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.

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. Understand the various types of evaluation that are appropriate to answer questions consonant with a program’s developmental stage.
2. Specify a program for evaluation including its theory of change.
3. Develop skills in logic modeling
4. Plan an outcome evaluation of a social work program.
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. 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, 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 all assignments. These will be weighted in the following manner along with class participation:

- Lead discussion of readings assigned day 5%
- Program Specification (Due October 13) 10%
- Measurement Critique (Due November 3) 10%
- Sampling and Design Plan (Due November 24) 10%
- Final Paper (Due December 15) 40%
- Class Participation 10%
- Group Presentation of Final Proposal 15%

**Class Discussion of Readings**
Beginning with the second week of class, one to 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 these discussions. Students will sign up for the week of interest to them on the 1st day of class. Note: Students are encouraged to be creative in leading these discussions. For example, students are welcome to develop role plays, games, short quizzes, etc., to help with the discussion process. For research articles, key questions are to be answered and understood. These will be given on the first day of class. Further, each student will choose the perspective of someone from a marginalized group, and use it while doing the readings, listening to and participating in class discussions, doing class assignments, etc. My intent is that students consciously try to understand the world through a different lens than the ones they normally use. A choice will be made during the first class as to the lens to be adopted.

For each of the following assignments, students will work in a group, choosing one program per group. Although you will work in groups, you may complete the assignments either individually or as a group. I strongly urge you to select the agency by the second week of class and begin collecting program documentation immediately after the choice is made.

**Program Specification:** Students will work with personnel from the agency chosen by the group 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 description of the major program processes and/or activities; and 4) an enumeration of both the expected immediate (objectives) and long-term (goals) outcomes and a rationale for why these are expected to be achieved.

**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. They will also be asked to address questions regarding the ethics of program evaluation as they apply to their proposed plan. 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 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 Presentation:** Students will present their evaluation proposal to the class during the last 2 class sessions. It is to be a professional presentation to the group funding the evaluation. As with the final written paper, it will incorporate information from the previous assignments.

**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 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 disseminate the findings to encourage program change should that be called for. They will also be asked to describe how they would use program stakeholders 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 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. 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 the proper referencing and bibliographic formats. The University Library web resources also has a brief guide to APA style: [http://www.lib.usm.edu/%7Einstruct/guides/apa.html](http://www.lib.usm.edu/%7Einstruct/guides/apa.html)

Papers should have page numbers and be proofread prior to submission. 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 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; **Note:** Completing all the components of an assignment does not guarantee an A. (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.

Anyone who has received a grade of B or lower will be allowed to rewrite the assignment, but only after an in person discussion with the instructor. If the paper was completed by a group, then the group needs to meet with the instructor. There is the possibility of raising the grade up to a B+, but no higher.

Final Grades
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.

Academic Integrity
Students have already been provided with information regarding plagiarism at their orientation, and materials addressing this issue appear in the Student Handbook. Students are reminded that this class will operate under the Student Code of Academic and Professional Conduct which appears on page 18 of this Student Handbook: http://www.ssw.umich.edu/studentGuide/2004/studentGuide2004.pdf. This section of the handbook describes plagiarism, procedures for processing alleged infractions, and the range of possible sanctions.

For other information on academic integrity and proper citations for papers see SSW Library online tutorial on this topic http://www.lib.umich.edu/ugl/searchpath/index.html as well as the SSW Library web page on writing a paper, with links to plagiarism information at http://www.lib.umich.edu/socwork/researchpaper.html. University Library and CRLT web resources on academic integrity can be found at http://www.lib.umich.edu/acadintegrity/

Course Conduct
This class adheres to the following Ground Rules for the Class:
1. Our primary commitment is to learn - from the instructor, from each other, from agency personnel, program stakeholders, 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, etc. - we are taught misinformation about ourselves and others regarding forms of similarity, difference and discrimination. Also, we may not be aware of the misinformation under which we operate, either about one of the groups we belong to, or about other groups.
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, and we will treat them accordingly.

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 demand, devalue, or ‘put down’ people for their experiences.

10. We have a shared 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.

Housekeeping

Electronic Devices: In consideration of your classmates, and due to their disruptive nature, I request that all students turn off all telephones and pagers while you are in my class. This is your time and I want you to be able to protect it. I prefer that you receive no messages during class time. However, if you must be on call for an emergency, please let your home or office knows that you are only available for emergencies that no one else can handle. If you must carry a pager, please set it to vibrate only.

Special Circumstances: If there are any circumstances that require that I and/or the class adapt to your special needs, please consult with me as soon as possible.

Religious Observances: Please notify me if religious observances conflict with class or due dates for assignments so we can make appropriate arrangements.

Accommodations for students with disabilities: If you need or desire an accommodation for a disability, I encourage you to contact me at your earliest convenience. Many aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way that I teach can be modified to facilitate your participation and progress throughout the semester. The earlier you make me aware of your needs, the more effectively we will be able to use the resources available to us, such as the services for Students with Disabilities, the Adaptive Technology Computing Site, and the like. If you do decide to disclose your disability, I will (to the extent permitted by law) treat that information as private and confidential.

REQUIRED TEXTS/MATERIALS


Course Pack of Basic Readings Required of All Students. In addition, there is a supplemental coursepack for each group.

TOPICAL OUTLINE
Session 1 – Sept. 8, 2004
Introductions, Class Overview and a Discussion of Program Evaluation

Basic Reading
Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, Chapter 2.
W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide
W.K. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook

Session 2 – Sept. 15, 2004

Basic Readings
Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, Chapters 1, 12.


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

Session 3 – Sept. 22, 2004
Newer Thinking About the Purposes, Conduct and Use of Evaluation – Inclusion, Social Justice, and Issues of Cultural Competence

Basic Reading
Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, Cheaper 3.


Applied Reading


Session 4 – Sept. 29, 2004
Students will use this day to meet with agency personnel, stakeholders, etc. regarding potential evaluation

Session 5 – Oct. 6, 2004
Needs Assessment
Basic Reading
Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, Chapter 4.


Applied Readings


Sessions 6 and 7 – Oct. 13 and Oct. 20, 2004
Program Specification Paper Due October 13
Dissecting and Specifying Programs and their Components
Basic Readings
Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, Chapters 5.


Applied Readings


Sessions 8 -- Oct. 27, 2004
Measurement Issues in Program Evaluation

Basic Readings
Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, Chapter 6


Applied Readings


Session 9 — Nov. 3, 2004
Program Monitoring and Improvement

Measurement Critique Due

Basic Readings
Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, Chapter 6

Applied Readings


Kirk, R.S., Reed-Ashcraft, K., & Pecora, P.J. (2002). Implementing intensive family preservation services: A case of infidelity. Family preservation journal. 6 (2), pp. 59-81. (GROUP 3)


Sessions 10-12 – Nov. 10, 17, 24, 2004
Outcome Evaluations

Sampling and Design Plan Due November 24th

Basic Readings
Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, Chapters 8,9.


Applied Readings


**Session 13 — Dec. 1, 2004**

*Analysis of Data and Issues of Dissemination and Utilization*

**Basic Readings**

Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, Chapter 10


Session 14 – Dec. 8, 2004
Real World Implementation Issues and Discussion of Final Papers

Group Presentations
Basic Reading


Session 15 – Dec. 15, 2004 – Final Paper Due
Group Presentations

Web Resources
Michigan Association for Evaluation: http://maeeval.org/