

M | SOCIAL WORK

COURSE TITLE: Evaluation in Social Work

COURSE NUMBER: 683 (Fall 2016, Section 009)

TIME & PLACE Thursday 6:00-9:00pm, Room B760, School Social Work Building

CREDIT HOURS: 3

PREREQUISITES: SW 522 or permission of instructor

INSTRUCTOR: Ebony Reddock, PhD, MPH, Program Manager, Curtis Center Program Evaluation Group & LEO Lecturer

CONTACT DETAILS:

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This course was developed through a collaborative effort of instructors: Janet Ray, Maureen Okasinski, Sue Ann Savas, Letha Chadiha, and Jorge Delva.

Please Note: The instructor reserves the right to adjust any aspect of the syllabus as needed, including, but not limited to, readings and assignment descriptions.

COURSE STATEMENT

This course statement was approved by Governing Faculty on Nov. 8, 2006.

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. Course Design

The course will use an integrative learning approach. Students will select local community-based evaluation projects based on their areas of interest and educational needs, and form groups of 3 to 5 students. Multiple pedagogical methods such as mini-lectures, participatory discussions, written assignments, student presentations, and role playing will be used. Client agency guests may be invited to present evaluation needs and discuss evaluation results. Students will access Canvas for additional course-relevant resources. Each course meeting will include a mini-lecture, group time to work on evaluation projects, and consultation from the instructor.

5. Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes

- **Multiculturalism and 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 and Social Change:** 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 is 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 and Prevention:** Students will develop the capacity to develop and evaluate prevention and promotion as well as rehabilitation programs that are designed to reduce the onset risk of problems and promote healthy development.

- Social Science: 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.

6. Intensive Focus Statement on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity, and Social Justice (PODS):

This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. 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 towards social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self-knowledge and self-awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

7. Relationship of the course to Social Work Ethics and Values

This course will emphasize the relationship of the NASW Code of Ethics, specifically those sections pertaining to the core values and ethical principles of social work as well as the standards of research and evaluation that under gird ethical behavior in the conduct of scientific evaluations. Additionally, this course will emphasize the relationship between the NASW Code of Ethics and other ethical codes governing evaluation research such as the Nuremberg Code, Declaration of Helsinki, and 1974 National Research Act (PL93-348) and the 1996 Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

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 University of Michigan policy on religious holidays, and a list of possible conflicts with classes, can be found at: www.provost.umich.edu/calendar/religious_holidays.html. Students are encouraged to notify the instructor as soon as possible.

2. Learning Needs and Disabilities

Students with specialized learning needs are requested 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 schedule a private appointment with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss accommodations for your specific needs. 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 will be recorded in this course. Each student is expected to visit their clients at least once during the semester. Students should also notify the instructor as soon as possible of any anticipated absences via e-mail.

4. Deadline Expectations

All assignments are due 30 mins. before class on the date listed in the course outline. Late assignments will be graded down 5% per day. Exceptions are at the sole discretion of the instructor.

5. Grading System

A 100-point system is used. Course points are rounded to a whole number at the end of the term. At the end of the semester, the project points earned will be 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	

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. Grade Modifications

Grade modifications are not granted unless a request is put into writing (e-mail is acceptable) no more than 48 hours after the grade is issued on Canvas. Students must also include justification for changing the grade that utilizes section materials such as lecture notes or rubrics or school policies. The decision to change a grade is at the sole discretion of the instructor.

Course Materials

Primary Text: Grinnell, R., Gabor, P., and Unrau, Y (2015) Program Evaluation for Social Workers: Foundations of Evidence-based Programs (Seventh Edition). New York: Oxford University Press.

****There is a sixth edition of this book. While it has some of the material included in the seventh, it is missing important units, including one on Logic Models. I would not recommend purchasing this one. But if you do, be sure to coordinate with your colleagues to obtain copies of the missing chapters.****

Additional Readings

The instructor will also provide students with additional readings based on the progression of the class. Students will receive notice of readings at least one week in advance.

Semester At A Glance

Week	Date	Topic	Assignment Due*
1	Sept 9	What Is Evaluation?	
2	Sept 15	Process and Standards	
3	Sept 22	Ethics	
4	Sept 29	Program Planning	
5	Oct 6	Logic Models and Theories of Change	
6	Oct 13	Site Visits--NO CLASS	
7	Oct 20	Needs Assessment	Client Engagement Report + Approval Form
8	Oct 27	Process Evaluation	
9	Nov 3	Outcome Evaluation	Program Specification and Logic Model
10	Nov 10	Efficiency Evaluation	
11	Nov 17	Data Driven Decision-making	
12	Dec 1	Evaluation Management	
13	Dec 8	Final Presentations and Reflections	Final Presentation
	Dec 13		Final Evaluation Plan

* In-class activities are listed in detailed agenda.

Detailed Agenda

Week 1 (September 9): What Is Evaluation?

Activities:

Review Syllabus

Readings:

Grinnell Chapter 1; Grinnell Chapter 2

Week 2 (September 15): Process and Standards

Activities:

none

Readings:

Grinnell Chapter 3; Grinnell Chapter 4

Week 3 (September 22): Ethics

Activities:

Complete PEERRS (required)

Identifying and Managing Ethical Dilemmas

Readings:

Grinnell Chapter 5; Grinnell Chapter 6

Week 4 (September 29): Program Planning

Activities:

Crafting Evaluation Questions

Readings:

Grinnell Chapter 7

Week 5 (Oct 6): Logic Models and Theories of Change

Activities:

Logic Modeling from a Case Study

Readings:

Grinnell Chapter 8

Week 6 (Oct 13): Client Engagement

Activities:

Facilitating a Client Visit

Readings:

Grinnell Chapter 9

Assignments Due: Client Engagement Visit should be completed this week. The corresponding report is due next week on Canvas.

Week 7 (Oct 20): Needs Assessment

Activities:

Finding Secondary Data

Readings:

Grinnell Chapter 10

Assignment Due: Client Engagement Report due on Canvas by 5:30pm on Oct 20

Week 8 (Oct 27): Process Evaluation

Activities:

Choosing Among Qualitative Data Collection Techniques

Readings:

Grinnell Chapter 11

Week 9 (November 3): Outcome Evaluation

Activities:

Choosing the Appropriate Statistical Test

Readings:

Grinnell Chapter 12

Week 10 (November 10): Efficiency Evaluation

Activities:

Fiscal Management and Program Evaluation

Readings:

Grinnell Chapter 13

Week 11 (November 17): Data-Driven Decision Making

Activities:

Data Visualization

Readings:

Grinnell Chapter 15

November 24—Thanksgiving—NO CLASS

Week 12 (December 1): Evaluation Management

Activities:

From Results to Recommendations—Using Evaluation for Program Improvement

Readings:

Grinnell Toolkits (all)

Week 13 (December 8): Reflections

Activities:

Final Presentations

Readings:

None

Assignments

Assignments are designed to provide opportunities for students to learn and apply skills related to evaluation practice. Assignments are also designed to assess student learning while accounting for diversity in learning styles.

Breakdown

50% Final Evaluation Plan & Presentation

10% Client Engagement Report

10% Program Specification and Logic Model Assignment

20% In-Class Activities

10% Participation

Total: 100%

A. Major Assignment: Evaluation Plan

Teams of 2 to 4 students will develop a program evaluation plan for a community agency. The team will select an agency, most likely a field placement site.

Once the agency is selected, the team will find out from the agency their evaluation needs through in-person client engagement meetings. All members of the team are required to attend one in-person

meeting, although it is recommended that your team elicit regular feedback from an agency contact person. One person from the team will need to be assigned as the client liaison; communications from the team generally go through that person. If possible, all team members should participate in formal client meetings.

The scope of the evaluation should be appropriate for a beginning level evaluation team and will need to be approved both by the agency and the instructor by October 20. **As part of this approval, you will need to have the contact person at the agency complete a form approving the scope of the project. This form can be sent via e-mail or faxed to 734-615-7231.** On the form, the team will briefly outline the program being evaluated and major aims (providing this in draft form and/or written form is acceptable).

Time is allotted during each classroom session for evaluation teams to meet and consult with the instructor. Ideally, class time will fulfill most of your needs for meeting as a team.

The final plan should be between 20-25 pages, double-spaced and in APA format. References will include a listing of the evaluation articles that were used to inform the evaluation plan. The plan should include a professional cover page, acknowledgement page, table of contents, as well as the sections described below. A graphic, professional layout and use of callout text boxes are encouraged.

The final evaluation plan should be detailed and specific, containing the following components:

- 1) A brief introduction section that outlines the social problem, program and evaluation,
- 2) A program justification section that defines the social problem addressed by the agency and program and describes the need for the program using knowledge gleaned from the agency and scholarly literature,
- 3) A logic model articulating the program's theory of change using SMART language and corresponding program specification that describes previous evaluation efforts of similar programs,
- 4) 4-5 evaluation aims and key questions that respond explicitly to components of the logic model,
- 5) An approach section that describes the type of evaluation and justification for such in light of the evaluation questions,
- 6) A methods section that describes the plan to collect and analyze data,
- 7) A limitation section that describes potential challenges in completing the evaluation and strategies for alleviating them, and,
- 8) A work plan for managing the completion of the evaluation that provides an estimate for the time and cost of the evaluation.

A1. Introduction

This section should be no longer than two paragraphs (1 to 1.5 pages). Lead with the purpose of the plan- be explicit that the project is an evaluation. Teams should also provide 1-2 sentences about the agency being served by the evaluation. Teams will also describe the social problem addressed by the agency and program, the program being evaluated, and the type of evaluation to be conducted.

A2. Program Justification

Teams will describe the agency partner in terms of background information (e.g. years in existence, estimate number of staff), services and programs provided, number of individuals served annually, and annual budget as well as other information you find pertinent. The team should describe the program being evaluated and the need for the program using knowledge gleaned from the agency and reputable data and literature sources. Program need should be described in terms of defining the social problem and briefly describing its socioecological context.

A3. Program Specification and Logic Model

The program specification and logic model section of the final evaluation plan will need to be completed and turned in as a separate assignment in addition to being included in the final plan. A detailed description of this section can be found later in the Assignments section.

A4. Evaluation Aims & Questions

Teams will develop four-to-five overarching evaluation aims with a minimum of one corresponding key evaluation question. Aims and questions should directly connect both to the logic model and client need. Be sure that evaluation questions are not research questions, but questions whose answers have direct implications for the agency and its programming.

A5. Evaluation Approach

Teams will need to choose the appropriate approach(es) to adequately respond to evaluation aims and questions. Teams will also need to justify the use of the approach(es) in light of what they have learned about evaluation approaches and how they respond to aims and questions.

A6. Data Collection

Teams will need to identify data “themes” needed to adequately answer the evaluation questions (e.g. questions for an agency program addressing juvenile justice would require data on demographics, incarceration, recidivism, family history of criminal behavior, etc.). Teams will also need to describe the types of data to be collected (e.g. primary, secondary, survey, focus group). Teams must plan to collect at least three types of data, with two as primary data sources. Teams should confer with the agency contact to develop data collection strategies that would best accommodate the needs and rights of the agency and its participants.

A7. Data Analysis

Students will describe the data management and analysis plan. The plan should outline how both paper and electronic data will be stored (e.g. file cabinets, Excel). The plan should also describe the analysis plan in terms of software used (e.g. SPSS, NVivo) and the types of analyses that will be conducted (e.g. descriptive statistics, inferential tests such as linear regression and ANOVA, open coding, inter-rater reliability). The plan should also justify the use of chosen analytical techniques in light of evaluation questions.

Students must also complete two additional pieces of work related to, but not included in, the final evaluation plan document:

Presentation of Project to the Class

Students will present their plans on the last day of class. A two-page infographic handout will be required. Presentation will be 15 minutes in length and will include time for questions.

Students will develop a slide deck and presentation consisting of a professional cover page, acknowledgement page, table of contents, executive summary, agency background, introduction, client background, description of the problem and program, evaluation purpose, evaluation questions, evaluation design, data collection plan, and potential limitations.

Group Process Reflection and Individual Effort

Each member will be evaluated by their peers to build individual accountability and effort in the evaluation group. Each student will complete an electronic survey. The ratings of fellow team members will be averaged and used to determine individual member grades based on adjustments to the plan grade.

B. Client Engagement - One Site Visit

Each student project team must make one visit to the client agency. Students must document the meeting agenda and the minutes of what transpired, action steps, person responsible for the action, and due dates. Teams must also be attuned to interactions with clients and critically reflect on issues such as cultural competency/humility, ethics, and power. Only one team member should upload the documents to Canvas. A team is allowed to make more than one visit. However, only one report will be accepted for grading purposes. This report should be between 2-4 double-spaced pages in length.

C. Program Specification and Logic Model

This assignment will familiarize you with the client's program as well as other programs with similar needs and projected outcomes. This written assignment requires obtaining written material from the client that describes the program and, specifically, a logic model. If the client has an existing logic model, critique the logic model for SMART language and specific outcomes. If the client does not have a logic model, develop a logic model in order to articulate the program's theory of change. The logic model will include separate columns for problem, inputs, activities, outputs, and short- and long- term outcomes. The logic model will be formatted on one page using concise "SMART" language.

Separately, the team will conduct a brief literature review (double-spaced and approximately 6 pages) to identify previous evaluation efforts of similar programs. Additionally, the review will include relevant theories, curriculums, and/or research that inspired the development of the model/program. Include a Reference/Resource page to identify published references (theorists, research studies) and other source materials (i.e. program handbooks, interviews with program staff) used in the development of the model.

D. Individual Activities

Students will complete individual in-class assignments each week that extend classroom instruction through applied learning skill-building. Assignments will be marked as either Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory / Not Completed. Students receiving a majority of Satisfactory marks will receive full credit for Individual Activities. Students receiving a majority of Unsatisfactory marks will receive half

credit for Individual Activities. Students receiving a majority of Not Completed marks, without an excused reason for such, will receive no credit for Individual Activities.

E. Class Participation

Students are expected to attend every class session; come on time; read / complete out-of-class learning: readings, film, and internet podcasts; and participate in class discussions and exercises. Participation and class attendance are professional responsibilities. They are critical elements of this class and essential to its effectiveness. It is important to be prepared to discuss assigned readings and to share experiential knowledge. To maximize individual and group learning, attendance and participation are expected. If you are unable to attend a session, please communicate with me in advance. Class handouts will be posted on Canvas. Your participation grade will be based on your:

1. Attendance;
2. Active participation in class and small group discussions – laptops should be brought to EVERY class;
3. Ability to discuss ideas with colleagues in a respectful manner;
4. Ability to engage in reflective learning;
5. Sharing of examples from your experiences (field placement and others), current events, or literature related to course topics

Please Note: The instructor reserves the right to adjust any aspect of the syllabus as needed, including, but not limited to, readings and assignment descriptions.



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