SW683: Evaluation in Social Work

Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisites: SW522 or Permission of the Instructor

Semester: Fall 2014
Meets: Thursday, 2:00-5:00pm
Location: Room B770 SSWB

Instructor: Addie Weaver, PhD, MSW
Office: 3751 SSW
Phone: 734-615-2122
Email: weaverad@umich.edu
Office Hours: Wednesday, 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; and case studies. 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 in 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 evaluation 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](http://www.provost.umich.edu/calendar/religious_holidays.html)

**Basis for Grading and Grading Scale:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment/Exam</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Group Discussions</td>
<td>Students sign-up for one class session during the Term</td>
<td>15 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client Interview Memo</td>
<td>September 25, 2014</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logic Model</td>
<td>October 9, 2014</td>
<td>15 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Plan – Part 1</td>
<td>October 30, 2014</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>December 4, 2014</td>
<td>20 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Plan – Part 2</td>
<td>December 9, 2014</td>
<td>20 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:

- **A+** 97-100
- **B+** 87-90
- **C+** 77-80
- **D** ≤69 (no credit)
- **A** 94-96
- **B** 84-86
- **C** 74-76
- **A-** 91-93
- **B-** 81-83
- **C-** 70-73

**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. **Collaborative Group Discussions (15 points)**

   Students sign up for one session during term

   This assignment aims to enhance students’ knowledge base and communication skills in evaluating social work practice. It also encourages students’ critical thinking about course concepts and how they relate to evaluation of social work practice. The assignment has two parts:

   First, beginning the second week of class, two or three students will be required to generate 2-3 discussion questions on weekly readings, including articles and textbook chapters. Students will use these questions to facilitate small group discussions. **Questions will be due on the day that class is held.** Small group discussions will last approximately 30 minutes. Students will sign up for their session of interest on the first day of class. For helpful textbook resources in generating discussion questions, the instructor refers students to “Questions for Class Discussion” found at the end of each Royse et al.
textbook chapter and also to the textbook’s website at www.cengage.com/social_work/royse.

In-class discussions will occur on September 11, 18, 25; October 9, 16, 23, 30; and November 6. Students will earn 5 points for generating questions and leading discussions.

Second, each student facilitating class discussion will write and independently submit a 1-2 page, 12 point font, double spaced reflective statement on the readings assigned for that class session. Reflection statements 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 reflection statements, 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. Guidelines for this reflective statement can be found in Appendix A of this course syllabus.

Reflection statements are worth 10 points and due by 11:55pm on the same day students facilitate class discussion.

2. Client Interview and Memo (10 points)  
Due: September 25, 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. Please note that a draft interview guide is included in Appendix B of the course syllabus. 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, over the phone, or via email. It is anticipated that client interviews will take 60 minutes. After completing the client interview, students will be required to write a memo summarizing what they learned and how it applies to or has impacted their evaluation plan. The memo should be 2-4 pages in length, 12 point font, double spaced.

Guidelines for the client interview and memo can be found in Appendix A of this course syllabus.

3. Logic Model (15 points)  
Due: October 9, 2014

This assignment aims to enhance students’ analytical skills in planning and designing evaluations in social work. Students will be required to conceptualize the intervention, program, or service that will be the focus of their evaluation plan using logic modeling. The logic model should be a one-page visual representation of the program.

Guidelines for the logic model can be found in Appendix A of this course syllabus.

4. Evaluation Plan – Part I (20 points)  
Due: October 30, 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. The evaluation plan will be written in two parts and each part is valued at 20 points. Please see Appendix A for the Assignment Guidelines.

Part I of the evaluation plan should be a maximum of 10 double spaced pages, excluding references, using 12-point font. The paper should be properly referenced using APA format (6th Edition).

5. Final Examination (20 points)  
December 4, 2014

The final examination assesses students’ attainment of course objectives, Social Work competencies, and advanced practice behaviors. The final examination will be administered during the last class session. The final examination will consist of 40 multiple choice questions. Students will be permitted to refer to one 8½ x 11 sheet of paper with their notes during the
examination. No laptops or textbooks will be permitted. A study guide will be provided by the instructor to assist students with exam preparation.

6. Evaluation Plan – Part II (20 points)  
Due: December 9, 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. The evaluation plan will be written in two parts and each part is valued at 20 points. Please see Appendix A for the Assignment Guidelines.

Part II of the evaluation plan should be a maximum of 10 double-spaced pages, excluding references, using 12-point font. The paper should be properly referenced using APA format (6th Edition).

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: September 4, 2014

Topic: Introductions, Course Overview, Evaluation Basics
- Evaluation in social work practice
- Evaluation v. basic research
- Types of evaluation

Required Readings:

In-Class Activities:
- In small groups, students will read and discuss Harmon (2010) article as it relates to ethical issues in evaluation and research
- Students will identify a potential intervention, program, or service for which they will conceptualize and plan an evaluation during this course.

Session 2: September 11, 2014

Topic: Evaluation Planning and Conceptualization
- Logic models
- Developing Research Questions
- Research Methods 101

Guest Presenter: Jeremy Gaertner, MSW, Evaluation Associate, Curtis Center Program Evaluation Group

Required Readings:

**In-Class Activities:**
- Small group discussions facilitated by students using their questions on weekly readings
- In small groups, students will develop research questions.
- Students will begin to plan and conceptualize an evaluation for their evaluation plan.

**Session 3: September 18, 2014**
**Topic: Needs Assessment**

**Required Readings:**

**In-Class Activities:**
- Small group discussions facilitated by students using their questions on weekly readings
- In small groups, students will plan and conceptualize a needs assessment

**Session 4: September 25, 2014**
**Topic: Measurement Issues in Evaluation**
- Survey selection and development
- Validity and reliability

**Required Readings:**

**In-Class Activities:**
- Small group discussions facilitated by students using their questions on weekly readings
- Exercise: Conceptualize and operationalize measures of “success” – the case of the Golden Girls’ program

**NOTE: CLIENT INTERVIEW MEMO DUE TODAY BY 11:55PM.**

**Session 5: October 2, 2014**
**Topic: Sampling in Evaluation**
- Sampling strategies

**Required Readings:**

In-Class Activities:
• Small group exercise: Focus group discussions on recruiting and retaining hard-to-reach populations in programs and interventions
• Reflections on focus group exercise

Session 6: October 9, 2014
Topic: Formative and Process Evaluation

Required Readings:

In-Class Activities:
• Small group discussions facilitated by students using their questions on weekly readings
• In small groups, students will plan and conceptualize a process evaluation

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

Session 7: October 16, 2014
Topic: Program Monitoring in Evaluation

Required Readings:

In-Class Activities:
• Small group discussions facilitated by students using their questions on weekly readings
• Small group activity: Critique the Critical Care Client Satisfaction Survey and rewrite selected survey items to improve their reliability and content validity.
• View Gramya: Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) in Uttarakhand Decentralized Watershed Development Project

Session 8: October 23, 2014
Topic: Conceptualizing and Specifying Outcome Evaluations

Required Readings:

**In-Class Activities:**
- Small group discussions facilitated by students using their questions on weekly readings
- In small groups, students will complete an article review to identify and critique research design, sampling strategy, and outcome measures
- Exercise: students will identify threats to internal validity

**Session 9: October 30, 2014**
**Topic: Ethical Concerns and Cultural Issues in Conducting Evaluations**

**Guest Presenter(s):** Adam Mjdjenovich, PhD, UM Institutional Review Board  
Megan Williams, MSW, Evaluation Associate, Curtis Center Program Evaluation Group

**Required Readings:**

**In-Class Activities:**
- Small group discussions facilitated by students using their questions on weekly readings

**NOTE: EVALUATION PLAN – PART 1 IS DUE TODAY BY 11:55PM.**

**Session 10: November 6, 2014**
**Topic: Cost-Effectiveness, Cost Analysis and Impact in Evaluations**

**Required Readings:**

**In-Class Activities:**
- Small group discussions facilitated by students using their questions on weekly readings

**Session 11: November 13, 2014**
**Topic: Statistics and Quantitative Data Analysis**

**Required Readings:**

**In-Class Activities:**
- Exercise: In small groups, students will apply data analysis techniques demonstrated in class.
Session 12: November 20, 2104

Topic: Data Interpretation and Report Writing

Guest Presenter: John Seeley, PhD, Associate Director, Curtis Research Center Program Evaluation Group

Required Readings:

In-Class Activities:
- Exam Review: Students and instructor will review study guide for final examination together.

NO CLASS ON NOVEMBER 27, 2014: THANKSGIVING RECESS

Session 13: December 4, 2014

FINAL EXAMINATION
APPENDIX A: ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES
Guidelines for Reflective Statement on Weekly Readings (Part of Collaborative Group Discussion) (10 points)

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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>How might these readings inform what you do in your field placement and/or what you plan to do in your career as a social worker?</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>What challenges, if any, might you face in applying what you learned from these readings in your placement and/or career as a social worker?</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Identify any evaluation skills you acquired as a result of completing this assignment.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Discuss how these evaluation skills relate to social work’s mission, values, and/or ethics.</td>
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Please note that the Reflective Statement is worth 10 of the 15 points possible for the Collaborative Group Discussion assignment. The remaining 5 points are earned through the generation of 2-3 discussion questions and facilitation of small group discussion on readings assigned for students’ respective class sessions.
Guidelines for Client Interview Memo (10 points)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Briefly describe the program to be evaluated.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>What is the client’s perspective of their program evaluation needs? (e.g., the purpose of an evaluation from the client’s perspective)</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>What outcomes are important to the client and are any outcomes currently measured by the program?</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Does the program have the desire and/or capacity to engage in evaluation activities (e.g., time, funds, staff)</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Based on your information gained from your interview, what type of evaluation offers the best fit with the developmental stage of the program?</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>How has obtaining the client’s perspective changed your conceptualization of an evaluation plan for this program, if at all?</td>
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Guidelines for Logic Model (15 points)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The theory of change or assumptions underlying the program</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Inputs or resources (e.g., system conditions, need, target population, community partners, funding)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Planned activities (e.g., tasks, actions, and events undertaken to change, prevent or treat the problem or need)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Outputs (e.g., tangible products resulting from activities)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Outcomes (e.g., positive intended consequences of the program for clients that may be defined as short-term, intermediate, and/or long-term)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Connection/relationship between activities, outputs, and outcomes (e.g., use of arrows or other visual cues to show which activities lead to which outputs and which outputs lead to which outcomes)</td>
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</table>
### I. Purpose of Evaluation (5 points)

a. Identify and describe the problem or need your evaluation aims to address.

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).

c. Justify why it is important to address the problem or need using evaluation.

d. State the purpose or aim of the evaluation.

### II. Research Question(s) (2 points)

a. Identify the research question(s) you plan to address in the evaluation. The question(s) should related to the problem or need and directly link to the purpose or aim of the evaluation.

### III. Target Population (2 points)

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.

### IV. Intervention, Program, or Service Evaluated (2 points)

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.

### V. Goals & Objectives of the Program & Evaluation (3 points)

a. Describe measurable goals and objectives of the evaluation.

b. Identify any specific strategies for achieving goals and objectives.

c. Using the logic model, explain the theory or assumptions guiding your expectation that the intervention, program, or service will meet its goals & objectives (e.g., change, prevent, or treat the specified problem or need).

### VI. Stakeholders (2 points)

a. Identify potential stakeholders (e.g., persons involved in and/or affected by the evaluation) and explain their role in the evaluation process.

### XII. References (2 points)

a. References are used appropriately and in APA format.

### XIII. Writing Quality (2 points)

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

b. Use of active voice.

c. Use of organization tools (e.g., headings/subheadings).
## Guidelines for Evaluation Plan – Part II (20 points)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. Research Design (4 points)</strong></td>
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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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<td><strong>II. Sample (4 points)</strong></td>
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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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<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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<td><strong>III. Data Collection (4 points)</strong></td>
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<td>a. Describe how and where you will get your data for the evaluation.</td>
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<td>b. Specify whether new, primary data or secondary data will be used.</td>
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<td>c. Define and operationalize the measures you plan to use. If you plan to use any standardized measures, report their reliability and validity.</td>
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<td><strong>IV. Analysis Plan (2 points)</strong></td>
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<td>a. Describe the appropriate statistical techniques for analyzing data on sample characteristics and outcome measures.</td>
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<td><strong>V. Conclusion (2 points)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Identify strengths and limitations of the planned evaluation.</td>
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<td>b. Describe any expected implications the evaluation has for practice, policy, and/or research.</td>
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<td><strong>VI. References (2 points)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>a. References are used appropriately and in APA format.</td>
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<td><strong>VII. Writing Quality (2 points)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Use of correct grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure.</td>
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<td>b. Use of active voice.</td>
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<td>c. Use of organization tools (e.g., headings/subheadings).</td>
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APPENDIX B: DRAFT INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CLIENT INTERVIEW MEMO ASSIGNMENT
Client Interview Guide

As part of my Evaluation in Social Work class, I am planning a program evaluation. I am interested in planning an evaluation for the [insert name] program at your agency. My assignment includes only the conceptualization and planning of an evaluation, not any data collection or analysis. In class we have been talking about the importance of participatory evaluation and collaborating with stakeholders, like you, as part of the evaluation process. I am interested in talking with you in order to learn more about your program and your perspective on the utility of a program evaluation. Your thoughts and perspective will be used to inform the evaluation plan.

I. Evaluation Purpose

I would like to start by learning more about aspects or areas of your program that you think may benefit from an evaluation.

a. What do you see as your programs strengths? How about weaknesses/areas for improvement?

b. Of the potential weaknesses or areas for improvement, what would you prioritize as being most important?

c. Is there anything you would like to know or learn about this aspect of your program that could be examined through an evaluation?

d. How would you use an evaluation (e.g., program improvement, to obtain/justify funding)?

e. Has your program been evaluated in the past?
   i. If yes: What was the focus of the evaluation? When was it conducted? How did you use the results? How would you use evaluation?

II. Organizational Structure & Program Description

Now I would like to talk a little more about your program.

a. What is your program’s mission?

b. What problem/need does your program address?

c. Could you please describe your program/what you do?
   i. What are the key program components and activities?
   ii. How was the program developed? Is it model-based/an evidence based practice?
   iii. What is the length of your program (e.g., 12-sessions; 3-months; based on client need)?

d. Who is the target population for your program?
   i. What is the eligibility criteria?
   ii. Who was program designed to served?
   iii. What, if any, do you perceive as challenges & barriers to clients’ ability to access services?

e. How do you engage clients?
   i. How would you describe their receptivity or readiness to change?
   ii. What barriers, if any, do you perceive as impacting change in clients?

f. How would you describe your reputation in the community?

III. Desired Outcomes/Resources

Finally, I’d like to better understand the outcomes your program hopes to achieve and the resources available to support your work.

a. What does it look like if a client “succeeds” in your program?
i. What are key outcomes or indicators that you look for or assess for change?
b. How do you determine what works in your program?
c. What client data, if any, do you collect on regular basis?
   i. Do you use this data to conduct any internal evaluation activities?
d. How would you describe your program resources?
   i. What are your main funding sources? Are client outcomes tied to funding?
   ii. How much time and money, if any, do you have for evaluation activities?
e. How would you describe your organizational capacity?
f. How would you describe your program/organization’s receptivity to change?
   i. What barriers, if any, do you perceive as impacting change within the program/organization?

IV. Conclusion
   a. Is there anything else that you think is important for me to know about your program as I begin to
develop an evaluation plan?

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today.