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 the social programs, and the systems that serve them. It will also address 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 theoretical foundations of the evaluation of social work practice with particular attention to populations at risk, including people of color, women, and gay and lesbian groups. 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 and their fit with the social context.

3. **Course Objectives:**

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and choose the type of evaluation most appropriate to the context and questions to be addressed.
2. Identify the process of program specification in the evaluation process.
3. Plan and critique the measurement, design, sampling, and analytic issues in evaluations.
4. Analyze issues of implementation and utilization in program evaluation.
5. Plan an evaluation of social work practice.
6. Identify the ethical issues present in the performance of program evaluations.
7. Identify, assess and address ways in which gender, race, ethnicity, social class, age and other forms of social stratification and disenfranchisement influence evaluation processes and outcomes.

4. **Course Design:**

A list of adjunct readings is attached, and may be supplemented by additional material at the discretion of the instructor. In addition, this course will incorporate a range of pedagogical methods, including participatory discussions, written assignments, and exercises related to course materials.

5. **Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes**

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity:** Students will develop the capacity to identify ways in which gender, race, ethnicity, social class, 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.
- **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. They will learn to develop services and programs that could plausibly serve these functions. Participatory, collaborative, change-oriented evaluation processes 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 evaluation participants can mobilize to shift imbalances of power and resources.
- **Promotion and Prevention:** Students will develop the capacity to develop and evaluate prevention and promotion programs designed to reduce risk of onset of problems and promote healthy development.
- **Social Science.** Students will strengthen their capacity to use social science literature, both research based and theoretical, to develop appropriate interventions and evaluations that are feasible, relevant and scientifically sound.

6. **Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:**

Ethical standards of social work practice (the NASW Code of Ethics) and evaluation practice (The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation’s Program Evaluation Standards) will be used to review issues commonly confronted in the evaluation.

7. **Source Materials:**

A. **Basic Resource Materials**


B. Substantive Texts


**Course Assignments and Expectations**

Students are expected to complete all assigned reading prior to the class for which it is assigned, and to use the reading as a basis for informed participation in class discussions. Students are expected to submit their work on schedule, and students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes unless there is a legitimate reason for absence or tardiness. Legitimate absences include those due to health conditions, family emergencies, and observance of religious holy days. Any such absence should be discussed with the instructor.

Course expectations include completion of four assignments plus class participation, weighted in the following manner:

1. **Program Specification:** Due 10/4/01 20 points
2. **Measurement Critique:** Due 10/25/01 10 points
3. **Sampling and Design Plan:** Due 11/15/01 10 points
4. **Final paper:** Due 12/5/01 50 points
5. **Class Participation** Ongoing 10 points

1. **Program Specification:** (20 points). Work with their field instructor to select a program problem and to answer questions about the program, including: Who are the clients? What is the system or condition the program attempts to address? How would you describe the major program components, including the assumptions, theoretical basis, empirical basis, and practice rationale? What are the goals and objectives of the program? How would you describe the major program processes and/or activities? What are the expected immediate and long-term outcomes of the program, and what is your explanation for why these are expected to occur?

2. **Measurement Critique:** (10 points). Identify an instrument that could be used to evaluate the program described in assignment one. Discuss the theory used to develop the instrument, the population on whom it was developed, the steps taken to ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument, and its directness, reactivity, sensitivity to change, and ease of administration in the program or agency that is of relevance to you.

3. **Sampling and Design Plan:** (10 points). Identify a research design and sampling plan or procedure for use in the evaluation of the program described in the first assignment. The research design section should include a description of the research design, and how you would form the research groups (e.g., experimental and control). You should discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the chosen research design in terms of its ability to answer the evaluation question under study. In the sampling section of this paper, identify the population of interest, and the sample, including the type of sample (e.g., random v. convenience), how this sampling technique would be implemented, and any anticipated problems with gathering the sample or with sample attrition.

4. **Final Paper:** (50 points). Building on the work you have already done, and utilizing readings and classroom activities, present a final evaluation proposal. The proposal should incorporate information from the program description, measurement, and design and sample papers already completed. Describe the major research questions, the assumptions of the proposed study, the probably data collection strategy, as well as the plan for data analysis. Additionally, discuss the limitations of the proposed study, as well as how program staff could be employed at each stage of the evaluation process.
At least two weeks before each assignment is due, a portion of the class time will be devoted to student questions. Every opportunity will be provided to answer questions and make this a painless and interesting educational experience. Assignments are due at the beginning of the designated class section, and late papers will be accepted only at the discretion of the instructor.

Because each assignment builds on previous assignments, students are encouraged to contact the instructor if they wish to discuss their ideas, especially prior to beginning the first assignment since that is the basis for all of the other assignment.

**Format:** All assignments must be typed, and double-spaced. Each page should be numbered, and proofread prior to submission. Please take pride in your work.

**Grading**

Each assignment will be awarded points, and the combined total will represent your final grade. The curve will be as follows: A+ = 98-100; A = 94-97; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 82-86; B- = 78-81; C+ = 75-77; C = 70-74; <70 = Not Passing. An A+ signifies work that exceeds the content of the course and the expertise that students are expected to master. Grades of A or A- are reserved for work which demonstrates very good mastery of content, and shows that the student has undertaken a complex task, applied critical thinking skills, and demonstrated creativity in approaching the assignment. The difference between these two grades is determined by the degree to which these skills have been demonstrated. A grade of B+ is given to work that is very good. This grade shows that the student has demonstrated a more than competent understanding of the material tested in the assignment. A grade of B is given to work that meets the basic requirements of the assignment and meets basic course expectations. A grade of B- denotes that the student’s performance is less than adequate on an assignment, and reflects only a moderate grasp of content and course expectations. Variations of the C grade reflect a minimal grasp of the assignment, poor organization of ideas, or several significant areas in need of improvement. Anything below a C is considered not passing. You must consistently foul things up in a significant way to fail this class. In any event, you have been given notice of my grading policies, and my expectations of you.
SYLLABUS

Session 1: Introduction/Class Overview/Social Context of Program Evaluation (9/6)

Session 2: Overview of Evaluation and the Ethics of Evaluation (9/13)

Basic Reading:

RFL: Chaps. 1, 2, 12

LaPolt, E.K. (1997). Ethical dilemmas in program evaluation and research design.


No class in celebration of the School’s 80th Anniversary (9/20)

Session 3: Needs Assessment (9/27)

Basic Reading:

RFL: Chap. 4: Assessing Program Need

Application:


Session 4: Programs and their Component Parts (10/4)

Basic Reading:

RFL: Chaps. 3, 5: Identifying Issues, Formulating Questions, Program Theory

Application:


Session 5: Measurement Issues in Program Evaluation (10/11)


Session 6: Program Monitoring and Improvement (10/18)

Basic Reading:

RFL: Chap. 6: Monitoring Program Process and Performance

Application:


Session 7: Outcome Evaluation (10/25)

Basic Reading:

RFL: Chap. 7: Strategies for Impact Assessment


**Session 8: Outcome Evaluation (11/1)**

**Basic Reading:**

RFL: Chap. 8: Randomized Design for Impact Assessment

**Application:**


**Session 9: Outcome Evaluation (11/8)**

**Basic Reading:**

RFL: Chaps. 9, 10: Quasi-Experimental and Reflexive Control Designs

**Application:**


Application:


No Class due to Thanksgiving (11/22)

Session 11: Cost-Benefit Analysis (11/29)

Basic Reading:

RFL: Chap. 11: Measuring Efficiency

Application:


Session 12: Implementing and Using Evaluations (12/5)


