



Course No: SOWO 810
Course Title: EVALUATION OF SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTIONS
Semester: Spring 2018
Time/Location: Tuesday 9:00AM – 11:50AM, Room 300
Instructor: **Gary S. Cuddeback, Ph.D., MSW, MPH**
School of Social Work
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COURSE DESCRIPTION: Students apply knowledge of research methods and evidence-based practices to the evaluation of social work interventions by developing and implementing an evaluation project.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to draw from knowledge of research methods and evidence-based practices and work effectively with supervisors, colleagues, peers, and service recipients to design and implement a program evaluation and effectively communicate its results. Specifically, students will demonstrate:

- 1) The ability to review and present information about the importance of a social problem, including its relation to discrimination based on race/ethnicity, culture, economic status, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, or other issues;
- 2) The ability to design a program evaluation or needs assessment, including identifying a sample, determining a suitable study approach and selecting appropriate, reliable, and valid measures of outcomes (including consideration of validity for the targeted population);
- 3) The ability to plan and conduct qualitative or quantitative analyses and interpret and report on the findings from those analyses;
- 4) The ability to apply knowledge of social work ethics and values to the design of program evaluations and/or needs assessments;
- 5) The ability to consider the implications of results for social work practice and policy;
- 6) The ability to summarize program evaluation results in a concise written document; and
- 7) The ability to present program evaluation findings and their practice and policy implications to appropriate audiences.

TEXTS AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Recommended:

Rubin, R., & Babbie, E.R. (2013). *Essential research methods for social work*. (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks-Cole.

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

Course materials, including the syllabus, assignment information, PowerPoints, and links to useful websites will be posted 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**).

The 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 student's field agency setting. If a project in the student's field agency is not possible, students can work with the instructor to find an alternative project (i.e., analysis of secondary data).

The project will include:

- a focused literature review of the problem being addressed;
- formulation of practice- or policy-related evaluation question(s);
- development of an evaluation design, sampling strategy, and measurement plan;
- primary and/or secondary data collection;
- quantitative and/or qualitative data analysis;
- a final evaluation report; and
- a brief presentation.

The final project will be a written evaluation report using the format presented by Royse, Thyer, & Padgett (Chapter 15); it will include an abstract, introduction, review of the literature, method (design, sampling, measures, data analysis), results, discussion, references, and appendices (if applicable).

EVALUATION FIELD AGREEMENT: Students must complete the **Evaluation Field Agreement** and have it signed by the field instructor or task supervisor prior to beginning their projects. This form is designed to facilitate a conversation about the purpose and scope of the evaluation project between the student and the field agency. The agreement can be amended if there are substantial changes to the project; however, it is critical that the field setting is aware of and approves of the project.

PHASED ASSIGNMENT WORKSHEETS: To ensure that the project can begin promptly and can be completed during the semester, each student will complete **four** phased assignment worksheets. These assignments will inform the final evaluation report. Instructions will be available on Sakai.

Phased Assignment Worksheet I: Description of Social Problem: Students will identify a social problem to be addressed and discuss its importance to social work practice and/or policy, clearly identify the intervention to be evaluated, if applicable (e.g., parent-child interaction therapy), and clearly state the evaluation question(s).

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.

Phased Assignment Worksheet II: Evaluation Design: Students will identify the type of evaluation (e.g., needs assessment, formative evaluation, process evaluation, outcome evaluation), sample, and the strategy to be used to collect data (e.g., focus groups, interviews, chart abstraction, secondary data). Students will also be asked to report the targeted sample size and how subjects will be identified and recruited.

Phased Assignment Worksheet III: Measurement: Students will identify a measurement plan (i.e., strategies for measuring evaluation outcomes). This could be a standardized measure, variables in an existing data set, a measure created by the student, or some combination of these.

Phased Assignment Worksheet IV: Data Analysis Plan: Students will develop a data analysis plan, designed to address the research question(s) (e.g., t-test for independent groups, ANOVA, correlation, 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 evaluation or needs assessment findings. It will include an abstract, introduction, review of the literature, method, results, discussion, references, and appendices. The final evaluation report is expected to be about **10-12 pages in length**, excluding the abstract, references, tables/figures, and appendices. Its organization is as follows, with approximate page allocations indicated in parentheses:

Abstract (1 page) – This one page summary will incorporate and synthesize information from the Introduction through the Discussion sections as described below.

Introduction of the social problem (1-2 pages) – The introduction should include a statement of the problem to be addressed (e.g., child abuse and neglect, homelessness, mental illnesses and the criminal justice system, the evidence for services for individuals with post-traumatic stress disorder). Identify the specific population that the problem affects and provide information about its 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).

Discuss the importance of the problem in terms of individual and social costs. How costly is this problem to the individual 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 (i.e., does the problem affect a large number of people, is the population that the problem affects profoundly marginalized or underserved)? What are the social justice and equity issues associated with the problem?

Literature review of the evidence for interventions that address the problem (2-3 pages) – Previous empirical research pertaining to relevant interventions 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. Students are **strongly encouraged** to get an early start on this review. If there are no empirical studies about the effectiveness of a particular intervention with the specific population of interest (e.g., functional family therapy with justice-involved juveniles who are diagnosed with intellectual and developmental disabilities) consider reviewing the general literature on the intervention (i.e., functional family therapy with justice-involved juveniles 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 collective look at the methodological strengths and weaknesses of the studies you selected.

Conclude this section with some discussion about why the evaluation project is necessary (i.e., there is a lack of evidence that the intervention works for your particular population, an intervention was modified and needs to be evaluated, etc.). What knowledge gaps do you hope to address with your evaluation? This section should end with one or two research questions.

Method (1-2 pages) – This section has four subsections: (1) design, (2) sample, (3) measures, and (4) data analysis. In addition, if the project is focused on the evaluation of an intervention (e.g., CBT), describe the intervention briefly in this section as well. Provide separate subheadings for each section.

- **Design:** describe the evaluation design (i.e., single-subject design, single-group pretest posttest).
- **Sample:** describe how the sample was obtained (note where you obtained your sample and whether it was a probability or non-probability sample) and provide a description of the sample. For those using single-subject designs, provide a brief description of the client, the focus of the client's treatment, and why the particular problems were selected for intervention.
- **Measures:** describe the targets or outcomes that were examined and how you measured each outcome. Include details about how data were collected (e.g., IRS, standardized measures, administrative records) and by whom (i.e., researcher, the client). The psychometric properties of any standardized measures that are being used should be presented.
- **Intervention description:** describe the intervention(s), if applicable.
- **Data analysis:** describe the plan for data analysis.

Results (1-2 pages) – This section will describe the results of the evaluation. If quantitative methods are used, descriptive statistics should be presented first and inferential statistics second. If qualitative methods are used, a description of 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 (1-2 pages) – This section should include the following, in this order: (1) a summary of findings; (2) a discussion of the implications of the findings; (3) recommendations for practice and/or policy based on the findings; (4) suggestions for further evaluation (e.g., given the limitations of your initial design, how the next evaluation can be improved); and (5) plausible alternative explanations for your findings and a discussion of the limitations of your evaluation. 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 (optional).

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

IN-CLASS EXAM: Students will take an in-class exam on material presented in class lectures and readings.

5-MINUTE LIGHTNING PRESENTATION: Students will present their evaluation studies in a brief and engaging 5-minute talk. This presentation will help students practice the skill of describing evaluation methods, findings and conclusions succinctly. All 810 sections will use the "lightning talk" format (guidelines and resources will be provided).

CLASS PARTICIPATION: A critical component of learning and creating a learning environment is thoughtful participation in class discussion. Please contact the instructor, in advance, if you need to miss a class session. It is your responsibility to obtain handouts, information about class content, and information about announcements, etc., if you have to miss a class.

GRADING SYSTEM:

Components	Possible Points
Phased assignment worksheets	15
In-class exam	30
Lightning presentation	25
Evaluation report (final paper)	30
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
P	Pass	93 – 80
L	Low Pass	79 – 70
F	Fail	69 or below

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:

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

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

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

POLICY ON INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS: An assignment is considered late if it is 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 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 late. All technical inquiries should be directed to the staff of the SOSW 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." (<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 just prior to and during final exams. 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, if needed.

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; the team 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 is available in-person, by e-mail, or by phone (email 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 respectful and engaging learning environment. Students may use laptops in class for taking notes or completing small group tasks. However, please use them **only** for relevant class activities.

COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Class	Date	Content	Assignment Due
1	1/14	Research presentation, discuss Evaluation Field Agreement and discuss field evaluation project ideas	
2	1/21	Introduction to evaluation	**Field Agreement**
3	1/28	RQs and evaluation	**Worksheet I**
4	2/4	Design, sampling, & measurement	
5	2/11	Consultation I (A-L)	**Worksheet II**
6	2/18	Consultation II (M-Z)	
7	2/25	Measurement	**Worksheet III**
8	3/3	Single-subject design	
3/10: Spring Break No Class			
9	3/17	Analysis 1 – Quantitative	** Worksheet II revised, if needed**
10	3/24	Analysis 2 – Qualitative	
11	3/31	Data Analysis and Interpretation	**Worksheet IV**
12	4/7	Consultation III	In-class exam
13	4/14	Lightning Presentations	** Lightning Presentations**
14	4/21	Lightning Presentations	**Lightning Presentations**
	TBD		**Final Paper**

Class 1 – January 14: Research Presentation, Introductions, Discussion of Project Ideas

Before the next class, **if possible, students should meet with their field supervisor and/or faculty liaison, if available, to review the Field Agreement, and discuss the proposed evaluation project.**

Class 2 – January 21: Introduction to Evaluation of Social Work Interventions (Field Agreement Due**)**

Overview of the course and evaluation project assignments

Discussion of:

1. Evidence-based practices
2. Rationale for and introduction to program evaluation
3. Student introduction of field agency and initial evaluation plan
4. Experiential learning

Readings:

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

Recommended Readings to Review:

Rubin & Babbie: Chapters 1 and 2

Class 3 – January 28: Developing Evaluation Questions and Evaluation Projects (Phased Assignment Worksheet I Due**)**

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
4. Experiential learning

Readings:

Rubin & Babbie: Chapter 5
Royse et al: Chapters 3, 5, 7, 9

Class 4 – February 4: Design, Sampling, & Measurement

Discussion of how to develop:

1. Evaluation logic models
2. Evaluation designs
3. Sampling designs
4. Quantitative and qualitative options for data collection
5. How to develop and search for appropriate data collection instruments
6. Experiential learning

Readings:

Rubin & Babbie: Chapters 10, 11, and 12

Class 5 – February 11: Individual Consultation I (A-L) (Phased Assignment Worksheet II Due**)**

Instructor will assign students to a 20-minute consultation time posted via Sakai before class. Students will review phased assignments 1 and 2, further describe their projects, and troubleshoot challenges. ****You are not required to be in class when it is not your consultation time****

Class 6 – February 18: Individual Consultation II (M-Z)

Instructor will assign students to a 20-minute consultation time posted via Sakai before class. Students will review phased assignments 1 and 2, further describe their projects, and troubleshoot current challenges. ****You are not required to be in class when it is not your consultation time****

Class 7 – February 25: Measurement (Phased Assignment Worksheet III Due**)**

Application of Measurement Concepts

Discussion of:

1. Psychometric properties of standardized measures
2. Developing scales and questionnaires
3. Drafting interview and focus group guides
4. Observational methods
5. Experiential learning

Class 8 – April 3: Single-subject Designs

Single subject-subject designs

Discussion of:

1. Single-subject designs
2. Sampling behaviors and measuring targets for single-subject designs
3. Data collection and data analysis with single-subject designs
4. Experiential learning

Class 9 – March 17: Development of Evaluation Data Analysis Plans – Quantitative (Phased Assignment Worksheet II revised, if needed**)**

Analyzing quantitative data

1. Hands-on practice with quantitative data analysis
2. LAB – we will be using the virtual computer lab so please bring your laptop
3. Discussion of proposed 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 10 – March 24: Development of Evaluation Data Analysis Plans – Qualitative

Analyzing qualitative data

Hands-on practice with qualitative data analysis

Readings:

Rubin & Babbie: Chapter 19

Class 11 – March 31: Data Analysis and Interpretation (Phased Assignment Worksheet IV Due**)**

Class will be used for individual consultations to review data analysis and interpretation of findings for final projects

Readings:

Rubin & Babbie: Appendix A and B
Royse et al.: Chapter 15

Class 12 – April 7: EXAM + Individual Consultation III

In-class exam followed by individual consultation, as needed.

Class 13 – April 14: Lightning Presentations (Final Paper Draft Due**)**

Class 14 – April 21: Lightning Presentations (Lightning Presentation Slides Due**)**

Final Paper Due TBD