



Course No: SOWO 810 (Section 003)
Course Title: EVALUATION OF SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTIONS
Semester: Spring 2017
Time/Location: Monday 9:00AM – 11:50AM, Room 300
Instructor: Paul Lanier, PhD, MSW
School of Social Work
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Office Hours: Mondays 12:00PM – 2:00PM and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Students apply knowledge of research methods and evidence-based practice to the evaluation of social work interventions by developing and conducting a detailed evaluation of a specific social work intervention.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to draw from knowledge of research methods and evidence-based practice, and work effectively with supervisors, colleagues, peers, and consumers, to design, implement, and disseminate the results of an evaluation of an intervention, program, service or policy implemented by their placement agency or needed by current or prospective consumers or program or policy planners. Specifically, students will demonstrate:

- 1) Skills for reviewing and presenting information about the importance of a social problem addressed by an agency, including its relation to discrimination based on culture, economic status, gender, religion, age, or sexual orientation;
- 2) The ability to consider this social problem in the context of current service delivery, and critically determine a matter requiring evaluation related to client need, the process of service delivery, or service outcomes;
- 3) The ability to design an appropriate evaluation, including identifying a sample, determining a suitable study approach; and selecting appropriate, reliable, and valid measures (including consideration of validity for the targeted population);
- 4) The ability to plan, conduct, and synthesize appropriate qualitative or quantitative analyses;

- 5) The ability to apply knowledge of social work ethics and values to the design of practice intervention or other types of evaluations;
- 6) The ability to consider the implications of results for practice and policy (including implications related to the agency's success in working with clients from different groups);
- 7) The ability to summarize evaluation results and program improvement plans in a concise written document; and
- 8) The ability to present evaluation plans and program improvement plans to appropriate audiences.

TEXTS AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Required: Rubin, R, & Babbie, E.R. (2013). *Essential research methods for social work*. (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks-Cole.

Recommended: Royse, D., Thayer, B.A., & Padgett, D.K. (2010) *Program evaluation: An introduction* (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks-Cole.

I will post our course materials, including syllabus, assignment information, PowerPoints, and links to useful web sites on Sakai, at <https://sakai.unc.edu> *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.*

ASSIGNMENTS:

Student performance will be evaluated based on the assignments described below **(detailed instructions for each assignment will be available on Sakai in the "Assignments" folder)**.

The student's primary assignment in this course is an evaluation project. Each student will design and conduct an evaluation of an intervention, program, service, or policy related to an important social problem. Ideally, this social problem will be one that is addressed in the field agency setting. If not, students can work with the instructor to find existing data or data collection strategy within the scope of the class (e.g., secondary data analysis). Students are expected to evaluate client/program needs or the process and outcomes of practice in their field placement, in the form of a process or outcome evaluation.

This semester-long evaluation will include:

- a focused literature review of the problem being addressed;
- formulation of the practice or policy related evaluation question(s);
- development of the evaluation design, sampling strategy, and measurement plan;
- data collection;
- data analysis;
- writing a final evaluation report; and
- presenting the evaluation findings.

The final project will be a written evaluation report using the format presented by Royse, Thyer, & Padgett (Chapter 15); it will include an executive summary, introduction, review of the literature, methodology, results, discussion, references, and appendices.

Evaluation Field Agreement

Prior to beginning your evaluation (including the phased worksheets), you must complete the **Evaluation Field Agreement** and have it signed by your field instructor or task supervisor. This form is available and can be submitted via Sakai. Use this form to have a conversation about the purpose of the evaluation project and to develop a clear understanding of the scope of your project. This agreement can be amended during the course of the semester if there are substantial changes to your evaluation plan. However, it is critical that your field setting is aware of your project and approves of your plan.

Phased Assignment Worksheets

To ensure that the project is started promptly and can be completed during the semester, each student will complete **four** phased assignment worksheets. These assignments will be used to develop the final evaluation report. Please bring a copy of each assignment to class (we will conduct peer reviews of each other's work). *Detailed instructions for each Phased Assignment Worksheet will be available on Sakai in the Assignments folder.*

Phased Assignment Worksheet I: Description of social problem and justification of evaluation

- You will be asked to:
 - Answer questions pertaining to the social problem to be addressed and its importance/justification;
 - Provide at least three citations related to the social problem to be addressed and at least three citations related to the project's justification;
 - Answer questions pertaining to the intervention to be evaluated (if you plan to evaluate an intervention);
 - Clearly state draft evaluation questions.

Note: The final paper will include a literature review with at least six scholarly citations that are pertinent to the evaluation. Pay special attention to the literature on relevant evidence-based practices in the area of study.

Phased Assignment Worksheet II: Evaluation design

- You will be asked to answer questions related to your evaluation design, including the type of evaluation you will implement (e.g., needs assessment, formative evaluation, process evaluation, outcome evaluation), your research design, and the strategy you will use to collect the data (e.g., focus groups, interviews, chart abstraction). You will also be asked to report the targeted sample size and how you will identify and recruit your sample participants (or obtain existing records).

Phased Assignment Worksheet III: Measurement

- You will be asked to answer questions related to your measurement plan (i.e., the data collection instrument you plan to use; this may be an existing instrument, one you create, or a combination of the two).

Phased Assignment Worksheet IV: Draft data analysis plan

- You will be asked to answer questions related to your analysis plan, including your research question(s), available data, analysis strategy, and which technique(s) you will use to answer the project's research question(s) (e.g., t-test for independent groups, ANOVA, correlations, interpretation strategy for qualitative data).

Final Paper/Program Evaluation Report

The primary assignment for this course will be an evaluation of an intervention, program, service, or policy related to an important social problem. It will incorporate content from the four phased assignment worksheets as well as the results and interpretation of the findings. It will include an executive summary, introduction, review of the literature, methodology, results, discussion, references, and appendices. The final evaluation report is expected to be about **12-15 pages in length**, excluding the executive summary, references, tables/figures, and appendices. Its organization is as follows, with approximate page allocations indicated in parentheses:

Executive Summary – This one page summary will incorporate the introduction through the discussion/interpretation as described below.

Introduction of the Social/Health Problem (2-3 pages) – The introduction should include a statement of the problem to be addressed (e.g., child abuse and neglect, homelessness, mental illness, post-traumatic stress disorder). Identify the specific population that the problem affects and provide information about the prevalence (i.e., the number and percentage of people in a population who currently have the problem) and incidence (i.e., the number and rate of new cases over time) of the problem.

Discuss the importance of the problem in terms of human and financial costs. How costly is this problem to the individuals it affects? How costly is the problem to society (e.g., health care costs, lost wages, crime)? What are the short- and long-term outcomes of the problem? What are the implications of not addressing the problem for those it affects and society as a whole? Why is the problem an important issue for social work practice to address (i.e., does the problem affect a large number of people, is the population that the problem affects profoundly marginalized or underserved in some way)? Make your reader care about this problem and the population it affects.

Review of the Best Available Evidence (2-3 pages) – Previous empirical research pertaining to relevant interventions, outcomes, or other matters specific to your population and problem of interest should be reviewed concisely and critically in this section.

Start your search with some of the more comprehensive databases (i.e., Web of Science, Social Work Abstracts, Pubmed). You might also try Google Scholar. Start your review early and contact your professor immediately if you have trouble locating articles. Historically, students who have waited to begin this process have struggled with this section of the paper. So, students are **strongly encouraged** to get an early start on this review. If there are no studies about the effectiveness of a particular intervention with your specific population of interest (i.e., functional family therapy with juvenile delinquents who are diagnosed with developmental disabilities) consider reviewing the general literature on the intervention (i.e., functional family therapy with juvenile delinquents in the general population) and draw conclusions about the potential effectiveness of the intervention for your population. After you have identified several articles, it might be helpful to construct a table (template available from instructor) in order to take a more collective look at their methodological strengths and weaknesses.

Conclude this section with some discussion about why your evaluation project is necessary (i.e., there's no evidence at all or that it works for your particular population, an intervention was modified and needs to be evaluated, etc.). What knowledge gaps do you hope to fill with your evaluation? This section should end with an explication of the research questions.

Evaluation Methodology (2-3 pages) – This section has the following four subsections: (1) Design, (2) Sample, (3) Measures, and (4) Data analysis. If you are conducting an outcome evaluation, describe the intervention in this section. Provide separate subheadings for each section.

- **Design:** First, discuss the type of study design you will be using in your evaluation.
- **Sample:** Second, discuss how your sample was obtained, (e.g., convenience sample, random sample). Note where you obtained your sample and whether it was a probability or non-probability sample. For those using single-subject designs, you should provide a description of your client, your client's problems and how and why the particular problems were selected for intervention.
- **Measures:** Next, discuss the targets or outcomes that will be examined and your plan for measuring change in the outcomes. Be sure to discuss how your data will be collected (e.g., IRS, standardized measures, administrative records) and by whom (i.e., you, the client, third party [multiple methods]). The psychometric properties of any standardized measures that are being used should be discussed.
- **Intervention Description (if process or outcome evaluation):** Fourth, you should provide a description of the intervention(s) as implemented. The intervention(s) should be sufficiently described so it can be replicated.
- **Data Analysis:** Fifth, you should provide a description of your data analysis.

Results (2-3 pages) – This section will describe the results of your evaluation. If quantitative methods are used, descriptive statistics should be presented first and

inferential statistics presented last. If qualitative methods are used, a description of the analysis themes is to be provided with illustrative quotes included as examples. Tables/figures should be used as appropriate, and are not included in the page count.

Discussion/Interpretation (3-4 pages) – This section should include the following, in this order: (1) a summary of your findings (e.g., related to the success of treatment, the discovery of new client needs, or whether staff are operating with a consistent program model); (2) a discussion of the implications of these findings and related recommendations (e.g., to change service delivery in a focused way to improve outcomes, better reach new clients, or assure consistency in service provision); (3) plausible alternative explanations for your findings; (4) a discussion of the limitations of your evaluation; and (5) suggestions for further evaluation (e.g., given the limitations of your initial design, how the next evaluation can be improved). This section should conclude with a discussion of the importance of your findings to social work practice, policy, and research.

References – Provide an accurate list of all cited sources.

Tables, Figures – Tables and figures are suggested to display your results. Typically, the first table describes the sample.

Appendix – Include copies of any scales or questionnaires used in your evaluation and other relevant information.

The complete evaluation report should follow **APA 6th edition formatting**, and the structure/suggestions presented in Royse, Thyer, & Padgett, Chapter 15. *Instructions and rubric on Sakai.*

5-Minute Class Presentation: You will present your entire evaluation study to the class in a brief, 5-minute format. This presentation will help you practice the skill of describing your evaluation and the implications of your findings succinctly. This presentation will occur prior to the poster presentation which will help you develop this “elevator speech.” You will get 5 minutes and 5 slides to deliver this presentation.

Poster presentation: Research and evaluation findings are often disseminated through poster presentation sessions at social work conferences. To practice this skills, you will be asked to participate in a poster presentation session, where you will have the opportunity to present your project to social work students, faculty, and staff.

Class participation: A critical component of learning and creating a learning environment is thoughtful participation in class discussion. This will require class attendance. If you are not in class (absent or late), you are not participating. Participation points will be based on attendance, participation in class activities and discussions, tardiness, and self-evaluation. Students who are late to class more than 3 times without adequate explanation will receive a

zero for participation points. Students with more than two absences will receive an “L” unless they have made prior arrangements with the instructor.

GRADING SYSTEM:

| Components | Possible Points |
|--|------------------------|
| Phased assignment worksheets (5 points each) | 20 |
| 5-minute class presentation | 10 |
| Poster presentation | 15 |
| Evaluation report (final paper) | 50 |
| Class participation & attendance | 5 |
| Total | 100 |

The School of Social Work operates on an evaluation system of Honors (H), Pass (P), Low Pass (L), and Fail (F). The numerical values of these grades are:

| | | | |
|---|-----------|-------------|-----------------------|
| H | High Pass | 100 – 94 | Clearly Excellent |
| P | Pass | 93 – 80 | Entirely Satisfactory |
| L | Low Pass | 79 – 70 | Inadequate |
| F | Fail | 69 or below | Unacceptable |

A grade of P is considered entirely satisfactory. The grade of Honors (“H”) — which only a limited number of students attain – signifies that the work is clearly excellent in all respects.

EXPECTATIONS FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Written assignments should be typed and follow APA format as specified in the APA Publication Manual (6th edition). The School of Social Work offers a variety of helpful writing resources available at <http://sww.unc.edu/students/writing>.

The following websites and links also provide helpful information regarding APA formatting:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

<http://www.apastyle.org/apa-style-help.aspx>

http://sww.unc.edu/files/web/pdf/APA_Quick_Reference_Guide.pdf

POLICY ON INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS:

A paper is considered late if handed in any later than the start of class on the day it is due. Students must notify the instructor at least 24 hours before an assignment is due if an assignment is going to be turned in late. Extensions may be given at the instructor’s discretion. Students will lose five points for each day beyond the due date/time (including weekends) for unexcused late assignments. Assignments more than 5 days late will not be accepted.

Please note that technical difficulties are not an acceptable excuse for turning in an assignment. All technical inquiries should be directed to the staff of the SSW Computing Information and Technology Unit (CITU).

POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

“The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has had a student-led honor system for over 100 years. Academic integrity is at the heart of Carolina and we all are responsible for upholding the ideals of honor and integrity. The student-led Honor System is responsible for adjudicating any suspected violations of the Honor Code and all suspected instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the honor system. Information, including your responsibilities as a student is outlined in the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance.” (From <http://studentconduct.unc.edu/faculty/honor-syllabus>.) Your full participation and observance of the Honor Code is expected. The Honor Code can be found at <http://studentconduct.unc.edu/sites/studentconduct.unc.edu/files/documents/Instrument.pdf>

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.”** In keeping with the UNC Honor Code, if reason exists to believe that academic dishonesty has occurred, a referral will be made to the Office of the Student Attorney General for investigation and further action as required. Please refer to the *APA Style Guide* for information on attribution of quotes, plagiarism, and appropriate citation. [The UNC Writing Center](#) provides clear guidelines regarding what does and does not constitute plagiarism.

Accessibility and Resources Services:

The University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities. All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service Office. In the first instance please visit their website <http://accessibility.unc.edu>, or 919-962-8300 or Email; - accessibility@unc.edu. A student is welcome to initiate the registration process at any time, however, the process can take time. ARS is particularly busy in the run-up to Finals and during Finals. Students submitting Self-ID forms at that time are unlikely to have accommodations set until the following semester. Please contact ARS as early in the semester as possible.

Writing Support

Clear, cogent writing is an essential skill for social work professionals. Writing support is available to all students through the School’s Writing Support Team; they can help you strengthen your writing skills by sharing strategies for organizing information, presenting a cohesive argument, ensuring clear communication, and mastering APA style. Writing Support offers a learning opportunity for students but does not merely copy edit student papers. Writing support is available in-person, by e-mail, or by phone. E-mail a requested appointment day and time to SOSWwritingsupport@gmail.com . In addition, see the Writing Resources and

References page on the School's website (under the Current Students tab: <https://ssw.unc.edu/students/writing>).

POLICY ON THE USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN THE CLASSROOM

We are all invested in creating a learning environment of respect and engagement. Students may use laptops in class for taking notes or completing small group tasks. However, I ask that you use them **only** for relevant activities – not for checking email or surfing the Web. During class, cell phones and other devices should be silenced. No text messaging during class.

CLASS PREPARATION, ATTENDANCE, AND PARTICIPATION

In order to fully participate in and benefit from each class session, **students should complete required readings before class and come to class prepared.** Attendance is critical to your learning, as well as to the atmosphere of inclusiveness and trust in the class. Therefore, attendance at all class sessions is expected, and an attendance sign-in sheet will be passed around at the beginning of each class. It is important to be on time as to not disrupt class. We will cover a great deal of information in each class session. I ask that you contact me, **in advance**, if you need to miss a class session due to illness or an emergency. It is your responsibility to obtain handouts, information about class content, and information about announcements, etc., from your classmates if you are unable to attend a class.

COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENTS

| Class | Date | Content | Assignment Due |
|--|---|---------------------------------|--|
| 1/16: MLK - No Class , review Evaluation Field Agreement with field instructor and formulate evaluation project ideas | | | |
| 1 | 1/23 | Introduction | |
| 2 | 1/30 | RQ and Evaluation | **Worksheet I due** **Field Agreement due** |
| 3 | 2/6 | Sampling & Design | |
| 4 | 2/13 | Learning Group Consultation I | **Worksheet II due** |
| 5 | 2/20 | Measurement | |
| 6 | 2/27 | Measurement Lab | **Worksheet III due** |
| 7 | 3/6 | Learning Group Consultation II | |
| 3/13: Spring Break - No Class | | | |
| 8 | 3/20 | Analysis Plan 1 – Quantitative | |
| 9 | 3/27 | Analysis Plan 2 – Qualitative | **Worksheet IV due** |
| 10 | 4/3 | Preparing Research Reports | |
| 11 | 4/10 | Learning Group Consultation III | |
| 12 | 4/17 | Advanced Topics in Evaluation | **Final Paper due ** |
| 13 | 4/24 | Presentations | **Class Presentation due*** |
| 14 | SOWO 810 Poster Session (date/time TBD 5/1??) | | |
| 5/13 SSW Graduation! | | | |

January 16 MLK – No Class

We will not meet as a class. However, you should meet with your field supervisor and your faculty liaison, if available, to review the Field Agreement, and begin to finalize ideas for your proposed evaluation. Outline your ideas and be prepared to discuss in the first class. Note that the finalized agreement is due in 2 weeks, so be proactive in making this a priority for the new semester in field.

**Class 1 – Introduction to Evaluation of Social Work Interventions
January 23**

Content

Overview of the course and evaluation project assignments

Discussion of:

1. Evidence-based practice
2. Rationale and introduction to program evaluation

Student introduction of field agency and initial evaluation plan

Readings:

Rubin & Babbie: Chapter 13

Royse et al.: Chapters 1

Recommended Readings to Review:

Rubin & Babbie: Chapters 1 and 2

**Class 2 – Developing Evaluation Questions and Evaluation Projects
January 30**
Phased Assignment Worksheet I Due
Field Agreement Due

Content

Class discussion regarding developing a feasible evaluation plan

Discussion of:

1. Types of program evaluation (i.e., needs assessment, formative/process evaluation, outcome/impact evaluation)
2. How to identify issues to evaluate in a practice setting
3. How to form evaluation problem statements and evaluation questions

Readings:

Rubin & Babbie: Chapter 5

Royse et al: Chapters 3, 5, 7, 9

Class 3 – Sampling & Design
February 6

Content

Discussion of how to develop:

1. Sampling design
2. Evaluation designs
2. Evaluation logic models

Readings:

Rubin & Babbie: Chapters 10, 11, and 12

Class 4 – Learning Group Consultation I
February 13 ***Phased Assignment Worksheet II Due***

Instructor will assign students to learning groups posted via Sakai before class. In these small groups, students will describe their projects and troubleshoot current challenges. Learning groups will consult with the instructor during assigned time during class. Note that there is another class session for (Week 10) for learning groups to meet during class time. There may be other times during the semester when groups can meet during class, but groups are encouraged to use each other as resources and for support.

Class 5 – Measurement
February 20

Content

Quantitative and qualitative options for data collection
How to develop and search for appropriate data collection instruments

Readings:

Rubin & Babbie: Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9

Class 6 – Measurement Lab
February 27 ***Phased Assignment Worksheet III Due***

Content

Application of Measurement Concepts

Discussion of:

1. Developing scales and questionnaires
2. Drafting interview and focus group guides
3. Observational methods

Class 7 – Learning Group Consultation II
March 6

Content

Students will meet with learning groups and receive individual consultation with the instructor during assigned times.

Class 8 – Development of Evaluation Data Analysis Plans-I
March 20

Content

Analyzing quantitative data
Hands-on practice with quantitative data analysis

- LAB – We will be using the virtual computer lab so please bring your laptop

Discussion of proposal data analysis plans

Readings:

Rubin & Babbie: Chapter 18

Other Resources:

Electronic Statistics Textbook: <http://www.statsoft.com/textbook/stathome.html>
Statistical Computing: <http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/>

Class 9 – Development of Evaluation Data Analysis Plans-II
March 27 ***Phased Assignment Worksheet IV Due***

Content

Analyzing qualitative data
Hands-on practice with qualitative data analysis

- LAB – We will be using the virtual computer lab so please bring your laptop

Readings:

Rubin & Babbie: Chapter 19
Marsiglio: Conducting qualitative in-depth interviews.
Coffey & Atkinson: Chapter 2 (Coding)
Padgett: Chapter 8 (Rigor)

Class 10 – Preparing Research Reports
April 3

Content

Discussion of how to prepare evaluation reports and present findings for varying audiences

Discussion of how to interpret evaluation findings in a way that is relevant for service planning and delivery

Readings:

Rubin & Babbie: Appendix A and B

Royse et al.: Chapter 15

Class 11 – Learning Group Consultation III
April 10

Content

Students will meet with learning groups and receive individual consultation with the instructor during assigned times.

Class 12 – Advanced Topics in Social Work Evaluation
April 17 ***Final Paper Due***

Content

Instructor will lead class discussion of cutting-edge evaluation methods and present case examples from the field. The future of the science of social work and evidence-based practice will be discussed.

Class 13 – Presentations
April 24 ***Class Presentation Slides Due***

Class 14 Poster Presentation Session
TBD ***Poster Due***