



Course No: SOWO 810 (Section 004)
Course Title: EVALUATION OF SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTIONS
Semester: Spring 2016
Time/Location: Tuesdays 10:30AM – 11:50AM, Room 300
Instructor: Paul Lanier, PhD, MSW
School of Social Work
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 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 a group assignment. Each group 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 by at least one of the group members' practice setting. If not, groups can work with the instructor to find existing data or data collection strategy within the scope of the class (e.g., secondary data analysis, document review). Groups are expected to evaluate consumer/program needs or the process and outcomes of practice in their field placement, in the form of a needs, process, outcome, or other type of assessment.

This semester-long evaluation will include:

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

Phased Assignment Worksheets

To ensure that the project is started promptly and can be completed during the semester, each group 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

- Your group 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 your group plans 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

- Your group 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). Your group 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

- Your group 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

- Your group will be asked to answer questions related to your analysis plan, including your research question(s), available data, analysis strategy, and which technique(s)

your group 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, written group 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 paper is expected to require 8 pages, excluding the executive summary, references, tables/figures, and appendices. Its organization is as follows, with approximate page allocations indicated in parentheses:

Executive Summary: (1 page) – This one page summary will incorporate the introduction through the discussion/interpretation as described below.

Introduction (1 page) – 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.

Literature Review (1 page) – 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 GoogleScholar. 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.

Methods (2 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 (1-2 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 (1-2 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 formatting, and the structure/suggestions presented in Royse, Thyer, & Padgett, Chapter 15. *Instructions and rubric on Sakai.*

Poster presentation: Research and evaluation findings are often disseminated through poster presentation sessions at social work conferences. Your group will be asked to participate in a poster presentation session, where you will have the opportunity to present your project to another section 810 as well as social work 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.

Value: 5 points (will consist of 10 points for students who conduct individual projects)

Peer evaluation of group participation: Students will evaluate the level and quality of their fellow group members’ participation throughout the semester using the following criteria: preparation, contribution, respect for others’ ideas, and flexibility. Students will also evaluate their own contribution to the group and document their roles and responsibilities associated with the group project and class assignments.

GRADING SYSTEM:

Components	Possible Points
Phased assignment worksheets (5 points each)	20
Evaluation report (final paper)	50
Poster presentation	20
Class participation & attendance	5
Peer evaluation of group participation	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://ssw.unc.edu/students/writing>.

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

<http://juno.concordia.ca/help/howto/apa.php>

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

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

Students are expected to use good academic English; grades will be lowered for poor grammar, syntax, or spelling. Students can get help with their writing from the School of Social Work writing support team: Diane Wyant (dwyant@email.unc.edu) and Susan White (sewhite@email.unc.edu). Help with writing is also available through the UNC Writing Center: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/>.

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). Please contact Manuel Garcia at megarcia@email.unc.edu or 919-962-6416.

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.

POLICY ON ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Students with disabilities or medical conditions that may impact their participation in the course and who may need accommodations should contact the Department of Accessibility Resources and Services (919-962-8300 or T-711 NC RELAY). Accessibility Resources and Services will notify the instructor regarding recommended accommodations. Instructors cannot provide accommodations to a student without communication from the Department of Accessibility Resources and Services <http://accessibility.unc.edu>

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	1/12	Introduction	
1/19: MLK - No Class			
2	1/26	RQ and Evaluation	
3	2/2	Sampling & Design	**Worksheet I due**
4	2/9	Measurement	**Worksheet II due** **Field Agreement due**
5	2/16	Measurement Lab	
6	2/23	Analysis Plan 1 – Quantitative	**Worksheet III due**
7	3/1	Analysis Plan 2 – Qualitative	
3/8: Spring Break - No Class			
8	3/15	Preparing Research Reports	**Worksheet IV due**
9	3/22	Preparing Research Reports Lab	
10	3/29	Consultation	
11	4/5	Consultation	
12	4/12	Consultation	
13	SOWO 810 Poster Session (date/time TBD)		**Final Paper due Friday, April 22nd by 5PM**

**Class 1 – Introduction to Evaluation of Social Work Interventions
January 12**

Content

Overview of the course and required assignments
 Discussion of:
 1. Evidence-based practice
 2. Rational and introduction to program evaluation
 Assignment of group membership

Readings:

Rubin & Babbie: Chapter 13
 Royse et al.: Chapters 1

Recommended Readings to Review:

Rubin & Babbie: Chapters 1 and 2

Assignment: Meet with your field supervisor and your faculty liaison, if available, to share your syllabus for SOWO 810, and discuss ideas for your practice or policy related problem and the proposed evaluation. Meet with your group members to discuss the class assignments, possible projects, and possible roles. Be prepared to report out regarding these meetings in the next class (January 26).

January 19 **MLK – No Class**

Class 2 – **Developing Research Questions and Evaluation Projects**
January 26

Content

Class discussion regarding group and field supervisor/faculty liaison meetings

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

Readings:

Rubin & Babbie: Chapter 5

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

Class 3 – **Sampling & Design**
February 2 *****Phased Assignment Worksheet I Due*****

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 – **Measurement**
February 9 *****Phased Assignment Worksheet II Due*****
*****Field Instructor Agreement Due*****

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 5 – Measurement Lab
February 16

Content

Application of Measurement Concepts

Discussion of:

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

Week 6 – Development of Evaluation Data Analysis Plans-I
February 23 ***Phased Assignment Worksheet III Due***

Content

Analyzing quantitative data

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 7 – Development of Evaluation Data Analysis Plans-II
March 1

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)

March 8 Spring Break – No Class

Class 8 – Preparing Research Reports
March 15 *Phased Assignment Worksheet IV Due*****

Content

Discussion of how to write evaluation reports
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 9 – Preparing Research Reports
March 22

Content

Reviews and discussion of evaluation progress

Class 10 – Consultation on Evaluation Implementation
March 29

Whole class, small group, or individual consultation on evaluation implementation issues (together, we will determine the format and topics). We can schedule hands-on workshops and consultation on specific topics. Topics will be based on class needs and may include lab exercises in quantitative or qualitative analysis, interpreting results, presenting “difficult” findings to your field agency, etc.

Class 11 – Consultation on Evaluation Implementation
April 5

Class 12 Consultation on Evaluation Implementation
April 12

TBD Poster Presentation Session

****Final Paper due Friday, April 22nd by 5PM****