



Course No: SOWO 810 (Section 003)

Course Title: EVALUATION OF SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTIONS

Semester: Spring 2021

Time/Location: Tuesday 9:00AM – 11:50AM on Zoom ([link](#))

Instructor: Daniel J. Gibbs, M.S.W., J.D.
School of Social Work
Tate Turner Kuralt Building, Room 426A
Phone: (803)238-5142
dangibbs@live.unc.edu

Office Hours: Thursdays 3:00PM – 5:00PM ([link](#)) 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.

*this text is now on the 9th edition, 3rd or 4th edition is fine, I have provided a chapter conversion document for 3rd and 4th on Sakai

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

Course materials, including syllabus, assignment information, Powerpoints, and links to useful web sites 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 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 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. *Detailed instructions for each Phased Assignment Worksheet will be available on Sakai in the Assignments folder.*

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 7th edition formatting**, and the structure/suggestions presented in Royse, Thyer, & Padgett, Chapter 15. *Instructions and rubric on Sakai.*

In-Class Methodology Exam: Students will take an in-class exam designed to assess your ability to apply concepts from this course to consuming evaluation reports and research studies. Students will be given excerpts from evaluation studies and asked to identify and synthesize key concepts from the reading and lectures.

5-Minute Lightning Presentation: You will present your entire evaluation study in a brief and engaging 5-minute talk. This presentation will help you practice the skill of describing your evaluation methodology and the implications of your findings succinctly. We will use the “lightning talk” format and more resources will be provided.

Course Engagement and Attendance: For this course to contribute most effectively to your and your classmates’ development as professionals, it is critical that students actively participate in the learning environment. Some students are more likely than others to speak in class discussions and there will inevitably be challenges as we try to foster community in the synchronous Zoom format, so engagement will be defined broadly. Students who wish to receive full credit for this item will need to consistently engage in any of the following activities: participating in class discussions/activities, asking or responding to in-class questions about the material, communicating with the class via Sakai (e.g., sharing a resource or asking about course material), or talking outside of class with the instructor either through office hours/appointments or via email. The instructor will keep detailed records of engagement activities, and students may inquire about their progress at any time.

Engagement also requires class attendance. If you are not in class (absent or late), you are not participating. Students who are late to class more than 2 times without adequate explanation or prior permission will begin to have points deducted from this item. Students with more than two absences will receive an “L” unless they have made prior arrangements with the instructor. In the event that you must be absent or be late to a class, please notify the instructor in advance unless emergency circumstances prevent you from doing so.

GRADING SYSTEM:

Components	Possible Points
Phased Assignment Worksheets (5 Points Each)	20
5-Minute Class Presentation	15
In-Class Methodology Exam	20
Evaluation Report (Final Paper)	40
Course Engagement and 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 – 74	Entirely Satisfactory
L	Low Pass	73 – 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 (7th edition). The School of Social Work offers a variety of helpful writing resources available at <https://ssw.unc.edu/academics/resources/apa-style-and-writing-resources/>

The following websites and links also provide helpful information regarding APA formatting: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html
<http://www.apastyle.org/apa-style-help.aspx>

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.

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 (<https://ssw.unc.edu/academics/resources/apa-style-and-writing-resources/>).

CLASS PREPARATION, ATTENDANCE, AND PARTICIPATION

In order to fully participate in and benefit from each class session, **students should complete required readings and assignments 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. I ask that you contact me, *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., from your classmates if you are unable to attend a class.

SPRING 2021 ASYNCHRONOUS CONTENT

For Spring 2021, instructor will use asynchronous content to minimize Zoom-based lectures and allow for greater flexibility for learning. **Topic Videos** will be relatively short (10-15 minutes) and allow students to return to information as needed during the semester. The Topic Videos will be posted to Sakai and will focus on the following topics:

1. Intro to evaluation and capstone project
2. Developing evaluation questions and selecting a design
3. Measurement and Sampling
4. QI and SSDs
5. Quantitative Analysis
6. Qualitative Analysis
7. Preparing Research Reports
8. Preparing Lightning Talks

In addition to the Topic Videos, there will be 3 **Guest Speaker Videos** for the course. These talks will be recorded and posted on Sakai. One live guest speaker session will be scheduled in each of the three time slots for 810 sections (Monday at 9 am, Tuesday at 9 am, and Tuesday at 2 pm). Students are expected to attend the live version for their section and engage with the speaker via Zoom. Students in the other sections will be expected to view the recordings of the guest speakers as asynchronous content that week.

COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Class	Date	Content	Assignment Due	Asynchronous
1	1/12	Introduction, RQs and Evaluation		Topic Video #1
<i>1/18 MLK Jr. Holiday – No Class on 1/19</i>				
2	1/26	Design, Sampling, & Measurement	**Field Agreement**	TV #2
3	2/2	Measurement Lab	**Worksheet I**	TV #3 Speaker #1
4	2/9	Consultation I	**Worksheet II** Due by consultation day	none
<i>2/16 Wellness Day – No Class</i>				
5	2/23	Consultation II		none
6	3/2	Consultation III		none
7	3/9	Quality Improvement	**Worksheet III**	TV #4 Speaker #2
8	3/16	Quant. Analysis		TV #5
9	3/23	Qual. Analysis	**Worksheet IV**	TV #6 Speaker #3
10	3/30	Preparing Research Reports		TV #7
11	4/6	Consultation IV		TV #8
12	4/13	Consultation V	Methods/Accreditation Exam	none
13	4/20	Consultation VI	**Final Paper draft**	none
14	4/27	810 Presentations	**Lightning Presentations**	none
15	4/30 (FRI)		**Final Paper Due**	
5/11 Grades Due				
5/15 SSW Saturday Graduation!				

Class 1 (1/12) – Introduction to Evaluation of Social Work Interventions

Asynchronous – Topic Video #1 prior to class at 10 am

In-Class Content

Overview of the course and evaluation project assignments

Discussion of:

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

Student introduction of field agency and initial evaluation ideas

Readings:

Rubin & Babbie: Chapter 13, 5
Royse et al.: Chapters 1

Recommended Readings to Review:

Rubin & Babbie: Chapters 1 and 2
Royse et al: Chapters 3, 5, 7, 9

Class 2 (1/26) – Design, Sampling, & Measurement
Phased Assignment Worksheet I Due

Asynchronous – Video #2 prior to class at 10 am

In-Class Content

Discussion of how to develop:

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

Quantitative and qualitative options for data collection

How to develop and search for measures

Readings:

Rubin & Babbie: Chapters 10, 11, and 12

Recommended Readings to Review:

CDC Framework for program evaluation in public health. MMWR 1999;48(No. RR-11)
US GAO Designing Evaluations. 2012 Revision

Class 3 (2/2) – Measurement Lab

Asynchronous – Topic Video #3 prior to class at 10 am, Speaker #1 video prior to next class

In-Class Content

Application of Measurement Concepts

Discussion of:

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

In-Class Group Measurement Activity

Speaker #1

Class 4, 5, 6 Individual Consultation

*****Phased Assignment Worksheet II Due*****

Instructor will assign students to a 30-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, use this time to work on assignments and your evaluation project.

Class 7 (3/9) – Quality Improvement in Social Work Practice

*****Phased Assignment Worksheet III Due*****

Asynchronous – Topic Video #4 prior to class at 10 am, Speaker #2 video prior to next class

In-Class Content

Discussion of:

1. Quality improvement frameworks
2. Quality improvement tools
3. Single case/subject/system designs

Readings:

Rubin & Babbie: Chapters 13

National Learning Consortium (2013). *Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Strategies to Optimize your Practice*

Class 8 (3/16) – Development of Evaluation Data Analysis Plans - Quantitative

Asynchronous – Topic Video #5 prior to class at 10 am

In-Class Content

Analyzing quantitative data
Hands-on practice with quantitative data analysis
Discussion of proposal data analysis plans

Readings:

Rubin & Babbie: Chapter 18

Class 9 (3/23) – Development of Evaluation Data Analysis Plans - Qualitative

*****Phased Assignment Worksheet IV Due*****

Asynchronous – Topic Video #6 prior to class at 10 am

In-Class Content

Analyzing qualitative data
Hands-on practice with qualitative data analysis

Readings:

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

Class 10 (3/30) – Preparing Research Reports**Asynchronous – Topic Video #7 prior to class at 10 am****In-Class 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
Remainder of class will be used for individual consultations

Readings:

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

Class 11, 12, 13– Consultation IV, V, VI**Asynchronous – Topic Video #8 prior to consultation**

Instructor will assign students to a 30-minute consultation time posted via Sakai before class. Students will review phased assignments 3 and 4, troubleshoot current challenges, and discuss final evaluation report.

**You are not required to be in class when it is not your consultation time, use this time to work on assignments and your evaluation project.

Class 14 (4/27) – Lightning Presentations

Lightning Presentation Slides Due

In-Class Presentations (9 am - 12 pm)

Student presentations of final project via Zoom. All students are expected to attend and participate during all presentations.

Final Paper Due Friday April, 30th at 5 pm