### Evaluation in Social Work: SW 683

**Course:** SW 683 -- Section 03  
Evaluation in Social Work  
Winter 2004  
Tuesdays 11:00-2:00  
1804 SSWB

**Instructor:** Shawna Lee, MSW, MPP, MS  
Office Location: 3320 Institute for Social Research (ISR)  
Office Telephone: 936-0463 or 763-2483  
Email: shawnal@umich.edu

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 2:00-3:00 or by appointment

**Course Materials:**  

**COURSEPACK:** Additional readings will be available through the School of Social Work Library Electronic Reserves:  
http://www.lib.umich.edu/socwork/eresw04.html

---

**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 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.

**Course Objectives:**  
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:  
1. Identify and choose the type of evaluation that is appropriate to the context of the situation and the questions that need to be addressed.
2. Choose the design and methodology appropriate to conduct a needs assessment.
3. Identify the process of program specification in the evaluation process.
4. Plan and critique the measurement, design, sampling, and analytic issues in process and outcome evaluations.
5. Describe ways in which to monitor one’s own practice in social work.
6. Analyze issues of implementation and utilization in program evaluation.
7. Plan an evaluation of a social intervention.
8. Identify the ethical issues present in the performance of program evaluations.
9. Apply a collaborative, participatory, change-oriented process, in designing an evaluation.
10. 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.

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 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.

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.

**Attendance and Participation**
Class attendance is critical both for your own learning and also to contribute to the group discussion. Students are expected to attend every class meeting and complete all readings and assignments prior to class. Attendance will be monitored throughout the semester. Any unexcused absence – including leaving/arriving early to class – may negatively affect your final class participation grade. In order to receive an excused absence, contact me at least 48 hours before the class that you will miss is scheduled to meet. Regardless of the reason for your absence, you are responsible for any material that we cover during class.

Please keep in mind that, according the SSW Student Guide, “on average, each hour of class time will be accompanied by 2-3 hours of time spent outside of class” (this time includes reading and other assignments and preparation for examinations).

**Grading System**
Grades are earned by successfully completing the work on all assignments, demonstrating understanding of the evaluation concepts, attending and participating in class.

Final grades will be based on standard percentages, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97 – 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94 – 96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A–</td>
<td>91 – 93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84 – 86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B–</td>
<td>81 – 83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 – 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74 – 76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C–</td>
<td>70 – 73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 69%</td>
<td>no credit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Deadline Expectations:** All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date listed in the course outline. Late assignments will only be accepted at the instructor’s discretion. Late assignments will be graded down one full letter grade for each day late (e.g., letter grade A becomes B). Exceptions require prior permission of instructor. In general, if you have questions about a grade, concerns about an assignment, or extenuating personal circumstances that you feel I should know about, you need to bring them to my attention AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. Please do not wait until the week before grades are due to talk with me about these matters. By the end of the term, it is too late to do anything about most of these concerns.

**Paper/Exam Rebuttals:** If you disagree with a grade that you received on a paper or quiz, I will reconsider your grade if you provide me with a typed explanation (no more than one page in length) of why the given answer is incorrect and why your answer is correct. Rebuttals are due within one week after a paper/exam is returned.

**Formatting:** Papers and written assignments should be typed, double-spaced, and of standard font (12-point, Times New Roman) with one-inch margins.
Incompletes: Incompletes are granted only under extreme circumstances when it can be documented that it would be unfair to hold the student to the normal expectations of the course. The student should submit a formal written request for an incomplete to the instructor, preferably prior to the last two weeks of class. Incompletes are granted at the discretion of the instructor. Students with specialized learning needs are requested to make an appointment with the instructor to discuss the necessary arrangements. Please review the Student Guide section on Ethical Conduct in the University Environment (pp. 50-52). This section addresses plagiarism, harassment, and discrimination policies. Students are required to complete assignments independently; plagiarism and cheating will be reported to the Associate Dean of Educational Programs.
Assignments
In this class I will use various methods to assess final course grades. Students will have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their comprehension of the course material. Discussions, presentations, quizzes and an evaluation proposal will all be part of the course final grade.

Participation: 5% of final grade
Participation will be determined by the quality of your participation and the effort you demonstrate in class performance. Good participation requires that you attend class, arrive on time, read assigned readings beforehand, participate in class discussion, demonstrate knowledge of class materials, and remain for the entire class period.

Reaction Papers: 10% of final grade
Beginning the second week of class, during most class sessions students will prepare a short “reaction paper” response to discussion questions that address the weekly readings. These responses will then be used to spur class discussion. All students are expected to have read the weekly readings and contribute to the discussion.

Quizzes: 20% of final grade
The instructor will administer several in-class quizzes throughout the semester. Quizzes will consist of either multiple choice or short answer questions covering key concepts discussed in the textbook and course readings. Quizzes are not on the syllabus; they will be announced in class, usually 1-2 sessions beforehand.

Evaluation Proposal Presentation: 10% of final grade
Students will be required to give an oral presentation on their evaluation proposal (discussed in detail below) during the last day of class. Students are encouraged to make handouts and use PowerPoint or overhead transparencies for this presentation.

Evaluation Proposal:
The evaluation proposal constitutes the bulk of the grade for this class. Each student will write a comprehensive program evaluation proposal which will be turned in at the end of the semester, but portions of the proposal will be due throughout the semester. The evaluation proposal focuses on the evaluation of a program, which includes specification of the problem the program is designed to address, specification of a program logic model, literature review, suggested measurement tools, research design, analysis plan, and two abstracts.

Evaluation Proposal Part I 10% of final grade
DUE IN CLASS: JAN 27, 2004
Working with your field instructor, select a problem/program within the agency for your evaluation. Articulate the program’s theory of change using a one-page logic model. The logic model should include: 1) a description of clients and system conditions/problem that led to the need for the program, 2) major program components, 3) detailed activities, 4) expected client outcomes. The Logic Model will be used for parts II and III of the Evaluation Proposal.

Evaluation Proposal Part II 20% of final grade
DUE IN CLASS: MARCH 16, 2004
1) Elaborate on the Logic Model that you developed for Part I.
   a. identify the logic model for the evaluation problem/program
   b. specify the client and/or system conditions that the problem/program attempts to address
   c. delineate assumptions underlying the problem/program
   d. list the goals and objectives of the problem/program
   e. describe the activities that you will undertake to address the problem
   f. articulate the program theory of change
   g. specify both expected immediate and long-term outcomes and a rationale for why these are expected to occur
   h. identify and explicate the involvement of stakeholders in the evaluation process

Note: This should take about 3-4 double-spaced typed pages.

2) Literature Review. Conduct and summarize a selected and critical review of the empirical literature related to the problem/program that you selected to evaluate within your agency. (Approximately 2-3 double-spaced typed pages.)

3) Measurement. Discuss the conceptualization and operationalization of your measures for the problem/program. Identify an instrument/measure that you might use in evaluating the problem/program. Discuss the population on whom the instrument was developed and standardized; reliability and validity of the instrument; and ease of administration of the measure. Consider these issues in the context of the population that you are evaluating. (Approximately 1-2 double-spaced typed pages.)

**Evaluation Proposal Part III**

DUE IN CLASS: APRIL 20, 2004

This part of the evaluation proposal focuses on the research design, analysis plan, references, and abstracts. For this submission, you will integrate Parts I and II with additional information regarding research design in a way so that the final evaluation proposal reads as one integrated document. The entire, integrated evaluation proposal should be no more than 15 pages long including references and logic model.

1) Research Design: Research Question(s) and Specific Design
   a. Identify the specific research question(s) you plan to answer in your evaluation
   b. Identify the specific research design you will use to answer the question
   c. Address the strengths and limitations of your design in answering the research question(s) you identified

2) Research Design: Sample Design
   a. What type of sample will be used?
   b. What inclusionary criteria will you use for your sample?
   c. How will you recruit, contact, and follow participants?
   d. How will you address problems of low participation and attrition?
   e. How will you address ethical issues of informed consent, voluntary participation, protection of sensitive data, etc.

3) Analysis Plan
Discuss your analysis plan using the appropriate statistical techniques for analyzing data based on the measurement level of outcome measure(s) and the research design identified under Item 1, research design.

4) References, minimum of 10 references

5) Two abstracts, 150 words or less for each, single spaced
   a. Technical abstract written in scientific jargon, e.g., designed to disseminate findings to professional audiences
   b. Lay abstract written in journalistic jargon, e.g., designed to disseminate findings to non-professional audiences, like stakeholders

The text, citations and references for the proposal should be written using American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual, Fifth Edition (2001) is readily available at book stores or online: http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html

Required Reading Legend
H Handout (distributed the week before lecture or in class)
T Weiss Evaluation text
E Electronic online articles available via SSW library website: http://www.lib.umich.edu/socwork/eresw04.html
   FYI: All electronic reserves are also available via the University of Michigan MIRLYN website PsycInfo database

Note: reading assignments are subject to change ☺ Proper notice will be given.

SESSION 1, JAN 6
Introduction to course expectations, research knowledge, evaluation experience, evaluation standards
H NASW Code of Ethics, evaluation relevant standards

SESSION 2, JAN 13
Program theory of change, logic models
T Weiss Textbook, Chapter 1

SESSION 3, JAN 20
Program specification of target population, system conditions, components/activities, expected outcomes
T Weiss Chapter 2: Purposes of Evaluation
T Weiss Chapter 3: Understanding the Program

SESSION 4 & SESSION 5, JAN 27 & FEB 3
PART I OF EVALUATION PROPOSAL (LOGIC MODEL) DUE IN CLASS JAN 27
Review logic model model drafts, evaluation approaches and planning, ethical issues in evaluation
Reflective practice, empowerment evaluation, participatory evaluation

T Weiss Chapter 4: Planning the Evaluation
T Weiss Chapter 5: Roles for the Evaluator

**SESSION 6, FEB 10**
Measurement (quantitative), sampling, consumer satisfaction surveys

T Weiss Chapter 6: Developing Measures
T Weiss Chapter 7: Collecting Data

**SESSION 7, FEB 17**
Qualitative measurement, needs assessment, bias in evaluations

T Weiss Chapter 11: Qualitative Methods

**SESSION 8, MARCH 2**
Data analysis, descriptive and bivariate statistics, interpretation of data

T Weiss Chapter 12: Analyzing and Interpreting the Data

**SESSION 9, MARCH 9**
Interpretation, report writing, executive summary format, utilization of results

T Weiss Chapter 13: Writing the Report and Disseminating the Results
H Herek, G. Developing a theoretical framework and rationale for a research proposal.

**SESSION 10, MARCH 16**
**PART II OF EVALUATION PROPOSAL DUE IN CLASS**
Outcome monitoring evaluations, single group designs, threats to validity

T Weiss Chapter 8: Design of the Evaluation
T Weiss Chapter 9: Randomized Experiment

**SESSION 11, MARCH 23**
Process evaluation, program monitoring
[POSSIBLE GUEST SPEAKER: CAROL MOWBRAY]


**SESSION 12, MARCH 30**

Outcomes impact evaluations, comparison group designs, random assignment, benefit cost analysis

[POSSIBLE GUEST SPEAKER: D. OYSERMAN]


**SESSION 13, APRIL 6**

Analysis, dissemination, reflective practice, utilization of knowledge in evaluation

T Weiss Chapter 10: Extensions of Good Designs

T Weiss Chapter 14: Evaluating with Integrity


**SESSION 14, APRIL 13**

Student Presentations

**SESSION 15, APRIL 20**

PART III OF EVALUATION PROPOSAL DUE IN CLASS

Student Presentations