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 their social programs as well as the systems that serve clients and communities. It 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 people of a different sexual orientation. 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 within 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 strategies that promote involvement of practice/policy communities in disseminating the results of evaluation activities in order to foster changes in programs/policies.
6. Critically examine existing evaluation studies for their consistency with the values reflected in the curricular themes.

IV. Course Design

The course will use multiple pedagogical methods—short lectures, in-class silent readings, participatory discussions, written assignments, student presentations, and experiential exercises. 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 participants of evaluation 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 that are 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 readings/assignments and participate in class discussions and experiential exercises. If a student has problems with attending class or meeting deadlines for assignments, she or he is expected to discuss them promptly with the instructor. Failure to attend class regularly or complete an assignment when it is due will result in decreased grade points.

VII. Discussions, Presentations, Mid-Term Examination, Written Assignments and Grading Criteria

1. Beginning with the second week of class, two students will be required to lead the discussion for the weekly readings. All students are expected to have read the weekly readings and contribute to weekly these discussions. Students will sign up for the topic of interest to them on the 1st day of class. Note: Students are encouraged to be creative in leading these discussions. For example, students in a prior class developed role plays, games and short quizzes for their discussant roles (10 points for discussant role)

2. Students will be required to present an oral presentation on their evaluation proposal during the last two class days. Students are encouraged to make handouts and use PowerPoint or overhead transparencies for their presentation. (10 points for oral presentation)

3. Students will be required to take a mid-term classroom examination. This short answer examination will cover key concepts and occur on October 14. The professor will provide students with a study guide in advance to prepare for the final exam (40 points for in-class exam)

4. Students will be required to write an Evaluation Proposal valued at 40 points, to be written in two parts (20 points for part 1; 20 points for part 2). This proposal assignment is meant to provide students with methods and skills of social work evaluation as well as grant writing skills.

Part 1: This part of the evaluation proposal focuses on the evaluation problem/program specification, literature review and measurement. It is due on November 4th in class.

1) Evaluation Problem/program Specification. Working with your field instructor, select a problem/program within the agency for evaluation.
   a. Identify the specific research question(s) you plan to answer in your evaluation.
b. List the goals and objectives for the problem/program.
c. Specify the client and/or system conditions that the problem/program attempts to address.
d. Design a logic model for the evaluation problem/program that includes:
   1. Inputs/resources
   2. Activities you will undertake to address the problem.
   3. Short-term and long-term outcomes with a rationale for why these are expected to occur.
e. Identify stakeholders in the evaluation and explain their involvement in the evaluation process.

Note: Estimated number of pages for a-e is 3-4 double-spaced word processed pages.

2) **Literature Review.** Conduct and summarize a selective and critical review of the empirical literature on the problem/program (Estimated number of pages is 1-2 double spaced word processed pages).

(MAXIMUM number of text pages for Part 1 is six).

**Part 2:** This part of the evaluation proposal focuses on the research design, analysis plan, references and abstracts. Students are required to submit Part 2 of the proposal on **December 9th.** For this final submission, I would like you to integrate Parts 1 and 2 so that this paper reads as one document.

1) **Research Design: Research Question(s) and Specific Design**
   a. Identify the specific research design you will use to answer the question(s). That is, what specific design (e.g. survey research, pre, quasi or true experimental design) you will use to evaluate the problem/program you have described under Part 1?
   b. If pre-, quasi- or true experimental design, provide a diagram of your design. Address how you will form the research groups you need to carry out the design, i.e., how will you assign members to groups?
   c. Address the strengths and limitations of your design in answering the research question(s). That is, how are you able to address threats to internal validity using your design?

(Estimated number of pages for a-c is 1-2 double spaced word processed pages).

2) **Research Design: Sample Design** (Hint: Sample selection not Random assignment)
   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 protect the rights of participants such as ethical issues of informed consent, voluntary participation, protection of sensitive data, etc.
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 populations/samples upon whom the instrument was developed and standardized, including information on reliability and validity of the instrument.

**NOTE:** If you cannot find an established instrument/measure in the literature and decide to construct your own, you are required to provide sample items and state how you will address reliability and validity issues. **(Estimated number of pages for this part is 1-2 double-spaced word processed pages).**

3) **Analysis Plan**
Discuss your analysis plan using the appropriate statistical techniques for analyzing data on sample descriptive measures and outcomes measures. Note: You will decide the appropriate statistical technique based on the level of measurement of your measures. **(Estimated number of pages is 1-2 double spaced word processed pages).**

4) **References** **(a minimum of 10 references is required).**

5) **Using the guidelines in your textbook, write a one-page informed consent statement.** **(MAXIMUM number of text pages for Part 2 is eight; submit attachments as an appendix)**

Students are required to write the text, citations and references for their proposal using the 5th Edition of the American Psychological (APA) style. They are required to use headings from the guidelines of the proposal for their proposal’s text.

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

- **Mid-Term classroom examination on key concepts on October 14**
- **Part 1 of Evaluation Proposal due November 4 in class**
- **Part 2 of Evaluation Proposal due December 9 in class**

Grading will be rigorous but fair. Grades are determined by academic performance, not effort. The grading scale is as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95 – 100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>91-94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>86-90</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-85</td>
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<tr>
<td>B -</td>
<td>76-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>72-75</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 70</td>
<td>not passing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

VII. Required Textbook

NOTE: Journal articles with an asterisk are posted on course tools; journal articles without an asterisk are accessible through the URL for electronic reserves [http://www.lib.umich.edu/socwork/eresf04.html](http://www.lib.umich.edu/socwork/eresf04.html).

VIII. Dates of classes

Sept 9, 16, 23, 30  
Oct 7, 14, 21, 28  
Nov 4, 11, 18  
Dec 2, 9

Note: Bold denotes date of proposal submission or mid-term examination.

Course Topics and Required Readings
NOTE: Articles with an asterisk are available from course tools site.

Session 1: September 9

**Topic: Introductions and Course Overview**

1. What is social work evaluation?  
2. What is a program?  
3. Why should social workers do evaluations?  
4. What is the role of social workers as evaluators?  
5. What is the role of stakeholders in evaluations?

Electronic Reserve Readings (to be disseminated and read in class):

Textbook Readings:
Session 2: September 16

Topic: Ethical Issues, Values and Cultural Issues in Evaluation

Electronic Reserve Readings:

Textbook Readings:
Royse, D., Thyer, B.A., Padgett, D.K., & Logan, T.K. Chapter 2. Ethical issues in program evaluation. Pp. 30-48. Chapter 13. Pragmatic issues: Political nature of evaluation (pp. 331-332); “Threat” of evaluation (pp. 333-334); Guidelines for evaluation in politically charged arenas (pp. 334-337); Culturally sensitive evaluation practice (pp. 338-341).

Session 3: September 23

Topic 1: Conceptualizing/Specifying Programs in Evaluation

Electronic Reserve Readings:

Textbook Readings:
Session 4: September 30

Topic 1: Needs Assessment in Evaluation
Electronic Reserve Readings:

Textbook Readings:

Session 5: October 7

Topic: Measurement Issues in Evaluation
Electronic Reserve Readings:

Textbook Readings:
Session 6: October 14

Mid-Term classroom examination – First Half of Class

Guest lecturer invited – Second Half of Class

Session 7: October 21
Topic: Sampling in Evaluation


Textbook Readings:

Topic: Process Evaluation

Electronic Reserve Readings:

Textbook Readings:

Session 8: October 28

Topic: Program Monitoring and Improvements in Evaluation

Electronic Reserve Readings:


Textbook Readings:

**Session 9: November 4**

**Topic: Conceptualizing/Specifying Outcomes in Evaluation**

Electronic Reserve Readings:


Textbook Readings:

*Part 1 of proposal due on this date.*

**Session 10: November 11**

**Topic: Benefit-Cost Analysis in Evaluation**

Electronic Reserve Readings:


Textbook Readings:

**Session 11: November 18**

**Topic: Analysis, Dissemination and Utilization of Knowledge in Evaluation**

Textbook Readings:

*Guest lecturer invited.*

**November 25** No class! Thanksgiving Holiday Break

**Session 13: December 2**

• Student Presentations

**Session 14: December 9**

• Student Presentations

Proposal (Part 2) due on this date.