Instructor: Mark Holter, MSSW., Ph.D., Assistant Professor  
3848 School of Social Work  
Classroom: Room 3816 SSWB  
Office Telephone: 763-9272  
E-mail: holter@umich.edu  
Office Hours: By appointment

Coursepack: A coursepack of all the readings in addition to the required text. (Both are available at Ulrich's)

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, including skills in computer assisted data management.

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 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 Project:**
The final paper will be in the form of a final evaluation report. Although the project will be done as a group (or in groups), each student will have identifiable responsibilities for drafting the report.

**Course Design**
The instructor will select required and recommended readings. In addition, the instructor will include a range of pedagogical methods, such as participatory discussions, written assignments, and experiential exercises related to course materials. Students will carry out appropriate evaluation tasks as assigned. Guest speakers may be invited to address special topics.

**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 process 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 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.
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.

Course Assignments and Expectations
Students are expected to complete all assigned reading assignments prior to the appropriate class and to use them as the basis for informed participation in class discussions. It is expected that students will submit work on schedule. Failure to meet these expectations may result in reduction in grades.

It is further expected that students will attend all classes unless legitimate and/or special reasons exist for absences or tardiness. Legitimate absences include those due to health problems that can be documented, unanticipated family emergencies, and observance of religious holy days. Any such absences or tardiness should be discussed directly with the course instructor, and students must make arrangements to complete class work which is missed.

Course expectations include completion of four assignments, that will be weighted in the following manner along with class participation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Specification</td>
<td>10/10/02</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement Critique</td>
<td>10/24/02</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampling and Design Plan</td>
<td>11/21/02</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>12/18/02</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Program Specification:* Students will work with their field instructor to select a program problem within the agency for evaluation. They will be asked to design a logic model for the program and to answer a series of questions about the program including: 1) the client and/or system conditions that the program attempts to address; 2) a delineation of the major program components including their assumptions, theoretical base, empirical base, and practice rationale; 3) a listing the program’s stated goals and objectives; 4) a description of the major program processes and/or activities; and 5) an enumeration of both the expected immediate and long-term outcomes and a rationale for why these are expected to occur.

*Measurement Critique:* Students will be asked to identify an instrument that they might use in the evaluation of the program described in the first assignment. They will then be asked to discuss the theory base used in the development of the instrument; the populations/samples upon whom the instrument was developed and/or standardized; the steps taken to ensure the reliability and validity of the measure; and the instruments directness, reactivity, sensitivity to change and ease of administration and completion.

*Sampling and Design Plan:* Students will be asked to identify the design and sampling plan that they might use in the evaluation of the program described in the first assignment. The design part of this paper will include a description of the research design which will be used and, if applicable, how the student would form the proposed research groups. Students will also be asked to discuss the strengths and limitations of the chosen design in terms of its ability to answer the evaluation question under study. In the sampling part of this paper, students will be asked to formally identify the population of interest and the sample they would use in their evaluation, including a discussion of the type of sampling to be utilized, a description of how this sampling technique will be implemented, and anticipated problems in gathering the sample or with sample attrition.
**Final Paper:** Building upon and augmenting the work already done during the semester, and utilizing readings and classroom activities, students will be asked to present a final evaluation proposal. It will incorporate information from the program description, measurement, and design and sample papers already completed. In addition, students will be asked to do a number of additional tasks, including an articulation of the major research questions, the assumptions of the proposed study, the probable data collection strategy, as well as an analytic plan. In addition, students will be asked to discuss the limitations of their proposed study, as well as to report on how they propose to using program staff in at each stage of the evaluation process.

All assignments will available to the students at least two weeks before they are due, and will be discussed in detail in class prior to their due date. Assignments are due at the beginning of the designated class section — late papers will be accepted only at the instructors discretion.

Since each assignment relates to an important step in the evaluation process, and builds on the assignment that precedes it, students are urged to contact the instructor if they wish to discuss their ideas prior to submission or to discuss issues after their papers are returned to them. It is strongly suggested that students follow the outline provided by the instructor when completing each of the assignments, as these will be detailed and provide the student with a blueprint for successful completion.

All assignments must be typed, double spaced, and, when appropriate, use appropriate referencing and bibliographic formats. Papers should have page numbers and should be proofread prior to submission, since the quality of the paper will be impacted by its visual presentation, the use of proper grammar and spelling, and other ‘pride of authorship’ issues.

**Grading Criteria**

Each assignment is given a letter grade. The grade of A+ will rarely if ever be used, and, in general, students should not expect to receive this grade on an assignment, for it signifies work that clearly goes beyond the content of the course and the expertise students are expected to master. Other grades will be determined based on the following criteria: (1) grades of A or A- are reserved for student work which not only demonstrates very good mastery of content but which also shows that the student has undertaken a complex task, has applied critical thinking skills to the assignment, and/or has demonstrated creativity in her or his approach to the assignment. The difference between these two grades is determined by the degree to which these skills have been demonstrated by the student; (2) a grade of B+ is given to work which is judged to be very good -- this grade denotes that a student has demonstrated a more-than-competent understanding of the material being tested in the assignment; (3) a grade of B is given to student work which meets the basic requirements of the assignment -- it denotes that the student has done adequate work on the assignment and meets basic course expectations; (4) a grade of B- denotes that a student's performance was less than adequate on an assignment, reflecting only moderate grasp of content and/or expectations; (5) variations of the C grade reflect a minimal grasp of the assignment, poor organization of ideas and/or several significant areas requiring improvement; (6) grades between D and F are applied to denote a failure to meet minimum standards, reflecting serious deficiencies in all aspects of a student's performance on the assignment. Late assignments accepted by the instructor will be graded down by at least one step in the grading scheme.

Final grades will be determined by multiplying the worth of the assignment (or class participation or presentation) by the following grade points: \[ A+ = 4.3; \ A = 4.0; \ A- = 3.7; \ B+ = 3.3; \ B = 3.0; \ B- = 2.7; \ C+ = 2.3; \ C = 2.0, \text{etc.}, \] and rounding the score to the nearest letter grade, with some discretion left to the instructor to round up if other factors come into play. Issues of student attendance and tardiness will, if necessary, be factored into this score after this calculation has been completed.
SYLLABUS

Session 1 – September 5, 2002
Introductions, Class Overview, and a Discussion of the Social Context of Program Evaluations

Session 2 – September 12, 2002

Basic Readings

Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, Chapters 1, 2, 12.


Various Handouts on Ethical Considerations – Portions of the NASW Code of Ethics, the Nuremberg Code, and AEA Taskforce on Principles, and sample consent form.

Session 3 – September 19, 2002
Needs Assessment

Basic Readings

Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, Chapter 4.

Applied Readings


**Sessions 4 and 5 – September 26, 2002; October 3, 2002**

*Dissecting and Specifying Programs and their Components*

**Basic Readings**

Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, Chapters 3, 5.


**Applied Readings**


**Session 6 – October 10, 2002**

*Measurement Issues in Program Evaluation*

**Program Specification Due**

**Basic Readings**


Session 7 — October 17, 2002
Program Monitoring and Improvement

Basic Readings

Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, Chapter 6


Applied Readings


Sessions 8, 9 & 10 -- October 24, October 31, & November 7, 2002
Outcome Evaluations

Session 8 -- Measurement Critique Due

Basic Readings

Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, Chapters 7-10.

Applied Readings


Outcome Evaluations, Applied Readings, continued


Session 11 – November 14, 2002

Single System Designs – Evaluating Effectiveness with Individual Clients

Basic Readings


Applied Readings


Session 12 — November 21, 2002
Cost Analysis and Program Efficiency

Sampling and Design Plan Due

Basic Readings

Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, Chapter 11.

Applied Readings


Session 13 — December 5, 2002
Issues of Implementation and Utilization

Readings


December 18, 2002 — Final Paper Due (in my office door by 5:00 PM)

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *