COURSE TITLE: Evaluation in Social Work
COURSE NUMBER: 683
SECTION NUMBER: Tuesday, 8am - 12pm
CREDIT HOURS: 3
PREREQUISITES: SW 522 or permission of instructor

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Phone: (402) 202-3519
Office Hours: Tuesday 12-1 and 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. 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. Understand what program evaluation is and why it is important.
2. Identify and choose the type of evaluation that is appropriate to answer questions consonant with a program’s developmental stage.
3. Recognize and apply evaluation and data collection methods that are appropriate to the evaluation context.
4. Plan and carry out an evaluation of social work practice with confidence.

**Theme Relation to 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 is critical to evaluation of social work interventions, attention to diversity is imperative for proper implementation of evaluation in social work contexts.

**Theme Relation to 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.

**Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation:** 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.

**Theme Relation to 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 to SW Ethics and Values:** This course will emphasize the relationship of the NASW'S 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'S Code of Ethics and other ethical codes governing evaluation research such as the Nuremberg Code, Declaration of Helsinki, 1974 National Research Act (PL93-348) and the 1996 Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

**Intensive Focus on 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 toward social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural
frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self knowledge and self awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

**Attendance/Participation**

Students are expected to attend all lectures. Students are expected to participate in the following course activities: small group projects, computer lab sessions, mock exercises, and mini-lectures. Please speak to me as soon as possible if you need to be absent from lecture for any reason.

**Grading System**

Grades are earned by successfully completing the work on the assignments, demonstrating understanding of the evaluation concepts, attending and participating in class. A 100-point system is used.

A grade of A reflects excellent work that demonstrates mastery of content, demonstrates critical thinking, and/or is creative in approach. A grade of B reflects work which meets the basic requirements of the assignment. A grade of C reflects minimal grasp of the assignment, poor organization of ideas, and/or significant areas of improvement. A grade of D reflects serious problems with all aspects of the assignment.

At the end of the term, the numerical grades earned for each written assignment will be translated into letter grades according to the following formula:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>94-96</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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**Special Needs / Academic Honesty**

Students with specialized learning needs are requested to make an appointment with the instructor to discuss the necessary arrangements as soon as possible. Please review the Student Guide section on Ethical Conduct in the University Environment. This section addresses plagiarism, harassment and discrimination policies. Students are expected to complete assignments on their own.

**Class Resources**

There is no required text for this course. However, the following text is recommended:


I will list optional readings from this text each class session that correspond to the topics we cover. If you want a more in-depth perspective on the topics we cover or if you want to own a program evaluation textbook, this is the best I have seen.
It is available on reserve at Shapiro Undergraduate Library, for sale at Ulrich’s, or online at half.com.

Each session will have required readings available on CTOOLS, although not all of the listed readings for each session are required. For several of the class sessions you will be able to choose the readings that most interest you.

**Web Sites**
- Michigan Association for Evaluation: [http://maeval.org](http://maeval.org)

**Assignments**
The assignments for this course have two goals: 1) for you to leave the course at the end of the term feeling like you understand what program evaluation is and 2) for you to feel confident in your ability to conduct a basic program evaluation on your own.

**Assignment 1: Evaluation Memos (worth 20% of your grade)**

We are going to be discussing several types of evaluations in this class. For four of those types of evaluations (needs assessment, process evaluation, outcome evaluation, and participatory evaluation), you are going to read a short article about an actual evaluation and answer a set of questions about what took place. These memos do not need to be in the form of a paper – rather, you can number the questions in a word document and respond to each of them with a few sentences (or one sentence, in some cases!). Because you will be doing this before we actually talk about the type of evaluation in question, I will not be “grading” these for right or wrong answers. Rather, you will get full credit for handing in a memo in which you have made a reasonable effort to answer the questions. Each memo is worth 5% of your final grade.

**Due Dates:**
- Needs Assessment – May 18
- Process Evaluation – June 1
- Outcome Evaluation – June 8
- Participatory Evaluation – June 15

**Assignment 2: Evaluation Interview (worth 30% of your grade)**

This assignment provides you with the opportunity to conduct a real program evaluation interview. Dr. Sandra Danziger and Sue Ann Savas, MSW, are evaluating the Family Success Program, which is a program at Starfish Family Services in Inkster. This program works with low-income parents in the Inkster area to achieve success in employment, housing, child-care, transportation, and
other areas of their lives. For this assignment, you and a partner will conduct an interview with a Family Success Program participant, either at the respondent’s home or at Starfish Family Services in Inkster. If you are uncomfortable with this assignment or unable to participate for any reason, please come and speak with me ASAP and I will give you an alternative assignment. Upon completion of the interview, you will get full credit for handing in a one-page (double spaced) reflection of your experience. The memo is due by the last day of class (July 20).

Assignment 3: Evaluation Proposal & Presentation (worth 55% of your grade)

This assignment is broken down into parts, with a component due every few weeks. The point of doing it this way is twofold: first, so you don’t feel overwhelmed at the end of the semester with a large final project, and second, so you can get my feedback on each part before you submit it at the end of the term. Your final paper will thus be a collection of the previous assignments you have turned in. Each individual component is worth 5% and the final paper is worth 30%.

Agency and Program Memo (worth 5%) – Due May 25
Working with your field instructor, identify a social problem and a program and/or a service within the agency for evaluation. Note: If you are no longer in a placement, identify and select a social problem, a program and/or a service that you would like to evaluate in the future. The memo should be between 1 and 2 double spaced pages.

• Describe the social problem on which you will focus for this project. This description can be brief, since you will be describing it in more depth in the literature review.
• Describe the agency and program on which you will focus for this project.
  o How long has the agency been around? How long has the specific program been around?
  o How is the program funded? What is its approximate budget?
  o What does the staffing structure look like?
  o What kinds of services does the program provide?
  o What clients are targeted for the program? How is eligibility determined?
  o What is the theory behind this particular intervention? In other words, according to the program, why does this problem occur (and why will the particular intervention be effective)?

Problem Definition and Literature Review (worth 5%) – Due June 8
Conduct and summarize a selective and critical review of the empirical literature on the social problem in question. Use at least 5 sources from peer-reviewed journals, books, research reports, or data from the Census Bureau, Kids Count, or other relevant agencies. This should be between 3-4 double spaced pages.
• Describe what the problem is, its prevalence, the population it affects, and at least two theories on why it occurs.
• Describe at least two interventions that have been cited in the literature as effective for this particular social problem.

Logic Model and Evaluation Plan (worth 5%) – Due June 22
The one-page logic model will include, at a minimum, (1) a description of clients and system conditions that led to the need for the program, (2) major program components, (3) detailed activities, and (4) expected client outcomes. You can use any of the types of logic models provided (Sue Ann’s examples, the Kellogg Foundation examples, or something else that you have found).

For the evaluation plan, identify what type of evaluation you plan to conduct for your final proposal and why this particular type of evaluation is appropriate for the program and/or social problem. Identify the key stakeholders to include in the planning process and the key evaluation questions you seek to answer. Identify the participants you plan to recruit, the methods you plan to use (qualitative or quantitative), and your strategy for sampling, recruitment, and retention (2-3 pages).

Data Collection Tools (worth 5%) – Due July 6
For this component, you will both design a data collection tool and identify a standardized evaluation tool created by a third party.

• You will design a survey, interview protocol, focus group script or observation tool for your project in accordance with the project evaluation plan described above.
• You will find at least one standardized program evaluation tool from the literature that is appropriate for your particular project.

Final Program Evaluation Plan (worth 25%) - Due July 20
Students will design a 10-page evaluation plan for the program specified above. You will already have written most of this plan in the previous four parts of the assignment, so much of it will be cut and paste. The final plan will include:

• Purpose of the evaluation
• Literature Review
• Logic model
• Type of evaluation planned and key evaluation questions
• Research Design – Qualitative or Quantitative - strengths and limitations of the design
• Participants, including sample, recruitment, retention, and protection of participants
• Data Collection, including standardized measures (if used) or your own (if used)
• Analysis plan, including the appropriate statistical technique if relevant

Presentation of Final Evaluation Plan (worth 5%) - July 20
Students will present their evaluation plan to the class on the final day of the term. This is an informal presentation and is graded based on completion.

Schedule (subject to change if necessary)

May 11
Topics: Overview of the course; what is evaluation and why should we care about it; what is a program; ethics in program evaluation.
Assignments Due: None.
Readings: None.
Optional Readings: Ethics in evaluation from UM’s Institutional Review Board; Royce, Thyer, and Padgett Chapter 2

May 18
Topics: Needs Assessment and Evaluation Planning
Assignments Due: Evaluation Memo #1
Readings: Choose ONE of the following readings on needs assessment, although you can read more than one if you would like. Each reading provides an example of a needs assessment for you to use when writing Evaluation Memo #1.


Optional Readings: Royce, Thyer, and Padgett Chapter 3

May 25
Topics: Logic models; Evaluation Design
Assignments Due: Agency and Program Memo
Readings:

Sample logic models provided by Sue Ann Savas.

**Optional Readings:** Royce, Thyer, and Padgett Chapter 5

**June 1**

**Topics:** Formative and Process Evaluation; Program Monitoring  
**Assignments Due:** Evaluation Memo #2  
**Readings:** Choose ONE of the following readings on a formative / process evaluation, although you can read more than one if you would like. Each reading provides an example of a formative/process evaluation for you to use when writing Evaluation Memo #2.


**Optional Readings:** Royce, Thyer, and Padgett Chapter 5

**June 8**

**Topics:** Outcome Evaluation; Single Case Method; Cost Benefit Evaluation  
**Assignments Due:** Evaluation Memo #3; Literature Review  
**Readings:** Choose ONE of the following readings on an outcome evaluation, although you can read more than one if you would like. Each reading provides an example of an outcome evaluation for you to use when writing Evaluation Memo #3.


Optional Readings: Royce, Thyer, and Padgett Chapters 6 & 10

June 15
Topics: Participatory evaluation; Research Methods Review
Assignments Due: Evaluation Memo #4
Readings: Choose ONE of the following readings on participatory evaluation, although you can read both if you would like. Each reading provides an example of a participatory evaluation for you to use when writing Evaluation Memo #4.


Optional Readings: Royce, Thyer, and Padgett Chapters 8, 9, 11, and 12

June 22
Topics: Quantitative Methods & Analysis #1
Assignments Due: Logic Model / Evaluation Plan
Readings: Jess’s Review of Statistics, Part 1
Optional Readings: Royce, Thyer, and Padgett Chapter 14

June 29
Topics: Quantitative Methods & Analysis #2
Assignments Due: None
Readings: Jess’s Review of Statistics, Part 2
Optional Reading: Royce, Thyer, and Padgett Chapter 14

July 6
Topics: Qualitative Methods & Analysis
Assignments Due: Data Collection Tool Memo
Readings:


Optional Reading: Royce, Thyer, and Padgett Chapter 4
**July 13**  
**Topics:** Budgeting, Dissemination, and other Pragmatic Issues  
**Assignments Due:** None  
**Readings:**


**Optional Reading:** Royce, Thyer, and Padgett Chapters 13 & 15

**July 20**  
**Topics:** Student Presentations and Wrap Up  
**Assignments Due:** Final Paper Due / Student Presentations  
**Readings:** None – Work on final projects.  
**Optional Reading:** None