Course: SOWO 510: FOUNDATIONS FOR EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE

Semester: Spring, 2009

Course website: SOWO 510 Sp09 course site https://sakaipilot.unc.edu/xsl-portal

Section 002:
Location and Time: TTK Building, Rm. 101, 9:00-11:50 am, Mondays

Instructor: Joelle D. Powers, Ph.D., M.S.W.
School of Social Work
TTK Building, Rm. 563C
Phone: 919-843-8686
Email: jdpowers@email.unc.edu

Office Hours: Mon. and Tues. 12-2 pm, and by appointment

Course Description:
Students develop knowledge of evidence-based practice, including skills needed to acquire and assess appropriate interventions for practice and basic skills required to evaluate their own social work practice.

Course Objectives:
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate the following:

(1) Knowledge of evaluation models and methodologies available to implement evidence-based social work practices;
(2) Skills in accessing and assessing public databases and research literature as a foundation for evidence-based practice;
(3) Skill in applying the findings of social intervention research to social work practice and policy;
(4) Skills to develop and implement intervention evaluations that promote evidence-based social work practice and policy, including skills related to qualitative and quantitative evaluation design, measurement, data analysis, and knowledge dissemination;
(5) Ability to apply knowledge of social work ethics and values to the design of practice intervention evaluations;
(6) Skill in designing social interventions that are sensitive to and address ethnic, economic, gender, racial, religious, sexual orientation, and other issues of difference, culture, and descent; and
(7) Knowledge of the practical, political, and economic issues related to the evaluation of social interventions.

**Required Texts***:


*Supplemental readings are available on Sakai or through UNC libraries databases. Additional supplementary readings may be recommended or assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities, which affect their participation in the course, should notify the instructor if they wish to have special accommodations in instructional format, examination format, etc., considered. Accommodations and services are provided by Disability Services (Voice/TDD 962-8300; 966-4041). Learning Disability Services (962-7227) provides supportive services for students with learning disabilities and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorders.

**Policy on Academic Dishonesty:**

Academic dishonesty is contrary to the ethics of the social work profession, unfair to other students, and will not be tolerated in any form. All written assignments should include the following signed pledge: “I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in preparing this written work.”

**Teaching Methods and Accountability:**

SOWO 510 is a hybrid class which includes fewer in person class sessions but requires students to acquire new knowledge and skills through the use of on-line materials and participation in activities outside of the structured classroom meetings. Students are expected to meet for class as the syllabus outlines as well as complete all online and out of class activities each week. Most in-class sessions will include class discussion of critical content issues/questions and skill building activities.
Online learning content of the hybrid course will typically include:

1. **Weekly Lesson**
   - **1.1 This Week’s Learning Objectives**
   - **1.2 Connection of Lesson to EBP**
   - **1.3 Class Meeting outline**
   - **1.4 Lecture podcast - instructor gives brief overview of lesson concepts**
   - **1.5 Applied podcast - interview with social work practitioner**
   - **1.6 Lesson Overview - multimedia learning object**
   - **1.7 Readings**

2. The on-line quiz related to the lesson content can be found in the Tests and Quizzes tool.

3. Assignments and certification are related to scope of the full course and can be found in the Assignments tool.

**Assignment Guidelines:**
Individual and small group written and oral assignments will allow students to apply knowledge gained from the course materials and activities. All written assignments must be typed and follow APA format. Several writing resources are posted on the website. Students should also refer to the following:


Note: You can find a self-paced tutorial for APA style at [http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/citations/apa/index.html](http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/citations/apa/index.html)

**Assignments:**

- **Research with Human Subject Training (CITI Training):**
  The Research with Human Subject Training provides an opportunity to review historical and current standards for ethical research that involves human subjects. Allow a minimum of 3 hours for completion of online training. The certificate of completion is due at the beginning of class on Week 2 and is worth 5% of your grade.

- **Assignment 1 - Group EBP Project:**
  This assignment will provide you with an opportunity to apply an evidence-based approach to a practice situation by critically appraising current research and identifying the implications for our field. Briefly describe a presenting problem for a client. Formulate and ask an answerable social work practice question pertaining to your problem of interest. Search for, review, and critique four empirical research articles about your targeted problem to help you answer your practice question. Finally, describe the implications of the research for social work practice. Assignment I can be completed in groups of 3-4 students. The 4-5 page
paper is due by 9:00 am on Friday March 6 and should be submitted electronically using the Assignments tool in Sakai course site. Assignment I is worth 25% of your overall grade.

- **Assignment II: Evaluation Proposal Paper:**
  A proposal for an evaluation project related to your field placement or specific social work interests will be developed by each student. This project is worth 35% of your overall grade and will be the primary written assignment for this course. Each 7-9 page paper should include the following sections: Abstract, Introduction, Literature Review, Methods, Discussion, and References. Assignment II is due by 9:00 am on April 27 and should be submitted electronically using the Assignments tool in Sakai course site. Assignment II is worth 30% of your overall grade.

- **Weekly Quizzes:**
  *Each on-line Sakai lesson* will include an online quiz, except for Weeks 1, 10 & 12. The quizzes will test students on content and the assigned readings covered for that week. Periodic, in-class quizzes will be given as well. For on-line quizzes, students can refer to on-line lesson materials and assigned readings. The quizzes comprise 40% of your grade, and cannot be made up at a later time.

**Description of online quizzes:**
- Each Quiz will be timed: you have 1 hour to complete 10 objective questions (multiple choice or true or false)
- The quiz questions will come from a random selection from a question pool
- You may retake the quiz up to two times. Your highest score will be recorded.

**Assignments and Course Performance Assessment:**

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CITI Training</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group EBP Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation Proposal</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Quizzes</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<td><strong>Course Total</strong></td>
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**Grading System:**

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<th>Points</th>
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<td>80 - 93</td>
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**Late Assignments:**
Late assignments are strongly discouraged. In case of a dire, life-threatening emergency, a late assignment may be accepted at the discretion of the instructor. If permission for late submission is not granted before breaking a deadline, the grade
will automatically be reduced 10%, and another 10% reduction will occur each day (including weekends).

Please note that technical difficulties are not an acceptable excuse for turning in an assignment late or submitting a quiz. All technical inquiries should be directed to the staff of the SSW Computing Information and Technology Unit (CITU). Please contact Manuel Garcia at megarcia@email.unc.edu or 919-962-6416.
COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENTS

PART I: USING THE EXISTING EVIDENCE BASE IN PRACTICE

Week 1: Jan. 12 - Introduction to Course and Evidence Based Practice

Students will have an in-class session this week

Goal:
By the end of this week, the student will understand how to proceed with the hybrid course, define evidence based practice (EBP) and authority based practice (ABP), and understand the benefits and challenges of working from an EBP framework.

Topics:
- Orientation to Hybrid Course
  - Review Syllabus
  - Review Website
  - Course Goals
- Evidence based practice vs. Authority based practice
- Overview of Social Work Evaluation and Goals for Practice

Assignments:
- Review all website materials
- CITI training certification

Readings:
- Rubin & Babbie: Chapter 1: The utility of research in social work

Week 2: Jan. 26 - Ethics, Critical Thinking, and Research for EBP

Students will have an in-class session this week

Goal:
By the end of this week, the student will be able to define the utility of research in evidence-based practice, describe the scientific process, think critically about ethical issues related to EBP and social work and Identify safeguards established to prevent harm to human subjects involved in research.
Topics:
- Research in evidence-based practice
- Research resources training
- Introduction to the scientific process
- Critical thinking and ethical issues related to EBP
- Safeguard to prevent harm to human subjects in research

Assignments:
- Review all website materials
- Quiz available on course website
- CITI Training Certificate of Completion due

Readings:
Rubin & Babbie: Chapter 4: Ethical issues in social work research
Royse et al.: Chapters 1 and 2

PART II: EVALUATING YOUR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Week 3: Feb. 2 - Program Evaluation (phase 1: Needs Assessments)

Students will not have an in-class session this week

Goal:
By the end of this week, the student will understand how to conduct a needs assessment of their organizations target population.

Topics:
- Introduction to Evaluation Types
- Model for Program Evaluation
- Needs assessment methods

Assignments:
- Review all website materials
- Quiz available on course website

Readings:
Royse et al.: Chapter 3

Week 4: Feb. 9 - Program Evaluation (phase 2: Process/Formative Evaluations and Cost Benefit/Effectiveness Evaluations)

Students will have an in-class session this week

Goal:
By the end of this week, the student will understand how to conduct an assessment of the processes within their organization that determine its effectiveness, including an assessment of costs and cost associated benefits and effectiveness.

Topics:
- Formative and implementation evaluations
- Process evaluations
- Cost analysis
- Cost effectiveness and cost benefit analysis

Assignments:
- Review all website materials
- Quiz in class

Readings:
Royse et al.: Chapters 5, 8 (pp. 207-221), 10
The Perry Preschool Project (2008). Long-term study of adults who received high-quality early childhood care and education shows economic and social gains, less crime. Read webpage and then view all of the Power Point slides of the project findings. http://www.highscope.org/Content.asp?ContentId=282

Week 5: Feb. 16 - Evaluation Types (phase 3: Summative/Outcome Evaluations and Cost Benefit/Effectiveness Evaluations)

Students will not have an in-class session this week

Goal:
By the end of this week, the student will understand how to conduct an outcome assessment of their organizations’ target population.

Topics:
- Summative evaluation strategies, including:
  - Outcome evaluations
Impact evaluations

Assignments:
- Review all website materials
- Quiz available on class website

Readings:
- Royse et al.: Chapters 8 (pp. 207-221), 9 (pp. 231-236)
- Hatry et al.: Step 1 and 3 (pp 1-30, 59-79)

Week 6: Feb. 23 - Forming Logic Models and Theories of Change

Students will have an in-class session this week

Goal:
By the end of this week, the student will understand how to create a logic model for their practice setting and build a theory of change that describes how their interventions should be linked to expected program activities and outcomes.

Topics:
- Theory and Frameworks (social work examples)
  - Risk and Resilience
  - Systems Theory
  - Critical Theory
- Logic Models and Theories of Change
- Role of Theory in Quantitative vs. Qualitative research

Assignments:
- Review all website materials
- Quiz in class

Readings:
- Royse et al.: Chapter 1 (pp. 8-11)
- Hatry et al.: Step 2 (pp. 31-55)
- Rubin & Babbie: Chapter 3 (pp. 23-30)

**Week 7: March 2 - Designing an Evaluation**

Students will not have an in-class session this week

**Goal:**
By the end of the week, students will understand the procedures for planning and designing an evaluation and obtained the necessary skills to design an evaluation based on the evaluation question.

**Topics:**
- What to evaluate: Research question and theory of change (or logic model)
- Who to evaluate: Samples and Sampling
- How to evaluate: Evaluation Design
- Ethics and cultural issues in sampling and design

**Assignments:**
- Review all website materials
- Quiz available on course website

**Readings:**
- Royse et al.: Chapter 9 (231-273), 184-185 (External validity)
- Hatry et al.: Step 2 (pp. 31-55) (Revisited)
- Rubin & Babbie: Chapter 11 (149-171), 187-192

**Week 8: March 16 - Measurement and Questionnaire Construction**

Students will have an in-class session this week

**Goal:**
By the end of the week, students will be able to understand how to measure program outcomes, develop questions and questionnaires necessary for data collection, identify and critically evaluate the quality of measurement instruments, and describe ethical and cultural issues related to measurement

**Topics:**
• Constructing questionnaires and interview schedules, focus group scripts, etc.
  o Typical pitfalls in forming questions
  o Types of questions and strengths and weaknesses
  o Issues of forming questions into indexes and scales
• Levels of measurement
• Qualities of measures
• Ethical and cultural issues in measurement

Assignments:
• Review all website materials
• Quiz in class

Readings:
• Royce et al. Chapter 12 (323-338; Illustration of instruments)
• Hatry et al.: Step 4 & 5 (pp. 81-112) Appendix (pp. 147-164)
• Rubin & Babbie: Chapter 8 (98-109), Chapter 9 (110-129)

Week 9: March 23 - Quantitative Data Analysis (1)

Students will not have an in-class session this week

Goal:
By the end of the week students will be able to define how statistical significance impacts research and practice. Students will be able to code data in a meaningful way, interpret descriptive statistics, and describe univariate and multivariate analysis. Students will also understand statistical results from research should impact social work practice.

Topics:
• Statistical vs. Clinical significance
• Coding data
• Descriptive statistics
• Univariate analysis
• Bivariate analysis
• Interpreting statistical results

Assignments:
• Review all website materials
• Quiz available on course website
Readings:
- Royce et al. Chapter 13
- Rubin & Babbie: Chapter 17
- Hatry et al.: Step 6 (pp. 113-124)

Week 10: March 30 - Quantitative Analysis (2)

Students will have an in-class session this week - Lab

Goal:
By the end of the week students will be able to run basic statistical analysis with Microsoft Excel, graphically present findings, and interpret the results.

Topics:
- Using Excel to analyze data
- Application of statistical analysis techniques (lab)
- Graphically representing data and results

Assignment:
- Review all website materials for Week 9
- No on-line quiz available
- Quiz in class (lab)

Readings:
- Review: Royse et al.: Chapters 13
- Review: Rubin & Babbie: Chapter 17 (274-299)
- Review: Hatry et al.: Step 6 (pp. 113-124)

Week 11: April 6 - Qualitative Data Collection Methods

Students will not have an in-class session this week

Goal: By the end of this week, students will be able to understand how to conduct an evaluation using qualitative methods, including in-person interviews, focus groups and participant observations.

Topics:
- Qualitative data collection strategies
  - Interviews
  - Focus Groups
  - Observations
  - Artifact review
• Ethical and cultural issues
• Qualitative data analysis
  o Types of coding schemes
  o Analysis strategies
  o Criteria for quality and rigor
  o Role of computer programs
  o Reporting

Assignments:
• Review all website materials
• Quiz available on website

Readings:
• Royse et al.: Chapter 4

Week 12: April 13 - Qualitative Data Analysis

Students will have an in-class session this week

Goal:
By the end of this week, students will be able to design, conduct and analyze qualitative interview data.

Topics:
• Qualitative data analysis
  o Types of coding schemes
  o Analysis strategies
  o Criteria for quality and rigor
  o Role of computer programs
o Reporting

Assignments:
- Review all website materials under Week 11
- No on-line quiz available
- Quiz in class (lab)

Week 13: April 20 - Using Evaluation Data for Program Design and Improvements

Students will have an in-class session this week

Goal:
By the end of the week students will be able to understand how to deliver findings from program evaluations so they can be used for program development, how to overcome challenges that come up the evaluation and reporting its findings, and how to sustain evaluation processes within the agency so that the program will continue to develop based on scientific evidence.

Topics:
- Overcoming evaluation challenges
- Applying evaluation findings to practice
- Working with stakeholders on making adjustments to practice
- Introducing accountability in practice

Assignments:
- Review all website materials
- Quiz in class

Readings:
- Royce et al.: Chapter 14 (371-393), Chapter 15 (394-415)
- Hatry et al., Steps 8 (pp. 129-145)
- Rubin & Babbie: 201-204 (Practical pitfalls)