s developmental stage.
2. Specify a program for evaluation and its theory of change.
3. Recognize and apply evaluation and data collection methods that are appropriate to the evaluation context.
4. Plan an evaluation of social work practice.
5. Understand strategies that promote involvement of practice/policy communities in disseminating the results of evaluation activities in order to foster changes in programs/policies.
6. Critically examine existing evaluation studies for their consistency with the values reflected in the curricular themes.
Course Design:
The course will use multiple pedagogical methods including short lectures; active and reflective learning; collaborative and focus group discussions; case studies; and role plays. To promote active and reflective learning, students will apply course concepts during in-class lab time and engage in self-reflection during in-class discussion. Guest presenters will address course topics such as ethical issues, participatory evaluation and client engagement, and data interpretation in program evaluation.

Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:

Multiculturalism & Diversity: Students will develop the capacity to identify ways in which dimensions of diversity (ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender [including gender identity and gender expression], marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation) influence evaluation processes and outcomes. Because a collaborative, participatory process is critical to evaluation of social work interventions, attention to diversity is imperative for proper implementation of evaluation in social work contexts.

Social Justice: Students will develop the capacity to analyze the impact and efficiency of services and policies as they relate to social change and social justice. Participatory, collaborative, change-oriented evaluation processes and appropriate dissemination activities can promote the achievement of social justice and change and therefore are emphasized in the class. Also important are an examination of the role of power in evaluation and the development of knowledge, skills, and capacities that participants of evaluation can mobilize to shift imbalances of power and resources.

Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, & Rehabilitation: Students will develop the capacity to develop and evaluate prevention and promotion as well as rehabilitation programs that are designed to reduce risk of onset of problems and promote healthy development.

Behavioral and Social Science Research: Students will strengthen their capacity to use theoretical and empirical social science literature to develop and understand whether interventions are appropriately designed and scientifically sound.

Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:
This course will emphasize the relationship of the NASW Code of Ethics, specifically the core values and ethical principles of The social work profession as well as the standards of research and evaluation for ethical behavior in the conduct of scientific evaluations. It will also consider the relationship between the NASW Code of Ethics, and other ethical codes governing evaluation research, such as the Nuremberg Code, Declaration of Helsinki, the National Research Act (1974), and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA; 1996).

Intensive Focus on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity, and Social Justice (PODS):
Through use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing a vision of social justice; learning to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice; working toward social justice processes; applying intersectionality and intercultural frameworks; and strengthening critical consciousness, self-knowledge and self awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

Role of Instructor and Students:

Instructor's Role: She will encourage critical thinking and foster a positive learning environment that will facilitate the participation of all students within the classroom context. She will be available during office hours or by appointment and via email to discuss all course matters.

Students’ Role: Students are expected to attend class, complete readings/assignments when they are due, participate in all class activities, and not use personal electronic equipment in class except for class related purposes. If a student is unable to attend a class or complete a reading or an assignment when it is due, she/he is expected to contact the instructor via email or meet with the instructor to discuss these matters. The classroom will be a safe environment where we can speak freely. Students are expected to keep class conversations within the room.
Relevant Policies:

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Please inform me on the first day of class (in person or via email) if you need an accommodation for a disability. As soon as I am aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, which can be reached by telephone at (734) 763-3000, to determine appropriate accommodations for your needs. I will treat any information you give as private and confidential.

**Religious Holidays:** Students who observe a religious holiday on the same day as class will have access to the class materials covered that day. Students are expected to notify the instructor if they plan to miss class. The official UM policy on religious holidays and a list of possible conflicts with classes can be found at: http://www.provost.umich.edu/calendar/religious_holidays.html

**Basis for Grading and Grading Scale:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assignment/Exam</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Reflection Papers</td>
<td>Weekly 5/19-7/14</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client Interview Memo</td>
<td>June 2, 2014</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logic Model</td>
<td>June 16, 2014</td>
<td>15 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Data Analysis Results Write-Up</td>
<td>July 7, 2014</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Plan</td>
<td>July 21, 2014</td>
<td>40 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poster Presentation</td>
<td>July 28, 2014</td>
<td>15 points</td>
</tr>
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</table>

A 100-point grading scale is used. At the end of the semester, the number of points students earn on each assignment will be totaled and translated into letter grades according to the following formula:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>91-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>81-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-80</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>≤69 (no credit)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Description of Course Assignments and Examination:**

Each student will be expected to complete the following assignments. All assignments are due by 11:55pm on their respective due dates and should be submitted via the C-Tools Assignment feature. Late assignments are subject to a penalty (up to 5 point deduction) if the student has not received the instructor’s approval for a late submission.

1. **Weekly Reflection Papers (10 points)**
   Due weekly from May 19 - July 14, 2014
   This assignment aims to encourage students’ critical thinking about course concepts and how they relate to evaluation of social work practice. This assignment also encourages students to consider the relevance and utility of evaluation to social workers across areas of practice and to the consumers we serve. Weekly reflection papers provides an opportunity for students to further develop written communication skills by synthesizing required readings and integrating their own reactions, critiques, and responses.

   Students will be required to write reflection papers on the readings assigned for each course session between May 19 and July 14, 2014. Weekly reflection papers should not summarize readings, but rather connect the readings to social work practice, the students’ field placement experiences, and the use of evaluation in social work. While not every reading must be addressed in the weekly reflection papers, it is expected that students will draw from at least two readings and make a concerted effort to
make connections and address themes across readings. Weekly reflection papers may focus on how readings:

- Inform social work practice in general, and/or what students do in their field placement or what they plan to do in their future social work career
- Present strengths and/or barriers to conducting evaluations within social work practice settings
- Relate to social workers’ ability to effectively serve and advocate for consumers
- Connect to our professional mission, values, and ethics

Weekly reflection papers should be no more than 1 page in length. Weekly reflection papers are due by 11:55pm the night before the next class session. This allows in-class discussion topics to be informed by students’ insight and perceptions of readings.

2. Evaluation Client Interview and Memo (10 points)  
Due: June 2, 2014
This assignment aims to introduce students to participatory evaluation and client engagement. This assignment enhances students’ oral and written communication skills while providing an opportunity to gather information necessary to successfully plan an evaluation. Students also begin developing skills needed to collaborate with clients and incorporate their perspective into the evaluation process.

Students will be required to interview their client to inform their evaluation plan. Clients will typically be the director or key staff person responsible for overseeing the intervention, program or service that students have selected for their evaluation plan. Interviews can be completed in person or over the phone. It is anticipated that the client interview will take 60 minutes. Students and the instructor will collaboratively develop an interview protocol to guide client interviews during class on May 19, 2014. After completing the client interview, students will be required to write a memo summarizing the client interview. The memo should be 2-4 pages in length. Memos will be informed by the interview protocol, but may focus on:

- How the client wants to use the evaluation/Purpose of evaluation from client perspective
- Learning more about the intervention, program, or service to be evaluated (theoretical basis; model-driven or developed within agency; eligibility criteria for consumers/target group; agency’s desire and/or capacity to sustain evaluation activities)
- Type of evaluation and research methods – options and what fits best with state of intervention, program, or service
- Outcomes that are important to the client/Existing outcomes measured by intervention, program, or service

3. Logic Model (10 points)  
Due: June 16, 2014
This assignment aims to enhance students’ analytical skills in planning and designing evaluations in social work. Students will be required to conceptualize their evaluation plan using logic modeling. The logic model should include:

- The theory of change or assumptions underlying the intervention, program, or service
- Inputs or resources
- Activities (e.g., tasks, actions, and events undertaken to change, prevent, or treat the problem or need)
- Outputs (e.g., tangible products resulting from activities)
- Outcomes (e.g., positive consequences of the intervention, program, or service for clients) that may be defined as short-term, intermediate, and long-term

4. In-Class Data Analysis Results Write-up (10 points)  
Due: July 7, 2014
This in-class assignment aims to provide students experience conducting statistical analysis in SPSS and professional writing skills in reporting results. The instructor will provide students with data. In small groups, students will be required to conduct data analysis in SPSS, including descriptive statistics and mean comparisons. All analytic techniques students will be asked to perform will be demonstrated in class and the instructor will be available for consultation. Each group will be required to write up their results following the format demonstrated in class and provided in example reports and articles. One results write-up per group will be submitted and all group members will receive the same number of points for the assignment.
5. Evaluation Plan (40 points)  
Due: July 21, 2014

This assignment aims to provide students with research methods and analytic skills as well as professional writing skills needed to plan and design evaluations in social work. Students will be required to prepare a scholarly, innovative evaluation plan that they have conceptualized and developed during this course. Please see Appendix A for the Assignment Guidelines.

The evaluation plan should be 15-20 double-spaced pages (excluding references) using 12-point font. The paper should be properly referenced using APA format (6th Edition).

6. Poster Presentation (15 points)  
Due: July 28, 2014

This assignment aims to enhance students' oral communication and presentation skills in the dissemination process of conducting social work evaluations. Students will be required to present a poster on their evaluation plan during the last day of class. The poster and presentation should include:

- Evaluation aims/goals and research questions
- Logic model
- Research methods (research design, sample/sampling strategy, data collection procedures, and proposed measures)
- Data analysis plan
- Limitations and strengths of the evaluation plan

Students will earn full points for this assignment unless they fail to present their poster. The instructor will provide resources (e.g., poster templates, expert guidance of designing academic posters, examples of posters presenting evaluation research). This size of the poster should not exceed 31 inches (width) by 45 inches (length).

Required Textbook & Readings:

The textbook is available for purchase or rental in paperback at Ulrich’s and Michigan Book and Supply Bookstores.

All required weekly readings from academic journals, websites, and books, except those from the Royse et al. text, are posted on C-Tools in resources under Readings.

Class Schedule and Topic Outline:

Session 1: May 12, 2014

Topic: Introductions, Course Overview, Evaluation Basics

- Evaluation in social work practice
- Evaluation v. basic research
- Types of evaluation

Required Readings:

- American Evaluation Association Guiding Principles for Evaluators

In-Class Activities:

- Students will complete the Essential Competencies for Program Evaluators Self-Assessment
- In small groups, students will compare and contrast the NASW Code of Ethics and the AEA Guiding Principles
• In-class Lab Time: Students will identify a potential intervention, program, or service for which they will conceptualize and plan an evaluation during this course.

Session 2: May 19, 2014

Topic: Evaluation Planning and Conceptualization

• Client Engagement Planning and Participatory Evaluation
• Logic models
• Needs assessment

Guest Presenter(s): Sue Ann Savas, MSW, Clinical Professor UM SSW and Director Curtis Center PEG
Jeremy Gaertner, MSW, Evaluation Associate, Curtis Center Program Evaluation Group

Required Readings:

In-Class Activities:
• Large group activity: Students and the instructor will collaboratively develop a client interview protocol focused on engaging clients in the evaluation process and obtaining the client perspective before planning a program evaluation.
• In-class Lab Time: Students will use the logic model to plan and conceptualize their program evaluation.

May 26, 2014: No Class – Memorial Day

Session 3: June 2, 2014

Topic: Research Design, Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods

• Single system research designs
• Group research designs
• Qualitative and mixed methods in evaluation

Guest Presenter: Laura Sundstrom, Evaluation Associate, Curtis Center Program Evaluation Group

Required Readings:

In-Class Activities:
• Large group activity: Mock focus group and reflections on focus group exercise
• In-class Lab Time: Students will identify appropriate research designs and methods for the program evaluation they are planning.
NOTE: CLIENT INTERVIEW MEMO IS DUE BY 11:55PM TODAY.

Session 4: June 9, 2014
Topic: Ethical Concerns and Cultural Issues in Conducting Evaluations

Guest Presenter(s): Adam Mjdjenovich, PhD, UM Institutional Review Board
Megan Williams, MSW, Evaluator, Michigan Department of Veteran Affairs

Required Readings:

In-Class Activities:
- In-class Lab Time: Students will identify ethical and cultural issues present in their proposed program evaluation and determine strategies to address them.

Session 5: June 16, 2014
Topic: Measurement and Sampling Issues in Evaluation

- Survey selection and development
- Validity and reliability
- Sampling strategies

Required Readings:

In-Class Activities:
- Small group activity: Threats to internal and external validity
- View Golden Girls DVD and then engage in small group exercise
- In-class Lab Time: Students will research measures relevant to their evaluation plan and consider the appropriate sampling strategy for their proposed evaluation.

NOTE: LOGIC MODEL IS DUE BY 11:55PM TODAY.

Session 6: June 23, 2014
Topic: Program Monitoring, Formative and Process Evaluation

Required Readings:


**In-Class Activities:**

- Small group activity: Critique the Critical Care Client Satisfaction Survey and rewrite selected survey items to improve their reliability and content validity.
- View LOVELIFE “Get Attitude” Campaign Video and discuss in relation to Stadler & Hlongwa (2002) article
- View Gramya: Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) in Uttarakhand Decentralized Watershed Development Project
- In-Class Lab Time: Students will work on their evaluation plans and sign up for individual consultation with instructor as needed.

**Session 7: June 30, 2014**

**Topic: Outcome Evaluation, and Cost Effectiveness/Cost Analysis in Evaluation**

**Required Readings:**


**In-Class Activities:**

- Small group activity: Article review to identify and critique research design, sampling strategy, and outcome measures.
- In-Class Lab Time: Students will use this time to work on their evaluation plans and sign up for individual consultation with instructor.

**Session 8: July 7, 2014**

**Topic: Statistics and Quantitative Data Analysis in Evaluations**

**Required Readings:**


**In-Class Assignment:**

- In small groups, students will apply data analysis techniques demonstrated in class. Each group will write up their results following the format provided in example reports and articles. Data Analysis Results Write-Up must be submitted via Assignment feature in CTools by 11:55pm on July 7, 2014.

**Session 9: July 14, 2014**

**Topic: Data Interpretation and Report Writing**
Guest Presenter: John Seeley, PhD, Associate Director, Curtis Research Center Program Evaluation Group

Required Readings:

In-Class Activities:
- In-Class Lab Time: Students will work on their evaluation plans and sign up for individual consultation with instructor.

Session 10: July 21, 2014
Topic: Professional Presentations & Workshop Session

Guest Presenter: Rob Pettigrew, Academic Technology Group, University of Michigan Library

In-Class Activities:
- In-Class Lab Time: Students will work on their posters and/or print their posters at designated campus sites.

NOTE: EVALUATION PLAN IS DUE BY 11:55PM TODAY.

Session 11: July 28, 2014
Topic: Poster Presentation

Students will present their posters. The class will be divided into two groups. One group will present posters during the first half of class and one group will present posters during the second half of class.

NOTE: ELECTRONIC FILES OF POSTERS ARE DUE BY 11:55PM TODAY.
## APPENDIX A: EVALUATION PLAN GUIDELINES

Student Name: _________________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Purpose of Evaluation (5 points)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Identify and describe the problem or need your evaluation aims to address.</td>
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<td>b. Conduct a critical review of empirical literature on the problem or need, including any literature on the specific intervention, program, or service being evaluated (if available).</td>
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<td>c. Justify why it is important to address the problem or need using evaluation.</td>
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<td>d. State the purpose or aim of the evaluation.</td>
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<tr>
<th>II. Research Question(s) (2 points)</th>
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<tr>
<td>a. Identify the research question(s) you plan to address in the evaluation. The question(s) should be related to the problem or need and directly link to the purpose or aim of the evaluation.</td>
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<th>III. Target Population (2 points)</th>
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<tr>
<td>a. Identify the group or groups affected by the problem or need and/or who will benefit from the intervention, program, or service being evaluated.</td>
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<tr>
<th>IV. Intervention, Program, or Service Evaluated (2 points)</th>
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<tr>
<td>a. Briefly describe the intervention, program, or service that you plan to evaluate and identify the core components. Note: This may not apply to needs assessments or formative evaluations.</td>
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<th>V. Goals &amp; Objectives of the Evaluation (5 points)</th>
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<tr>
<td>a. Describe measureable goals and objectives of the evaluation.</td>
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<td>b. Identify any specific strategies for achieving goals and objectives.</td>
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<td>c. Using the logic model, explain the theory or assumptions guiding your expectation that the intervention, program, or service will meet its goals &amp; objectives (e.g., change, prevent, or treat the specified problem or need).</td>
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<th>VI. Stakeholders (2 points)</th>
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<tr>
<td>a. Identify potential stakeholders (e.g., persons involved in and/or affected by the evaluation) and explain their role in the evaluation process.</td>
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<th>VII. Research Design (5 points)</th>
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<tr>
<td>a. Specify the research design planned for the evaluation and why it was selected.</td>
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<td>b. Describe how the research design will address the research questions, goals and objectives, and outcomes.</td>
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<td>c. Address any strengths and limitations of the design, including potential threats to internal validity (e.g., selection, maturation, dropout).</td>
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<th>VIII. Sample (5 points)</th>
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<td>a. Describe the type of sample that will be selected and why it was selected.</td>
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<td>b. Identify inclusion/exclusion criteria that will be used for selecting participants and a rationale for the criteria.</td>
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<td>c. Describe how you will recruit and retain participants.</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Briefly explain how you will protect the rights of participants (e.g., ethical issues of informed consent, voluntary participation, protection of sensitive data).</td>
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<th>IX. Data Collection (5 points)</th>
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<tr>
<td>a. Describe how and where you will get your data for the evaluation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Specify whether new, primary data or secondary data will be used.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
c. Define and operationalize the measures you plan to use. If you plan to use any standardized measures, report their reliability and validity.

**X. Analysis Plan (2 points)**

a. Describe the appropriate statistical techniques for analyzing data on sample characteristics and outcome measures.

**XI. Conclusion (2 points)**

a. Identify strengths and limitations of the planned evaluation.

b. Describe any expected implications the evaluation has for practice, policy, and/or research.

**XII. References (2 points)**

a. References are used appropriately and in APA format.

**XIII. Writing Quality (3 points)**

a. Use of correct grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure.

b. Use of active voice.

c. Use of organization tools (e.g., headings/subheadings).