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 the social programs, and the systems that serve them. It thus 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 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.

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 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.

IV. Course Design:
The course will use diverse pedagogical methods, including lectures, participatory discussions, written assignments, student presentations, and experiential exercises related to course materials. 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 evaluation participants 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, 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 required readings and assignments, participate in class discussions and experiential exercises, and complete two 1.5 hours exams. If any student has problems with attendance, meeting deadlines or completing assignments, she or he is expected to discuss them promptly with the instructor.
VII. Presentations, Written Assignments and Grading Criteria

A. Students will be required to volunteer as lead discussant for weekly readings; assignment for these readings will be made as the course progresses (10 points). Students will be required to give an oral presentation on their evaluation proposal during the last class day (10 points). (Total points for presentation = 20)

B. Students will be required to take two in-class examinations lasting 1.5 hours; each exam will be valued at 25 points. (Total points for exams = 50)

C. Evaluation Proposal (Total points for proposal = 30). This assignment is meant to provide students with evaluation knowledge and skills as well as grant writing skills. A well-written grant proposal includes most components of a scholarly research paper.

The evaluation proposal must include the following components:

1) Program Specification: Working with your field instructor, select a program or problem within the agency for evaluation. Design a logic model for the program and answer the following questions about the program or problem including:
   a. the client and/or system conditions that the program/problem attempts to address;
   b. a delineation of the major program model, including its assumptions, theoretical base, empirical base, and practice rationale;
   c. a description of the major program processes and/or activities;
   d. a listing of the program’s stated goals and objectives;
   e. an enumeration of both expected immediate and long-term outcomes and a rationale for why these are expected to occur;
   f. and the identification and involvement of stakeholders in the evaluation process.

2) Literature Review: Conduct and summarize a selective and critical review of the empirical literature on the program/problem.

3) Measurement: Identify an instrument/measure that you might use in evaluating the program/problem described under #1 above. Discuss the populations/samples upon whom the instrument was developed and standardized; reliability and validity of the instrument; and directness, reactivity, sensitivity of the instrument/measure to change and ease of administration and completion. Discuss the conceptualization and operationalization of your measures.

4) Sample and Evaluation Design Plan: Identify an evaluation design and sampling plan that you might use in the evaluation of the program/problem described under #1 above. The design should include a description of the research design which will be used and, if applicable, how you will form the proposed research groups. Discuss strengths and limitations of your design in terms of its ability to answer the evaluation question you formulated.

For the sampling part of your plan, identify the population of interest and type of sample as well as a description of the implementation (i.e., recruitment) of the
sample. Discuss any problems you might anticipate in identifying and recruiting the sample and with the retention of the sample (i.e., attrition).

5) **Data Collection Plan:** Summarize the data collection plan including the administering of instruments/measures (i.e., who will collect data, in what form will data be collected, how often will data be collected).

6) **Analysis Plan:** Summarize an analysis plan including the appropriate statistical techniques for analyzing the data based on measurement level of the outcome measures and any explanatory or descriptive measures.

7) **Conclusions:** Provide a brief conclusion including strengths and limitations of your proposed evaluation. Discuss threats to internal and external validity as well as conclusions expected based on literature review under #2 above.

8) **List of References**

9) **Submit two abstracts (150 words or less for each):** a) a technical abstract written in scientific jargon; b) a lay abstract written in journalistic jargon. Note: A technical abstract can be used to disseminate research findings to professional audiences (e.g., a scientific journal or at a conferences), while a lay abstract can be used to disseminate findings to non-professional audiences (e.g., stakeholders)

Students are required to write the text, citations and references for the proposal using the 5th Edition of the American Psychological (APA) style. Students are encouraged but not required to make handouts for the oral presentation on the proposal in either PowerPoint or another format of choice.

VII. **Summary and Dates of Written Assignments and Grading Scale**

- **Two in-class examinations on key concepts (multiple choice and short answer) (25 points each for a total of 50 points)**

  *Exam #1 on January 29; Exam #2 on March 12*

- **Written Evaluation Proposal and Oral Presentation on last class day, April 16. (30 points)**

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

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
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<td>86-90</td>
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VII. Required Readings


- List of required readings with their dates of assignment will be distributed on the first day of class.

Notes: The textbook, other books and required journal readings are available on reserve in the Social Work Library.

VIII. Dates of classes

January 8, 15, 22, 29
February 5, 12, 19
SPRING BREAK February 22 through March 3
March 5, 12, 19, 26
April 2, 9, 16

Bold denotes due dates of exams and proposal.

Acknowledgment: This course syllabus is an adapted version of Prof. William Meezan’s syllabus.