Course Number: SW685-001 (24691)
Course Title: Methods of Program Evaluation
Credits: 3
PreReq: SW522 or permission of instructor
Semester: Winter 2018
Instructor: Lydia Li, Ph.D. (lydiali@umich.edu; 3839 SSWB, 734-936-4850)
Office hour: By appointment
Meets: Thursday, 2-5 pm in 3816 SSWB

(I) COURSE STATEMENT

a. 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.

b. 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.
c. **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.

d. **Course Design:** This course will include a range of pedagogical methods--short lectures, participatory discussions, written assignments, student presentations, and experiential exercises. As this course will include a statistical lab component, students will gain proficiency in performing statistical analyses for evaluation assignments.

e. **Curricular Themes:**
   *Theme Relation to Multiculturalism & 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.

f. **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.

g. **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 intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self knowledge and self awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

(II) **CLASS REQUIREMENTS**

a. **Text and Class Materials**
   - **Additional readings** are either distributed as hard copies in class or available in Canvas.
   - If you want to review basic concepts in research methods. You can get this book: Rubin, A & Babbie, E. (2014). *Research Methods for Social Work*. Wadsworth/Thomson, from our library. There are many editions. Their content is pretty much the same, so any edition should be okay.
   - **Laptops** and **SPSS** are required. Bring your laptop to class and purchase SPSS 24 from the Computer Showcase ($42, see http://showcase.itcs.umich.edu/). If you do not bring a laptop to class, you can check one out at the computer desk inside the Atrium but be forewarned that these laptops are slow and may not have the latest version of SPSS.
   - On-line tutorial for using SPSS: [http://libguides.library.kent.edu/SPSS/home](http://libguides.library.kent.edu/SPSS/home) and [https://stats.idre.ucla.edu/spss/modules/](https://stats.idre.ucla.edu/spss/modules/)

b. **Assignments and Grading Criteria**

   (1) **Discussion based on two program evaluation reports (10%)**
   We will use two evaluation reports (Start Strong and Teen Action; find them in a folder in Files, Canvas) as the basis to learn about the process, concepts and skills in conducting program evaluation. During the weeks between Jan 11 and Jan 25,
students are asked to post a response (to questions posted by the instructor on Canvas-Discussion) to topics of the week prior to coming to the corresponding class, based on the two evaluation reports. Grading criteria include: (a) critical thinking, thoroughness (all topics and relevant questions are addressed), and timely submission (before the corresponding class begins).

(2) Conducting data analysis and writing a program evaluation report

We will use the data from the Start Strong program evaluation to learn how to conduct quantitative data analysis and write a program evaluation report. Each student will use descriptive and regression analyses, respectively, to answer two or more evaluations questions. You are asked to turn in a hard copy of 2-4 evaluation questions for this assignment to the instructor on Feb. 8. Three written products, described below, have to be submitted.

(2A) Descriptive analysis (10%. Due Feb 22)

For 2A, students will:
1. Formulate one or more evaluation questions suitable to be answered using descriptive analysis (univariate, bivariate or multivariate analysis.)
2. Perform the analysis
3. Write a report with the following sections
   o Evaluation questions
   o Evaluation methodology
     ▪ Research design (what type of design was used? Describe.)
     ▪ Data collection (how were data collected? Schedule? By whom?)
     ▪ Instruments (what tools are used to collect data? what was collected? Using what measures? How’s the validity and reliability of the measures?)
     ▪ Sample (Who provided information? How were they selected? How was the group chosen if using comparison or control group? Representativeness of the sample?)
     ▪ Data analysis (How were data analyzed?)
   o Findings (present results of the analysis organized by evaluation questions)
   o Appendix: attach the output of your analysis (for the instructor’s reference)

(2B) Regression analysis (10%. Due March 22)

Again, students will formulate one or more evaluation questions that can be answered using linear or logistic regression, and then perform the analysis. The report can build on the one already done for 2A. Just add relevant elements under each section appropriately (e.g., you certainly will have ‘new’ evaluation
question. If you have ‘new’ variables for 2B analysis, then add that to Instrument. Or if the sample size changes for 2B due to attrition or missing data, you may want to clarify that in Sample.)

(2C) Program evaluation report (40%. Due April 5)

The report is a formal version combining 2A and 2B. Please refer to the handout: Guidelines for program evaluation report.

(3) Qualitative mini-project (30%, deliverables due at different time points. See handout: Instruction for Qualitative Mini-Project)

You will form a team of 2-4 persons to conduct a small study using qualitative methods. Your team will identify a question suitable for using qualitative methods, develop a research plan, conduct interviews/observations, manage and analyze data, and report findings to the class. Class time will be used for the team to plan the study and prepare the presentation, but you will need outside class time to carry out various tasks related to the study.

Summary of assignments and due dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% of final grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 11, 18 &amp; 25</td>
<td>Critique of 2 research reports (respond to questions posted on Canvas-Discussion)</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 25</td>
<td>Qualitative mini-project research plan (each team submits one copy via Assignment, Canvas)</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 8</td>
<td>2-4 evaluation questions for data analysis assignments (had copy submitted in class)</td>
<td>Not graded</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 22</td>
<td>Descriptive analysis report (submit via Assignment)</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>Qualitative interview transcripts (each team submits one set via Assignment)</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 22</td>
<td>Regression analysis report (via Assignment)</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 5</td>
<td>Program evaluation report (via Assignment)</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 12</td>
<td>Presentation of qualitative project (each team submits one set of powerpoint slides via Assignment)</td>
<td>20</td>
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</table>
Grading Scale
Grading will be rigorous but fair. Grades are determined by academic performance, not effort. This table presents the minimum percentage required for each grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>(94)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>(87)</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>(77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>(90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>(84)</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>(74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>(80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>(70)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(III) ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

a. Role of Instructor and Students: The instructor will facilitate critical thinking and constructive student participation during class. She will be available out of the classroom by appointment to discuss assignments and answer questions with individual students. She will provide feedback on students’ written assignments and return them in a timely manner, usually within 7-10 days after submission.

All students are expected to arrive on time and stay throughout all class sessions. If you have to miss a session, please notify the instructor via email in advance whenever possible. We will have many in-class activities and your active participation is greatly needed. It is your responsibility to get materials, handouts, or class notes from your fellow classmates if you are unable to be in class. Full attendance and active participation will help boost up your final grade.

Students are also expected to submit all assignments on time. If you cannot meet assignment deadlines, please discuss the problems with the instructor well in advance. A half-grade down will be applied to late submissions that have not received permission from the instructor. Incomplete is usually not granted except under very extenuating circumstances.

b. Accommodations/ Health and Wellness Services: If you have a disability or impairment that requires an accommodation, please contact the instructor within two weeks after the class starts to discuss what modifications are necessary. Any information you give will be treated as private and confidential. For more information and resources, please contact the Office of Student Services (OSS) at the School of Social Work (you can email Ms. Nyshourn Price: ndp@umich.edu). If religious/spiritual observances conflict with section attendance or due dates for assignments, please notify the instructor within two weeks after the class starts to discuss appropriate arrangements.
The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of all students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact:

- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (734) 764-8312
  The SSW embedded CAPS Counselor is Meghan Shaughnessy-Mogill, LLMSW. She is dedicated to supporting the wellbeing of social work students and the SSW community and offers short-term, solution-focused individual therapy. All services are free and confidential. Contact her at (734) 763-7894 or via email at mshaughm@umich.edu.
- University Health Service (UHS) at (734) 764-8320

The SSW Office of Student Services’ Health and Wellness Program provides supportive services to MSW students which promote wellness, self care and maintenance of a healthy academic and mental health balance, as well as to increase disability awareness. Please contact the Health and Wellness Program at ssw.wellness@umich.edu

c. **Safety & Emergency Preparedness**: In the event of an emergency, dial 9-1-1 from any cell phone or campus phone.

All University of Michigan students, faculty and staff are required to familiarize themselves with emergency procedures and protocols for both inside and outside of the classroom. In the event of possible building closure (i.e. severe weather conditions, public health notices, etc.) you may contact (734)764-SSWB(7793) for up-to-date School closure information.

Be Prepared. Familiarize yourself with the emergency card posted next to the phone in every classroom/meeting room. Review the information on the emergency evacuation sign (located nearest the door) and locate at least (2) emergency exits nearest the classroom.

If you are concerned about your ability to exit the building in the case of an emergency, contact the Office of Student Services and/or email ssw-ADAcompliance@umich.edu.
Office of Student Services
School of Social Work | Room 1748
734-936-0961

For more information view the annual Campus Safety Statement at [http://www.dpss.umich.edu/](http://www.dpss.umich.edu/).
d. **Teaching Evaluations:** Students are strongly encouraged to complete teaching evaluations at the end of each term. Teaching evaluations are administered via Canvas and will be emailed to students during the last week of classes. Student identity is completely anonymous, and instructors cannot view evaluation reports until after grades are submitted.

e. **Proper Use of Names and Pronouns:** All students will be referred to by the names and pronouns they use (e.g. she, they, ze, he). If you have a name that differs from the one that appears on the roster, please inform the instructor before the second class period so that she uses your correct name and pronouns.

f. **Writing Assistance:**

*School of Social Work Career Services:* Tutoring and writing assistance for social work courses is available at the School of Social Work Career Services Office located in 1696 SSWB. To schedule an appointment, email the office staff at ssw-cso@umich.edu. The Career Services Office also offers workshops, resources and individual assistance to help improve skills and confidence in written communication.

*Sweetland Writing Center:* The Sweetland Writing Center is a campus resource to which you have access. Graduate students are eligible for seven sessions per semester. They can help you develop your argument, improve your paper organization, correct grammar mistakes, and craft effective prose. SWC is located at 1310 North Quad (corner of W. Washington and State St.) You can register with them on line and schedule an appointment: Website: [http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/)

*APA formatting:* Your papers or presentations should utilize APA formatting. Review the MLibrary APA Citation Guide ([http://guides.lib.umich.edu/c.php?g=282964&p=1885441](http://guides.lib.umich.edu/c.php?g=282964&p=1885441)) as needed. The Purdue Owl website ([https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/)) is another helpful resource for assistance with APA formatting.

g. **Honor Code:** Academic integrity should not be taken lightly. In particular, *be aware of plagiarism*—representing someone else’s words, statements, ideas or works as one’s own without proper acknowledgement or citation—is a serious violation of academic integrity and will be grounds for failure on an assignment and other disciplinary action as described under the School’s policies on academic and professional conduct: [http://ssw.umich.edu/msw-student-guide/section/1.12.00](http://ssw.umich.edu/msw-student-guide/section/1.12.00). Another helpful resource can be found at: [http://guides.lib.umich.edu/swintegrity](http://guides.lib.umich.edu/swintegrity)

Note that using Web resources increases the risk of “accidental plagiarism.” Do not let that happen.
### IV. CLASS SCHEDULE

(Subject to change. Any change will be announced via Canvas.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic &amp; content</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Jan 11 | Eleven steps of program evaluation  
-Step 1: engage the stakeholders  
-Step 2: understand the program  
-Step 3: define purpose & scope  
-Step 4: specify questions  
3. (Royce et al., 2010). Measurement tools and strategies.  
4. (CDC, 2008). Focus groups.  
| Jan 18 | -Step 6: create data collection action plan  
-Step 7: collect data                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                         | -Qualitative team meeting: develop data collection plan & interviewing guide         |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>References</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Jan 25 | -Step 8: analyze data  
-Step 9: present findings  
-Step 10: draw conclusion & recommendation  
2. CDC (2009). Disseminating program achievement and evaluation findings to garner support.  
| Feb 1  | Quantitative data analysis  
-Understand Start Strong dataset  
-Descriptive analysis: univariate & bivariate  
-Use graphs, charts and tables  
-Construct scale & index  
| Feb 8  | -Level of measurement and statistical analysis  
-Hypothesis testing  
-t-test, ANOVA, chi-square  
-Effect size | | -Prepare for Descriptive analysis assignment  
-Team: all interviews done |
<p>| Feb 22 | -Testing of mediating effects | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 8</td>
<td>-Logistic regression analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>-Logistic regression analysis</td>
<td>-Prepare for Regression analysis assignment</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>-Qualitative team: all interviews transcribed</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 29</td>
<td>Qualitative data analysis 2</td>
<td>-Regression analysis report due</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 5</td>
<td>Prepare for qualitative mini-project presentation</td>
<td>-Qualitative team: analysis of qualitative data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 12</td>
<td>Presentation of qualitative mini-project</td>
<td>-Program evaluation report due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>