Spring/Summer 2014

Course Title: Methods of Program Evaluation
Course Number: SW685 (Tuesday: 8am- Noon)
Credits: 3 credits
Pre-req: SW522 or permission of instructor

Faculty Contact Information
Sue Ann Savas, MSW, Clinical Faculty
E-mail: ssavas@umich.edu
Cell Phone: (734) 649-6776
Office Hours: Tuesday’s Noon to 1pm or by appointment
SSW Office: 3848

Elizabeth Thomason, MSW, PhD, Post-doc Fellow
E-mail: lizzyb@umich.edu
Office: Atrium B721

Course Description: This course will focus on the use of quantitative and qualitative research methods to monitor and evaluate social services. Students will develop skills in choosing and implementing appropriate evaluation strategies and designs to answer policy and practice questions. Emphasis will be placed on how to select and construct measures and assess their reliability and validity. Students will assess service needs of target populations and communities, monitor the implementation and operation of social welfare programs, and evaluate their impact. Opportunities will be provided to obtain practical experience in data collection, interpretation, presentation and dissemination of evaluation results.

Course Content: The purpose of this course is to develop students' abilities to use evaluation methods to describe real world situations in social work settings and to make inferences based on that information in order to improve social policy decisions and service delivery programs. Students will develop skills to identify the focus and purpose of the evaluation activities; identify and generate the kind and content of the information needed to meet the purposes for the evaluation; identify and assess the intended sources for the desired information; identify,
assess, develop, and pilot the measures or instruments to be used for the evaluation; describe, select, and apply appropriate types of statistical and/or theoretical analyses and the general techniques to be used in the analysis; identify the types of information liable to result from the analysis; assess and implement additional factors in the evaluation design (e.g. timetables, standards to be used in judging the results of the evaluation, logistics, and client privacy); and develop reporting and utilization strategies.

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

1. Specify goals and objectives for evaluating the effectiveness of programs and practices for individual clients, as well as for aggregates of program participants.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the concepts of measurement, reliability, and validity; use these concepts for selecting variables for evaluation.
3. Devise basic designs for evaluation, and contrast their relative advantages and disadvantages to other designs.
4. Identify the issues involved in generalizing evaluation results, and devise representative sampling plans and replications for evaluating practices and programs.
5. Generate evaluation reports using the criteria and concepts above.
6. Discuss common ethical concerns related to program evaluation.

**Course-related Advanced Practice Behaviors**

a). Advanced practitioners in the method area of Social Policy and Evaluation demonstrate advanced analytical skills in the consumption, production, and dissemination of knowledge and research, policy analysis and advocacy, and evaluation.

b). Advanced practitioners in the method area of Social Policy and Evaluation use appropriate methods to evaluate their own policy and evaluation practice.

**Course Design and Instructor Teaching Approach**

Multiple methods will be used to support an engaged active learning environment: mini-lectures, in-class work session, discussions, analysis labs, report editing sessions, field trip, data collection in the community, instructor consultations, role plays, and small group sessions. Students will use C-Tools course folders to access readings, articles, shared databases, and other resources. Assignments will be submitted on C-Tools drop box.

The course will use a project-based integrative learning approach. This term, students will work in teams/small groups and apply course content to local program evaluations suggested by students or available through the instructor.

Principles of Instruction: Adapted from Rosenshine, B., *Research-based Strategies that All Teachers Should Know*, American Educator (Spring 2012).
I will begin each session with a review of what was covered the previous lecture. Students will be asked to provide the review of key concepts and “take-aways.”

I will present material in small steps and provide class time for students to practice after each step. I will give clear instructions.

I will provide models, templates and numerous examples of problem-solving, including rehearsal time. I will think aloud as I demonstrate.

I will provide scaffolds for difficult tasks and notify students of possible errors.

I will guide student practice through additional explanations, live review of drafts, and small group consultations.

I will monitor students for understanding by asking specific questions and checking student responses.

I will reteach material when necessary. I will teach material needed by students even when the students were expected to have mastered the material prior to the course.

I will note student successes and give students ample opportunity to practice independently.

I will provide feedback as students begin to practice independently.

**Theme Relation to Multiculturalism and Diversity:** Students will develop the capacity to identify ways in which the diversity dimensions "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 and are impacted by various methods of program evaluation.

**Theme Relation to Social Justice:** The ability to assess policies and programs analytically is necessary if the social work profession is to play an important role in shaping the outcome of ongoing program and policy debates that reflect issues in social justice and change. This course will provide students with the capacity to understand and influence the role that methods of program evaluation play in the formation and implementation of policy, practice, and program development.

**Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, and Treatment & Rehabilitation:** Prevention, promotion, treatment, and rehabilitation activities are difficult to evaluate, and therefore, raise special challenges in statistical analysis. Students will be exposed to models of program evaluation (e.g., empowerment designs, envelope analysis, responsive evaluations, and reflective focus group techniques), which have particular utility as methods to evaluate promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation oriented social services.

**Relationship to Social Work Ethics and Values:** Ethical standards of social work practice (NASW Code of Ethics) and evaluation practice(Program Evaluation Standards) as well as ethical
standards for federally funded research will be reviewed as issues that evaluators may be confronted with in program/policy evaluation.

**Intensive Focus on PODS:** Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social justice processes, apply inter-sectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self-knowledge and self-awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

**RELEVANT POLICIES**
1. **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](http://www.provost.umich.edu/calendar/religious_holidays.html)

2. **Learning Needs and Disabilities.** Students with specialized learning needs are encouraged to make an appointment with the instructor to discuss the necessary arrangements. If you have a disability or condition that may interfere with your participation in this course, please submit the disability certificate prior to the Drop/Add date. This information will be kept strictly confidential. For more information and resources, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities office at G664 Haven Hall, (734) 763-3000.

3. **Attendance.** The School of Social Work attendance policy can be found in the Student Guide. Attendance is not included in the grading rubric for this course. Students are expected to visit the client agency during the course face-to-face or by phone. Students are expected to participate in lectures, project group meetings, and project consultation appointments with the instructor. Attendance is strongly encouraged.

4. **Deadline Expectations.** Project assignment due dates are listed in the syllabus. All project assignments must be submitted on the last lecture. Assignments submitted more than two days late will be graded down one full grade (points are calculated by assignment). Exceptions will need prior permission of the instructor.

5. **Grading System.** A 100-point system is used. At the end of the semester, the points earned will be translated into letter grades according to the following formula:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>94-96</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>91–93</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87-90</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>&lt;69 (no credit)</td>
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6. **Incompletes.** Incompletes are not granted unless it can be demonstrated that it would be unfair to hold the student to the normal expectations of the course. The student must formally request an incomplete with the instructor prior to the final weeks of class. Please review the Student Guide section on Ethical Conduct in the University Environment. This section addresses plagiarism, harassment and discrimination policies.

7. **E-mail Communication/Chat Room.** Please include “SW685” in the subject line of all e-mails to the instructor. The instructor will most likely not respond to e-mails over the weekend. Submit evaluation questions to the c-tools chat room that are relevant for the entire class. The instructor will respond regularly to chat room questions and contribute to chat room discussions.

**ASSIGNMENTS.** Rubrics will be developed for each assignment in class with students.

**Scope of Work (20 points).** Students will develop a written Scope of Work for their evaluation project. The document will include a brief description of the program, the evaluation approach, key services, deliverables, project timelines, and evaluation budget.

**Data Collection Effort (30 points).** Students will select a quantitative or qualitative data collection method, develop and follow the protocol to gather the data needed to answer key evaluation questions pertaining to their evaluation project. Prior to the collection, students will submit the data collection activity to the UM IRB for non-regulated status.

**Student-led Workshop (25 points).** Each student project will be presented and discussed during workshop time (10:15 – 11:00). Students will select one lecture to lead their workshop. The workshop will give students an opportunity to present the status of the project, accomplishments, and challenges. The class will have an opportunity to ask questions and provide consultation.

**Evaluation Report (25 points).** Each student will submit an evaluation report using a professional report format, including these sections: purpose of report, overview of program, evaluation team, methodology, results, and recommendations for improving the evaluation. Students are expected to use data visualization best practices.
TEXTS

REQUIRED


OTHER TEXT RESOURCE (available at the Graduate Library)


All article readings are available in the course c-tools site in each lecture folder.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide (available on-line) |
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 June 24</td>
<td>Data visualization techniques and ArcGIS mapping</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 July 8</td>
<td>Data Interpretation Meeting with the Blueprint for Aging at Catholic Social Services</td>
<td>CDC (2009). Evaluation Brief: Disseminating program achievement and evaluation findings to garner support.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 July 22</td>
<td>Evaluation presentations, license exam review</td>
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