

UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA at CHAPEL HILL  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Course:       **SOWO 292. Evaluation of Social Interventions**

Professor:   **Dr. Dennis K. Orthner, Professor**

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Semester:    **Spring, 2002**

**Course Description:**

Students develop knowledge of the purposes of evaluation research, and the approaches and methodologies necessary to evaluate social work interventions.

**Course Objectives:**

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

1. Skill in developing and implementing social intervention research that is relevant to social work practice and policy;
2. Skill in evaluating social intervention research and applying the findings to social work practice and policy;
3. Skill in qualitative and quantitative research design, measurement, data analysis, and knowledge dissemination;
4. Knowledge of the practical, political, and economic issues related to social intervention research;
5. Skill in designing social intervention research that is sensitive to and addresses racial, gender, social, economic, and other issues of difference;
6. Ability to apply knowledge of social work ethics and values to the design of social intervention research.

**Expanded Description**

This course introduces advanced students to the processes necessary for the evaluation of social work practice and policy evaluation. Building on the knowledge gained in the foundation course SoWo 102, Introduction to Research Methodology, the course provides a results-based accountability framework so students may gain:

- (a) skills in accessing and assessing public databases and research literature as a foundation for evidence-based practice,
- (b) knowledge of evaluation models and methodology available to implement results-based evaluation, and
- (c) the ability to work within a results-based accountability system in their social work practice.

**Required Texts:**

- Hatry, H., van Houten, T., Plantz, M.C. and Greenway, M.T. (1996). *Measuring program outcomes: A practical approach*. Alexandria, VA: United Way of America.
- Padgett, D.K. (1998). *Qualitative methods in social work research: Challenges and rewards*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Royse, D.; Thayer, B.A.; Padgett, D.K. & Logan, T.K. (2001) *Program evaluation: An introduction*. (3rd Edition) Belmont, CA: Brooks-Cole.

The required texts are available in the health sciences bookstore. These required texts are also available on reserve at Davis Library.

Copies of supplemental readings will be available in the social work library and reading room on the fifth floor of the Tate/Turner/Kuralt Building. Some supplemental readings are available on-line and their web addresses will be noted with the citation as they are assigned. Additional supplementary readings may be assigned based upon the needs of the class members at the discretion of the instructor.

**Teaching Methods**

Most class periods will include a lecture by the instructor, class discussion, and skill building activities, when appropriate. Each student is expected to participate regularly in class discussions about the concepts studied and to participate in each of the skill-building exercises. Skill building exercises will integrate readings and previous assignments into the exercises.

While integration of practice material is always encouraged in discussions, the written assignments are also designed to allow students to apply the knowledge gained from the readings, presentations, and assignments to their own field and/or practice settings. Readings have been chosen as examples of general principles as they operate in the local North Carolina context.

Individual consultation with the instructor, field supervisor and other practitioners is encouraged as the student prepares for assignments. However, the student is expected to be the sole author of all written assignments. If the student has any questions about whether consultation with others is appropriate, she should ask the instructor.

Written assignments are designed to build upon each other. Keeping a notebook of assignments is encouraged.

An in-class mid-term and final examination is required of all students. This is non-negotiable. Failure to take an examination will result in the loss of all assigned points for the final grade. Legitimate excuses will be considered and, if agreed upon, the make-up exam will be in the form of an in-office oral examination over the material.

## Assignments and Course Performance Assessment:

“1st half” projects	20%
Mid-term Exam:	30%
“2nd half” projects	20%
Final Exam:	<u>30%</u>
Course Total	100%

Written assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date noted. Assignments may be submitted in writing or as an email attachment in Word. Assignments that are submitted as an email attachment will receive a confirmation that the assignment has been received and whether or not it was able to be opened. If there was a problem opening the assignment the student will be notified. When submitting assignments by email, please take the proper precautions to assure that your file is virus-free.

A short description of each of the assignments is included at the end of this syllabus. Detailed instructions for written projects, oral class presentations, and final project will be provided in separate documents.

### Format for Written Work

Assignments must be typed and use APA format (including, but not limited to, APA guidelines on line spacing, margins, punctuation, within text citations, reference list, and headings). Students should refer to the *UNC School of Social Work Style Guide: A Writing Manual for Social Work Students* and/or the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) for information on APA format. In addition, students should refer to the *School of Social Work Style Guide*, pages 26-32, for guidelines on how to cite others' work properly and avoid plagiarism.

### Grading System

<u>Points</u>	<u>Grade</u>
<69	F
70 - 79	L
80 - 93	P
94 - 100	H

### Policy on Unexcused Absences

Because class periods contain skill building components it is important that students attend class. It is expected that students will attend each class. However, absences may be excused by the instructor for good cause. Students should request an excused absence in an email to the instructor (a) before the class period if the absence is anticipated, or (b) within a week after the absence if the absence was unanticipated. Students may have two unexcused absences with no penalty.

### **Policy on Incompletes and Late Assignments**

There are five out of class assignments (worth 10 points each) that have due dates that must be met for full credit to be assigned. Students must notify the instructor *before* the due date and time by email if an assignment is going to be turned in late. Whenever possible, students should notify the instructor at least 24 hours before the due date. Extensions may be given at the instructor's discretion for extenuating circumstances—extensions will not be granted in all cases. Students will lose five points (i.e. from an 85 to an 80) for each 24 hours beyond the due date and time (including weekends) for unexcused late assignments or late assignments that are not discussed with the instructor.

The due date on the class presentation and final project are fixed. Students must notify the instructor *before* the due date and time by email if it is impossible to meet the requirements at the time due. Alternate arrangements may be made at the instructors discretion for the class presentation. Consideration for a grade of incomplete will be made on a case by case basis depending upon circumstances.

### **Policy on Academic Dishonesty**

All written assignments (exams, projects, logic models) should include the following signed pledge. We will discuss the procedures to use if assignments are turned in by email.

“I have neither given or received unauthorized aid in preparing this written work.”

Students are also held responsible for properly citing references in their written work. This topic is discussed at length in the SSW Writing Guide. Students should review the Writing Guide content on citations and plagiarism.

Students in the class who observe or are aware of academic dishonesty on the part of classmates are expected to inform the instructor. Academic dishonesty is contrary to the ethics of the social work profession, unfair to other students, and will not be tolerated in any form.

### **Policy on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities that affect their participation in the course or fulfillment of course requirements may notify the instructor. Special accommodations in instructional format, or the format of assignments, will be considered.

**Course Outline**  
**SoWo 292**

*Note: Reading assignments are to be completed by the class date for which they are listed.*

<b>Class Date</b>	<b>Topics and Readings</b>
January 8	<b>Course Orientation: Paradigms of Evaluation and Practice</b> Introduction to Accountable Practice and Evaluation of Social Interventions Understanding Context in Intervention Research
January 15	<b>Holiday</b>
January 22	<b>Foundations for Accountable Practice:</b> History, Ethics, Issues of Diversity, Social Justice, and Inclusion  Royce et al.: Chapter 1 Introduction Chapter 2 Ethical Issues in Program Evaluation Padgett: Chapter 1 Introduction, Chapter 2 The Researcher as Instrument Chapter 4 Ethical Issues in Qualitative Research
January 29*	<b>Program Evaluation Modeling: Evidence Based Practice</b> Results Management and Logic Modeling  Hatry et al. (pp. 1-58)  Orthner, D.K. & Cole, G. (1999), <i>Developing a measurement system for NC Schools for the Deaf and Blind</i> . Chapel Hill: Jordan Institute for Families. Coffman, J. (1999). <i>Learning from logic models: An example of a family/school partnership program</i> . Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project.  <a href="http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~hfrp/pubs/onlinepubs/logic.pdf">http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~hfrp/pubs/onlinepubs/logic.pdf</a> Gambrill, E. (1999). Evidence-based practice: An alternative to authority-based practice. <i>Families in Society</i> , 80 (4) 341-350. <a href="http://www.hsl.unc.edu/ereserves/fall101/SOWO292/Gambrill.pdf">http://www.hsl.unc.edu/ereserves/fall101/SOWO292/Gambrill.pdf</a>
February 5	<b>Needs Assessments: Client and Community</b> Approaches to assessing baseline needs for interventions  Royce et al.: Chapter 3  Orthner, D.K., Zimmerman, L.I. and colleagues (1994). <i>Executive Overview: Durham County Community Needs Assessment</i> . Chapel Hill: Human Services Research & Design Laboratory. (on reserve)

Putnam, R.D. (1995). Bowling alone: America's declining social capital.  
*Journal of Democracy* (6)1 65-78.

[http://www.press.jhu.edu/demo/journal\\_of\\_democracy/v006/6.1putnam.html](http://www.press.jhu.edu/demo/journal_of_democracy/v006/6.1putnam.html)

Rash, B.C. & McCoy, B. (February 28, 2001) Social Capital Benchmark Survey: Executive summary for the Charlotte region. Charlotte, NC: Foundation for the Carolinas.

[http://www.cfsv.org/communitysurvey/docs/carolinas\\_sh.pdf](http://www.cfsv.org/communitysurvey/docs/carolinas_sh.pdf)

Annie E. Casey Foundation (2001). 2001 KIDS COUNT Data Book Online. Baltimore, MD: Author.

<http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/kc2001/>

February 12\*

**Qualitative Assessment in Evaluation**

Qualitative methods for social interventions

Royce et al.: Chapter 4

Padgett: Chapters 3, 5,6

February 19

**Measurement Instruments for Evaluation:**

Constructing and Using Interview Guides, Questionnaires, Scales and Indexes

Royce et al.: Chapters 11, 12

Hatry et al., (pp. 59-80, 147-163)

Orthner, D.K., Jones-Senpai, H., & Williamson, S. (2001). Income and family strength in North Carolina. Chapel Hill: Jordan Institute for Families. (email distribution)

February 26\*

**Intervention Process Designs:**

Evaluability Assessments and Intervention Effectiveness Measures

Royce et al.: Chapter 5

Orthner, D.K., Hudgins, ES. & Hyman, B. (1996). Implementation assessment of the Work First program. Chapel Hill: Jordan Institute for Families. (on reserve for reading).

Orthner, D.K., Erlick, R. & Cole, G. (2001). Collaboration: A Smart Start success. Chapel Hill: Frank Porter Graham Center for Child Development (email distribution)

March 5

**Mid-Term Examination: In Class**

March 12

**Spring Break**

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- March 19                   **Client and Program Outcome Designs**
- Royce et al.: Chapters 6, 8, 9 (pp. 213-226)  
 Hatry et al. (pp. xv, 81-112 and 125-128)
- Orthner, D.K., Cook, P., Rose, R. & Flair, K. (2001). Longitudinal analysis of an after-school program for at-risk children. Chapel Hill: Jordan Institute for Families. (email distribution)
- March 26                   **Program and Community Impact Designs**
- Royce et al.: Chapter 9 (pp. 226-248)
- Orthner et al., (1995). Impact Evaluation of the North Carolina JOBS Program. Chapel Hill: Human Services Research & Design Laboratory. (on reserve)
- April 2\*                   **Program Cost Analyses**
- Royce et al.: Chapter 10
- Peveler, R. (2001). A depression management programme increased depression free days and costs in depressed frequent users of general healthcare. *Evidence-Based Mental Health* (4)4 79.  
<http://ebmentalhealth.com/cgi/reprint/4/3/79.pdf>
- The Perry Preschool Project Significant Benefits: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Project. Read webpage and then view slides of the project using Power Point.  
<http://www.highscope.org/research/RESPER.HTM>
- Sorenson, J.E. Client Outcomes and Costs in Frontier Mental Health Services: Letter to the Field #13  
<http://www.wiche.edu/mentalhealth/frontier/index.htm>
- April 9                   **Quantitative Data Analysis: Statistics of Difference**
- Royce et al.: Chapters 14  
 Hatry et al. (pp. 113-124)
- April 16                   **Quantitative Data Analysis: Statistics of Association**
- Royce et al.: Chapters 14
- April 23                   **Qualitative Data Analysis**
- Padgett:           Chapters 7, 8, 10

April 30\*

**Using Evaluation Data for Program Design and Improvements**  
Overcoming Evaluation Challenges

Royce et al.: Chapters 13 and 15  
Padgett: Chapters 9 and Epilogue  
Hatry et al. (pp. 125-145)

TBA

**Final Exam: In Class**

**\*Assignments**

- Jan. 22** Write a three to four page paper describing the intervention program you will use to develop a system of practice evaluation. Describe the population (clients, participants) the program serves, program resources and program activities. Also describe any on-going evaluation process that is now in use in the agency, if any. Include a section describing ethical issues you will need to consider in evaluating practice with the population you serve and for the setting in which you practice.
- Feb. 5** Prepare a graphic logic model for a program in which you are currently working or have had experience. Place in the model the following components: long term target result(s), program or intervention results, activities designed to produce results, and client needs that must be addressed. Write a two-page analysis of your agency's program logic to describe the "theory of change" that underlies the intervention.
- Feb. 19** Develop a 3-4 page questionnaire that could be used in your agency to assess program needs on the part of clients or the program target population. Be sure to include some basic demographic/identification questions as well as specific questions related to service needs.
- April 2** Write a 3-page design for an impact evaluation of your agency. Explain the need and purpose for an impact evaluation, the people from whom the data will be collected, and the methods that you plan to use for collecting and interpreting the data. Describe the appropriate statistical procedures that will be used in the data analysis and why these were selected.
- April 30** Conduct a statistical analysis of data from children who did and did not attend an afterschool program. Prepare a report that includes the following: 1) your hypothesis or research question, 2) your rationale for your hypothesis or research question, 3) a description of the sample you are using, 4) the statistical procedure being used, 4) the findings from your analysis, and 5) your interpretation of the analysis in light of your hypothesis or research question.