Methods of Program Evaluation: Winter 2017

Course Number: SW685 (Thursday 2 – 5pm)
Credits: 3 credits
Pre-req: SW522 or permission of instructor

Faculty Contact Information
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Office: 3848 School of Social Work

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.

Instructor Teaching Approach
Multiple methods will be used to support an engaged active learning environment: mini-lectures, in-class work sessions, data visualization practices, analysis labs, report editing sessions, community client meetings, instructor consultations, role plays, and small group sessions. Students will use Canvas course folders to access readings, articles, shared databases, and other resources. Assignments will be submitted on Canvas.

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.

Community Project, Michigan Engaging Community through the Classroom
The course will use a project-based integrative learning approach. This term, students will work in teams to apply course content to a local community-based program evaluation project that aligns with their practice area of interest.

Students can select the MECC multi-disciplinary evaluation project in Traverse City to improve affordable workforce housing. Students will be expected to participate in the trip to Traverse City (leave A2 Feb 9th 5pm and return to A2 Feb 11th 3 pm). Transportation, housing and meals will be provided.

MECC students will participate in a monthly seminar with students from other schools to collaborate on the project. Seminar 6pm – 7:30pm. Jan 17 (with client), Feb 21, March 21 (with client), and April 11. Seminar location Ginsberg Center (corner of East and South U).

Themes
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:

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

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.
Assignments
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 and Analysis Activity (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. The data will be analyzed. Students will document the plan and activity using a two-page template.

Student-led Presentation/Consultations (20 points). Each project will be presented to the class. Students will present the status of the project, accomplishments, limitations, and challenges. The class will have an opportunity to interpret results, discuss the evaluation strategies, and provide consultation to the presenters.

Final Evaluation Report (30 points). Each student will submit an evaluation report using a professional report format or a series of slides (slidedoc). The report will include: overview of program, purpose of evaluation, methodology, results, and recommendations for improving the evaluation. Students are expected to use data visualization best practices.

RESOURCES


Other Text Resources


### Class Schedule, Topics, and Readings. *All article readings are available on Canvas.*

Link to the Wholey Text: *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*  

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Methods</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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| L1     | **Jan. 5**                                                                      | **Introductions, student expectations for course, syllabus review**  
**Program Evaluation careers, competencies and skills needed.**  
**Community-based project orientation**  
  
For each method listed, students will learn about the method, benefits, challenges, design, reliability, validity, sampling, collection and strategies to increase response rates, analysis applications and tests, reporting results using data visualization, and ethical and confidentiality issues. |
| L2     | **Jan. 12**                                                                      | **Project discovery and selection**  
**Screening Tool development for integrated health clinic**  
**Scope of Work, budget, gantt charts**  
  
Wholey Text Chapter 1: Planning and Designing Useful Evaluations. (Newcomer, K. & Hatry, H. and Wholey, J.)  
What is the Difference Between Evaluation and Research – and Why Do We Care? (Mathison, S.) In Fundamental Issues in Evaluation (Edited by Smith, N and Brandon, P., 2008)  
| L3     | **Jan. 19**                                                                      | **Client engagement and Cultural responsive evaluation**  
**Focus Groups**  
**Audio-recording of focus group Community Project Work Session**  
  
Wholey Text. Chapter 2: Analyzing and Engaging Stakeholders (Bryson, J, and Patton, M.)  
Wholey Text. Chapter 17. Focus Group Interviewing (Krueger, R. and Casey, M.)  
| L4     | **Jan. 26**                                                                      | **Client Meeting #1 to understand evaluation needs, develop scope of work, timelines, and work plan.**  
**Read: Managing to Outcomes Chapters 1 - 5** |


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<th>L5</th>
<th>Feb. 2</th>
<th><strong>Scope of Work</strong>&lt;br&gt;Due</th>
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|     |        | • Human subject protections, IRB  
|     |        | • **Customer Satisfaction Surveys**  
|     |        | • Community Project Work Session  
|     |        | Wholey Text. Chapter 12: Using Surveys (Newcomer, K. and Tripllett, T)  
|     |        | Wholey Text. Chapter 14: Collecting Data in the Field (Nightingale, D, and Rossman, S.)  

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<th>L6</th>
<th>Feb. 9</th>
<th><strong>TRIP to Traverse City</strong></th>
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|     |        | • **Most Significant Change Method, Stories as Hard Data**  
|     |        | • Community Project Work Session  
|     |        | Wholey Text Chapter 18: Using Stories in Evaluation (Krueger, R)  
|     |        | Content Analysis of Stories, on-line lecture by Rick Davies.  

| L7  | Feb. 16 | **Using Agency Records**  
|-----|---------|--------------------------|
|     |         | • **Using Trained Observer Ratings**  
|     |         | • Community Project Work Session  
|     |         | Wholey Text Chapter 11: Using Agency Records (Hatry, H.)  
|     |         | Wholey Text Chapter 13: Using Trained Observer Ratings (Berman, B., Brenman, J., and Vasquex, V.)  

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<tr>
<th>L8</th>
<th>Feb. 23</th>
<th><strong>Client Meeting #2: Activities to fulfill Scope of Work</strong>&lt;br&gt;Read: <strong>Managing to Outcomes Ideas Into Action</strong>, Castillo, Hunter, and Robinson essay</th>
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**March 2**  
*Winter Break – No Class*

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<th>L9</th>
<th>March 9</th>
<th><strong>Documentation of Data Collection and Analysis Activity</strong></th>
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|     |         | • **Key Informant Interviews**  
|     |         | • Community Project Work Session  
|     |         | • Student Presentations  
|     |         | Wholey Text Chapter 16: Conducting Semi-structured Interviews (Adams, W.)  
|     |         | Wholey Text Chapter 19: Qualitative Data Analysis (Rogers, P. and Goodrick, D.)  

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<th>L10</th>
<th>March 16</th>
<th><strong>Standard scales for assessment and outcome measurement</strong></th>
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|     |          | Wholey Text Chapter 5: Performance Measurement: Monitoring Program Outcomes (Poister, T)  
|     |          | Wholey Text. Chapter 6: Comparison Group Designs (Henry, G.)  


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<td>L11</td>
<td>March 23</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Community Project Work Session</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Student Presentations</strong></td>
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<td>L12</td>
<td>March 30</td>
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<td><strong>Community-level Indicators, Measuring Collective Impact</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Community Project Work Session</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Student Presentations</strong></td>
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<td>L13</td>
<td>April 6</td>
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<td><strong>Client Meeting #3: Final Deliverables and Closing Meeting</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Read:</strong> Managing to Outcomes Moore, Brantley and Schafer essays</td>
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<td>L14</td>
<td>April 13</td>
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<td><strong>Final Reports Due</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Program Evaluation Career Opportunities, continued learning</strong></td>
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