I. 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.

II. 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 populations at risk, including people of color, women, the poor, people with a disability and people of a different 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.

III. 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.

IV. Course Design

The course will use multiple pedagogical methods—short lectures, participatory discussions, written assignments, student presentations, and experiential exercises. Guest speakers may be invited to address special topics.

V. Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes

1. Multiculturalism and Diversity: Students will develop the capacity to identify ways in which gender, race, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, age, and other forms of social stratification and disenfranchisement 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.

2. 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 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.

3. 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 risk of onset of problems and promote healthy development.

4. 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.
VI. Role of Instructor and Students

The instructor will encourage critical thinking and participation of students in discussions. She will be available by appointment and during office hours to discuss questions and assignments.

Students will attend class, complete readings/assignments and participate in class discussions and experiential exercises. If a student has problems with attending class or meeting deadlines for assignments, she or he is expected to discuss these problems promptly with the instructor. Failure to attend class regularly or complete an assignment when it is due will result in decreased grade points (5 points for each infraction).

VII. Discussions, Presentations, Mid-Term Examination, Written Assignments and Grading Criteria

1. Beginning with the second week of class, two students will be required to lead the discussion for weekly readings. Note: All students are expected to read the weekly readings and contribute to discussions. Students will sign up for their topic of interest on the 1st day of class. Note: Students are expected to be scholarly and creative in leading these discussions. For example, students in a prior class summarized weekly readings in PowerPoint presentations and used web resources to expand readings. Students also implemented role plays and short quizzes for their discussant roles. Students are encouraged to refer to the textbook for exercises and questions to use in discussions. (10 points for discussant role)

2. Students will be required to present an oral presentation on their evaluation proposal during the last two class days. Students are encouraged to use PowerPoint for these oral presentations that will include the research question(s)/goals, methods (sampling, evaluation design, data collection, measures), analysis plan, strengths and limitations of the evaluation proposal. (10 points for oral presentation)

3. Students will be required to take a mid-term classroom examination. This short answer examination will cover key concepts and occur on October 19. The professor will provide students with a study guide in advance to prepare for this midterm exam. (40 points for in-class exam)

4. Students will be required to write an Evaluation Proposal valued at 40 points; this scholarly proposal will be written in two parts (20 points for part 1; 20 points for part 2). This assignment aims to provide students with methods and skills of social work evaluation as well as professional proposal writing skills in evaluating practice/policies.

   Part 1: This part of the evaluation proposal focuses on the evaluation problem/program specification, literature review and measurement. It is due on November 2nd in class.

   1) Evaluation Problem/program Specification. Working with your field instructor, identify and select a problem/program within the agency for evaluation. Note: If
you are no longer in placement, identify and select a problem/program that you would like to evaluate in the future.

a. Identify the specific evaluation research question(s) you plan to address in your evaluation.
b. List the goals and objectives for the problem/program.
c. Specify the client and/or system conditions that the problem/ program attempts to address.
d. Design a logic model for the evaluation problem/program that includes:
   1. Inputs/resources
   2. Activities you will undertake to address the problem.
   3. Short-term and long-term outcomes with a rationale for why these outcomes are expected to occur.
e. Identify stakeholders in the evaluation and explain their involvement in the evaluation process.

Note: Estimated number of pages for a-e is 4-5 double-spaced word processed pages.

2) Literature Review. Conduct and summarize a selective and critical review of the empirical literature on the problem/program; attach a list of references used for writing this review (Estimated number of pages for review is 3-4 double spaced word processed pages).

(MAXIMUM number of text pages for Part 1 is nine).

NOTE: The instructor will give feedback to students and allow them to revise this section of the proposal, which students will resubmit with Part 2.

Part 2: This part of the evaluation proposal focuses on the research design, analysis plan, references and abstracts. Students are required to submit Part 2 of the proposal on December 7th. For this final submission, students are expected to submit Part 1 (with or without revisions) and Part 2 as a single document.

1) Research Design: Evaluation Research Question(s) and Specific Design
a. Identify the specific research design you will use to address the question(s) in Part 1. That is, what specific design (e.g. survey research, pre, quasi or true experimental design) you will use to evaluate the problem/program you have described under Part 1?
b. If you are using a pre-, quasi- or true experimental design, draw a diagram of your design. Address how you will form the research groups you need to carry out the design of your evaluation, i.e., will you use random assignment to place participants in groups?
c. Address the strengths and limitations of your design in answering the research question(s). That is, how are you able to address threats to internal validity (e.g., selection, maturation, dropout) using your design?

(Estimated number of pages for a-c is 2-3 double spaced word processed pages).
2) **Research Design:** Sample Design and selection (Hint: Sample selection not Random assignment)
   a. What type of sample will you used—probability or nonprobability?
   b. What inclusionary criteria will you use for selecting participants?
   c. How will you recruit, contact, and retain participants?
   d. How will you address problems of low participation and attrition?
   e. How will you protect the rights of participants such as ethical issues of informed consent, voluntary participation, protection of sensitive data, etc.

   *(Estimated number of pages for a-e is 2-3 double spaced word processed pages).*

3) **Measurement.** Discuss the conceptualization and operationalization of your measures for the problem/program. Identify an instrument/measure that you might use in evaluating the problem/program. Discuss the populations/samples upon whom the instrument was developed and standardized, including statistical information and documentation on reliability and validity of the instrument.

   **NOTE:** If you cannot find an established instrument/measure in the literature and decide to construct your own, you are required to provide sample items and state how you will address reliability and validity issues. *(Estimated number of pages for this part is 1-2 double-spaced word processed pages).*

4) **Analysis Plan**
   This analysis plan should be linked to the evaluation research questions, goals and objectives of the problem/program as well as linked to the evaluation design including measurement. Students are expected to describe the appropriate statistical techniques for analyzing data on sample descriptive measures and outcomes measures. Students may also summarize their analysis plan in table format by describing all measures and their level of measurement in addition to specifying the appropriate statistical techniques.

   *(Estimated number of pages is 1-2 double spaced word processed pages).*

5) **References (minimum of 10) and abstract (maximum of 250 words in this format: Purpose, Design and Methods, Expected Results, and Implications for Practice and Policy).**

Students are expected to write the text, citations and references for their proposal using the 5th Edition of the American Psychological (APA) style. They are required to use headings from the guidelines of the proposal for their proposal's text.
VII. Summary and Dates of Written Assignments and Grading Scale

- **Mid-Term classroom examination on key concepts on October 19th**
- Part 1 of Evaluation Proposal due November 2nd in class
- Part 2 of Evaluation Proposal due December 7th in class

Grading will be rigorous but fair. Grades are determined by academic performance, not effort. The grading scale is as follows:

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>91-94</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>86-90</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-85</td>
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<tr>
<td>B -</td>
<td>76-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>72-75</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 70</td>
<td>not passing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VII. Required Textbook


NOTE: All journal articles are posted as PDF files on CTools. Textbook is on reserve in the School of Social Work Library.

VIII. Dates of classes

- Sept 7, 14, 21, 28
- Oct 5, 12, 19, 26
- Nov 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
- Dec 7

Note: Bold denotes dates of mid-term examination and proposal submission.

Course Topics and Required Readings

Session 1: September 7

**Topic: Introductions and Course Overview**

1. What is social work evaluation?
2. What is a program?
3. Why should social workers do evaluations?
4. What is the role of social workers as evaluators?
5. What is the role of stakeholders in evaluations?

Articles:


Textbook Readings:

Video: An example of a program
Exercise (Optional): Involving Stakeholders in Evaluation

Session 2: September 14

Topic: Ethical Issues, Values and Cultural Issues in Evaluation

Articles:

Textbook Readings:

Handout: Reading on Sampling for Session 7, October 19.

Session 3: September 21

Topic: Conceptualizing/Specifying Program Evaluations

Articles:

Textbook Readings:

**Session 4: September 28**

**Topic: Needs Assessment in Evaluation**

Articles:

Textbook Readings:

Guest speaker invited on this date.

**Session 5: October 5**

**Topic: Measurement Issues in Evaluation**

Articles:
Textbook Readings:

Video & Exercise: Measuring Success: The Golden Girls’ Program

Session 6: October 12

Topic: Formative and Process Evaluation

Articles:

Textbook Readings:

Guest speaker (Dana Bright, MSW, Blueprint for Aging Initiative) invited on this date.

Session 7: October 19

Mid-Term classroom examination – First Half of Class
NOTE: No discussants for this week.

Topic: Sampling in Evaluation


Textbook Readings:

Session 8: October 26
**Topic: Program Monitoring and Improvements in Evaluation**

**Articles:**

**Textbook Readings:**

**Session 9: November 2**

**Topic: Conceptualizing/Specifying Outcomes in Evaluation**

**Articles:**

**Textbook Readings:**

**Part 1 of proposal due on this date.**
Session 10: November 9

Topic: Benefit-Cost Analysis in Evaluation

Articles:

Textbook Readings:

Guest speaker invited on this date.

Session 11: November 16

Topic: Analysis, Dissemination and Utilization of Knowledge in Evaluation

Textbook Readings:

Session 12: November 23
Guest speaker(s) invited for this day.

Session 13: November 30
Student Presentations

Session 14: December 7
Student Presentations
Proposal (Part 2) due on this date.