## 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.

## 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, 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.

## 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 dissemination strategies that engage the policy and/or practice communities with the results and findings of evaluation activities in order to foster changes in polices and programs.
6. Critically evaluate existing evaluation studies for their consistency with the values reflected in the curricular themes.
Course Design:
The course will use diverse pedagogical methods, including lectures, participatory discussions, written assignments, student presentations, and experiential exercises related to course materials.

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, 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.

• 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 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, as well as rehabilitation programs, designed to reduce risk of onset of problems and promote healthy development.

• 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.

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. Students with more than two unexcused absences may risk failure.

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>February 20(^{th})</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement Critique</td>
<td>March 13(^{rd})</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampling and Design Plan</td>
<td>April 3(^{rd})</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>April 17(^{th})</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Presentations</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</tbody>
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**Program Specification:** Students will work with their field instructor to select a program or 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 model, including its assumptions, theoretical base, empirical base, and practice rationale;
3) a description of the major program processes and/or activities;
4) a listing of the program’s stated goals and objectives 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 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 a 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 use program stakeholders in at each stage of the evaluation process.

Assignment examples 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 instructor’s 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. **Students are also encouraged to submit drafts of assignments prior to the due date for feedback and suggestions.** 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, **single 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 For Written Assignments:**

Each written assignment is awarded a number of points based upon the weight of the assignment. The points will correspond to their equivalent 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 (per day) unless specific negotiations between the student and instructor should warrant otherwise, i.e., serious illness or death in the family, etc.

Class Presentations, Participation, and Discussion:
In order to meet the final course objective, (i.e. that student’s will be able to critically evaluate existing evaluation studies for their consistency with the values reflected in the curricular themes) a set of readings, indicated as “Applied Readings” in the Topical Outline, are included for each major subject heading. Students will be divided into six groups, and each group will be responsible to report on one or more of these applied readings. For each topic area, students will be given a series of questions to answer regarding the applied reading prior to the time the instructor covers the topic in lecture.

After the lecture on a given topic, during class time, students will meet in groups to discuss their assigned “applied” reading(s) (you may also meet outside of class time to prepare for your presentation) based on the questions that have been distributed. After these small group discussions, each group will report to the class on their applied readings and respond to any questions from the instructor or their classmates. Once all six groups have reported on their specific readings, a class discussion will take place that will center around one of the curricular themes and how the particular stage in the evaluation process relates to it.

REQUIRED TEXTS/MATERIALS:
• Course Pack of Readings Required of All Students
• One of Six Supplemental Course Packs of Applied Readings

Course Conduct:
This class adheres to the following ground rules:
1. Our primary commitment is to learn – from the instructor, from each other, from materials and from our work. We acknowledge differences among us in skills, interests, values, scholarly orientations and experience.
2. We acknowledge that racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination exist and are likely to surface from time to time.
3. We acknowledge that one of the meanings of societal oppression and discrimination is that we have been systematically taught misinformation about our own groups and especially members of devalued groups and populations of color. The same is true for sexism, ageism, sexual orientation and other alternative lifestyles – we are taught misinformation about ourselves and others regarding forms of difference and discrimination.
4. We acknowledge that our notions of privilege – privilege of ethnicity, religious
belief, gender, sexual orientation and class – can distort our understanding of individuals, families, communities, organizations and infrastructure, and can undermine the development of authentic relationships and understanding.

5. We cannot be blamed for the misinformation that we have heard but we will be held responsible for repeating misinformation after we have learned otherwise.

6. Victims are not to be blamed for their oppression.

7. We will assume that people are always doing the best they can, both to learn material and to behave in socially just and honest ways.

8. We will actively pursue opportunities to learn about our own groups and those of others, yet will not enter or invade others’ privacy when unwanted.

9. We will share information about our groups with other members of the class, and will not demean, devalue, or ‘put down’ people for their experiences.

10. We have an obligation to actively counter the myths and stereotypes about our own groups and other groups so that we can break down the walls which prohibit group cooperation and group gain.

11. We want to create a safe atmosphere for open discussion. Thus, at times, members of the class may wish to make a comment that they do not want repeated outside the class room. If so, the person will preface the remarks with a request and the class will agree not to repeat the remarks. (See course handout on Guidelines for Supportive and Respectful Communication.)
TOPICAL OUTLINE

Session 1 – January 5\textsuperscript{th}
\textit{Introductions, Class Overview and a Discussion of Program Evaluation}

Session 2 -- January 15\textsuperscript{th}
\textit{An Overview of the Field of Evaluation and Ethics in the Evaluation Process.}

\textbf{Basic Reading}
- Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, Chapters 1, 2, 12.

Session 3 – January 22\textsuperscript{nd}
\textit{Newer Thinking About the Purposes, Conduct and Use of Evaluation – Inclusion, Social Justice, and Issues of Cultural Competence}

\textbf{Basic Reading}

\textbf{Applied Reading}
- Weaver, H.N. (1997). The challenges of research in Native American communities: Incorporating principles of cultural competence. Journal of social
Session 4 – January 29th

Needs Assessment

Basic Reading

- Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, Chapter 4.

Applied Readings


Sessions 5 and 6 – February 5th and 12th

Dissecting and Specifying Programs and their Components

Basic Readings

- Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, Chapters 3, 5.

Applied Readings

maltreatment characteristics. Child welfare. 81, 617-642. (GROUPS 1 and 2)

Sessions 7 – February 19th
Measurement Issues in Program Evaluation

**Program Specification Due**

Basic Readings

Applied Readings

Session 8 — March 5th
Program Monitoring and Improvement

Basic Readings
- Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, Chapter 6

Applied Readings

Sessions 9-11: March 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>
Outcome Evaluations

Session 9

**Measurement Critique Due**

Basic Readings
- Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, Chapters 7-10.
Applied Readings


Session 12 — April 2nd
Cost Analysis

**Sampling and Design Plan Due**
Basic Readings
- Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, Chapter 12.

Applied Readings

Session 13 – April 9th
Issues of Implementation, Dissemination and Utilization

Basic Readings

Session 14 – April 16th **Final Paper Due**