I. PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION OF COURSE

Developing skills to evaluate program outcomes and/or practice effectiveness is the primary purpose of the course. Practice skills should be based on professional knowledge, including empirically based knowledge, relevant to social work and social work ethics. Students are expected to demonstrate competencies in using research to inform practice.

The course introduces students to the practitioner-researcher role. Students learn how to apply social work research concepts and procedures to social work practice situations. The basic goal of this course is to improve the student's ability to apply research methodologies for evaluating social work practice. The course emphasizes evidence-based practice interventions, including the knowledge and skills required for the systematic search for these interventions and their application to diverse populations and settings.

The course supports the use of research knowledge in making practice decisions that improve the quality of services, initiate change in policy, and improve the delivery of social services. In addition, a major focus throughout the course is on strengthening the skills of students to evaluate research studies, apply research findings to practice, and evaluate their own practice interventions.

**SW791 is a variable content course, meaning that its content can be different somewhat from section to section. Therefore, this section will focus on the practical skill of program evaluation in addition to the content described above.**

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this course, the student will be able to demonstrate competence in the following areas. (Note: EPAS stands for Educational Policy & Accreditation Standards, Council of Social Work Education; PB stands for practice behavior):

1. Describe the role that program evaluation plays to improve program outcomes and/or practice effectiveness. [EPAS 2.1.6 PB 22; EPAS 2.1.10d, PB 41] (Measured by exams; assignments)

2. Describe how different aspects of the evaluation process need to be sensitive to the age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation of the client population. [EPAS 2.1.3 PBs 11-13] (Measured by exams; assignments)
3. Describe the principal components of an evaluation plan typically used to assess the effectiveness of a program including specification of an evaluation design, the identification and measurement of target problem(s), and the analysis and interpretation of data. [EPAS 2.1.3 PB 12; EPAS 2.1.10b PBs 32 & 35; EPAS 2.1.10d PB 41] (Measured by exams; assignments)

4. Describe selected concepts, strategies, and procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of social work programs and practices. [EPAS 2.1.3 PB 12; EPAS 2.1.10b PBs 32 & 35; EPAS 2.1.10d PB 41] (Measured by exams; assignments)

5. Recognize the scientific, analytic, and ethical approach to building knowledge (i.e., evaluating programs) for practice. [EPAS 2.1.3 PB 12; EPAS 2.1.10b PBs 32 & 35; EPAS 2.1.10d PB 41; EPAS 2.1.6 PBs 21-22] (Measured by exams; assignments)

6. Analyze a practice situation in terms of the need for an evaluation and the desired outcomes for a target population. [EPAS 2.1.3 PB 11; EPAS 2.1.6 PBs 21-22; EPAS 2.1.10d PB 41] (Measured by final assignment)

7. Identify a practice-effectiveness question and search for evidence that addresses the question. [EPAS 2.1.3 PBs 11-12; EPAS 2.1.6 PB 21] (Measured by final assignment)

8. Design a plan to gather data for making decisions about the effectiveness of an intervention or program. [EPAS 2.1.3 PBs 11-12; EPAS 2.1.6 PB 21] (Measured by final assignment)

9. Evaluate the quality of research studies and critically think about applying research findings to the practice situation. [EPAS 2.1.3 PBs 11-12; EPAS 2.1.6 PB 22] (Measured by exams; assignments)

10. Critique research methods for conducting evaluations of evidence-based practices in an effort to shape or influence the decision-making related to agency policy and the delivery of services.[EPAS 2.1.3 PBs 11-12; EPAS 2.1.6 PB 22] (Measured by exams; assignments)

11. Apply critical thinking skills in evaluating a practice intervention/program. [EPAS 2.1.3 PBs 11-13] (Measured by exams; assignments)

12. Recognize the importance of using research literature in the selection of interventions/programs [EPAS 2.1.3 PBs 11-12; EPAS 2.1.6 PBs 21-22; EPAS 2.1.10d PB 41] (Measured by exams; assignments)

13. Apply the National Ass’n of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics in evaluating an intervention/program [EPAS 2.1.1 PBs 1-6; EPAS 2.1.2 PBs 7-10; EPAS 2.1.4 PBs 14-17; EPAS 2.1.7 PBs 23-24; EPAS 2.1.9 PBs 27-28] (Measured by exams; assignments)

14. Describe the importance of conscious use of self as a researcher when interacting with groups/organizations/communities in studying program outcomes for diverse populations. [EPAS 2.1.1 PBs 1-6; EPAS 2.1.2 PBs 7-10; EPAS 2.1.4 PBs 14-17; EPAS 2.1.7 PBs 23-24; EPAS 2.1.9 PBs 27-28] (Measured by exams; assignments)

15. Recognize and clarify conflicting values and ethical dilemmas that interfere in a practitioner’s ability to design research studies in an unbiased manner. [EPAS 2.1.1 PBs 1-6; EPAS 2.1.2 PBs 7-10; EPAS 2.1.4 PBs 14-17; EPAS 2.1.7 PBs 23-24; EPAS 2.1.9 PBs 27-28] (Measured by exams; assignments)
IV.  **REQUIRED TEXTBOOK**


In addition to the textbook, the instructor will be posting additional materials on Blackboard, or providing them in class.

Additional Recommended Texts:


V. **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

There are three (4) major assignments for this course: 2 objective exams, a poster presentation of a program evaluation plan, and a final writeup of the interpretation and discussion of that same program evaluation plan.

**ASSIGNMENTS 1 & 2: EXAMS -- 60% of total course grade (2 @ 30% each)**

There will be 2 open book/open note exams that will be in a multiple-choice and true/false format. The exams will cover course readings, lectures, class discussion, and skill building exercises.

Assigned readings are listed in the syllabus' Class Schedule and Topics. Students are expected to study all assigned readings, whether or not they are discussed in class. Students are to bring an 882-ES scantron card (green) and a Number 2 lead pencil for each exam. A make-up exam will be offered only to students who have received prior approval from the instructor for missing the regularly scheduled exam with a valid and verifiable excuse. Students that do not complete the exam or the make-up for the exam will receive a 0 for the exam.

**ASSIGNMENT 3: Poster Session to present Program Evaluation Plan -- 30% of grade**

This assignment is designed to give the student a near-real experience designing a program evaluation or a related evaluation research activity. Students may work individually or as part of a 2-person group (both members of the group will receive the same grade). Applying their learning from the course, the individual or group will choose a topic, typically an existing program, service, practice approach, or situation at their internship agency, work organization, or simply from observation of the community. The topic/program should be one that has not already been evaluated, and the student should be able to specify a unique contribution of her/his evaluation effort in the form of an evaluation rationale.
The evaluation plan will be presented on a 3-panel poster board near the end of the semester at a venue on campus where you will answer questions from Dr. Woodruff, other students, and other faculty. Poster sessions require synthesis of large amounts of information into brief bullets. Poster sections usually include an introduction, methods, results, and discussion/recommendations. However, you will present only up the results; the Discussion/Recommendations section will be submitted as a written final assignment (see below). Present your poster in a professional manner that clearly communicates your evaluation plan. Graphics, charts, mock tables, etc are encouraged.

In addition to a title and author(s), some suggestions for information that may be included in the poster are as follows:

A. Introduction/Statement of the Problem; can include:
   a. background of the topic or problem
   b. rationale for the evaluation, that is, what unique contribution does your evaluation make to the knowledge base (e.g., program not yet evaluated, understudied population, better measure)
   c. objectives and description of the evaluation—what type of evaluation do you plan to do (e.g., needs assessment, process, formative, outcome/summative, combination)
   d. description of the intervention (if any) and its objectives
   e. conceptual framework that shows how the intervention (if any) is expected to achieve its objectives
   f. logic model

B. Methods
   a. evaluation design—describe and graph the program evaluation design, e.g., ABA, SSRD, RCT
   b. data collection—what strategies will you use to collect the data (e.g., focus groups, interviews, chart abstraction, surveys, existing agency records).
   c. targeted sample size and how you will identify and recruit your sample participants (or obtain existing records)
   d. instruments and measures-
      i. e.g., qualitative, quantitative, multimethod, secondary data
      ii. when appropriate, describe the psychometric properties (reliability and validity) of the instruments
      iii. do you have to develop an instrument, if so, how?
   e. data analysis plan, e.g., “consult with statistician to assess…”

C. Results
   a. mock up preliminary graphs or tables for extra credit

D. References, Appendices, and Copies of Instruments
   a. Rather than using poster space, have hard copies available for interested viewers

This project should provide an opportunity for the student to understand and appreciate the role that practice-relevant research can play in strengthening the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice. This assignment also serves to address the CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards related to preparing students to engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research. In addition, it will give students experience in presenting their work at a professional venue.

A Note for those Opting to Complete this Assignment as a Group: Both members of the group will receive the same grade. Both group members are responsible for the content of the poster, and both members are required to participate in its conceptualization, content, creation, writing, and
presentation. Students are expected to cooperate in a professional manner and resolve scheduling or workload issues within the entire group. Each member of the group is responsible for everything that the group as a whole produces. It is expected that group members will attempt to resolve any minor issues within the group by assignment of specific tasks and deadlines. In rare circumstances, this process may not be sufficient. Problems completing the Poster assignment should be addressed as noted below:

(a) Should a group experience problems with members failing to do their share of the assignment, and the group has been unable to resolve the issues, the group should schedule an appointment with the instructor. Members of the group (including the member of concern) should meet together with the instructor to discuss the situation and negotiate a solution.

(b) In the event that a verifiable emergency (i.e., severe illness, family emergency) interferes with a group member participating with the rest of the group, the member should immediately contact the instructor to explain the circumstances. The instructor will meet with the student and negotiate an alternative individual assignment with that member. The grade of the other members of the group would not be affected.

ASSIGNMENT 4: This is an individual 2-page written final assignment of the Interpretation, Discussion, and Recommendations of your evaluation. It is an individual level assignment, even if the student is working in a group. It contributes only 10% to your overall grade, but is a required component for completion of the course.

A. Discussion/Recommendations - what conclusions can be drawn based on the type of program evaluation you propose, e.g.,
   - what next research steps, or service/policy changes would you recommend based on the results of your evaluation
   - what are the strengths and limitations of the program evaluation plan
   - what ‘flies in the ointment’ might you anticipate in actually doing the evaluation?
   - “So What?” What are the implications of your evaluation?

CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE: Highly encouraged and noticed

VI. CLASS POLICIES

Office Hours:
The instructor will maintain office hours as listed on the first page of this syllabus, and will be available at other times by appointment. To make the best use of the office hour time, the instructor encourages students to schedule appointments when possible. The instructor also welcomes questions from students via email or telephone.

1) Students are responsible for reading all assigned readings before the next class.
2) The NASW Code of Ethics is an academic standard for any student majoring in social work.
3) Students are responsible for collecting their final assignments from the instructor.
4) Students are expected to respect each other and the professor during class. Talking when others are talking, leaving class early or coming late (without a legitimate reason), sleeping in class, reading the Daily Aztec during class and the like will not be tolerated. (See Student Discipline and Grievance Policy, Section 41301, available at http://coursecat.sdsu.edu/9899/GRC.html).
5) All assignments must be turned in on time. Late work will only be accepted in the case of legitimate, verifiable emergencies (illness, accidents, etc.). The instructor will require documentation to support the legitimacy of an emergency. Please note: having multiple assignments due on the same day or computer problems is not a legitimate emergency.
6) Please turn off pagers and cellular telephones in class. If using a computer to take notes in class,
please refrain from surfing the web and social networking.

7) Please do not bring pets or children to class (animal assistants are allowable). This interferes with the learning environment and is not fair to other students.

Students failing to conform to the above policies may be asked to leave the class, receive a reduced grade in the course, and/or be referred to the department or SDSU officials for disciplinary action.

VII. GRADUATE GRADING GUIDELINES

1. Grades of A or A- are reserved for student work that not only demonstrates excellent mastery of content, but also shows that the student has (a) undertaken complex tasks, (b) applied critical thinking skills to the assignment, and/or (c) demonstrated creativity in her or his approach to the assignment. The degree to which the student demonstrates these skills determines whether he/she receives an A or an A-.

2. A grade of B+ is given to work that is judged to be very good. This grade denotes that a student has demonstrated a more-than-satisfactory understanding of the material being tested, and has exceeded expectations in the assignment.

3. A grade of B is given to student work that meets the basic requirements of the assignment. It denotes that the student has done satisfactory work on the assignment and meets the expectations of the course.

4. A grade of B- denotes that a student's performance was less than satisfactory on an assignment, reflecting only moderate grasp of content and is below expectations.

5. A grade of C reflects a minimal grasp of the assignments, poor organization of ideas and/or several significant areas requiring improvement.

The instructor will evaluate students' work in accordance with the graduate grading guidelines. Completion of all components of a written assignment/presentation would result in a grade of B. As per the guidelines above: "A grade of B is given to student work that meets the basic requirements of the assignment. It denotes that the student has done satisfactory work on the assignment and meets the basic expectations of the course."

Grading will begin with the assumption that the student has met the requirements of the assignment, and all papers/presentations will begin with a score of 85%, slightly higher than a mid-range B. Areas of the assignment that are judged to demonstrate more-than-satisfactory understanding of the task will receive additional credit, and marked with a “+” (plus). Areas that are less than satisfactory effort, including omissions or reflecting only moderate grasp of content and/or expectations, will have credit deducted, and marked with a “--” (minus).

Grades between C- and F denote a failure to meet minimum standards, reflecting serious deficiencies in a student's performance on the assignment.
The course grade is based on grades earned for 2 Exams (30% each = 60%), Poster Session presentation (30%) and the written Interpretation, Discussion, and Recommendations (10%). The following grading scale will be used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-95</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>76-73</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94-90</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>72-70</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89-87</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>69-67</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86-83</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>66-63</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82-80</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>62-60</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79-77</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>59 and lower</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Written assignment (Assignment #4). Students are expected to write at a graduate level and produce clear, well-organized papers with correct grammar and spelling. Proper citation of source material is required, whether in a written paper or on a visual presentation, such as posters, powerpoint presentations, etc. Written work should be carefully proofread. It is to be typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins. Font size should be a 12-point font, and the print should be clear and legible. Papers will be returned to individual authors if a self-addressed and stamped return envelope is provided to the instructor. If no envelope is provided, the paper (or poster) may be retrieved from the instructor at the end of the semester after grades have been submitted. Materials will be held for up to one semester following the end of class.

Written assignments should follow the stylistic guidelines suggested by most recent edition of the APA manual. Students should pay particular attention to APA guidelines regarding expression of ideas (i.e., writing style, grammar, and guidelines to reduce bias in language); reference citations in the text; reference list; margins; page numbering and headings.

Policy on late assignments. All assignments are to be submitted on the due dates listed in the syllabus. Late assignments will not be accepted unless the student has obtained prior approval from the instructor. Approval will be granted only if the student is able to demonstrate unanticipated/extenuating circumstances that prevent completion of the assignment. (Computer or printer problems, and multiple assignments will not be accepted as excuses for late papers). To receive credit for a late assignment, the student must meet with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss the reasons for the lateness and to establish a plan and time frame for completion of the work. A penalty of ½ letter grade (e.g., from A to A-) will be assessed for assignments that are late for any reason other than a verifiable emergency (e.g., illness in self or family, death of a family member). If the student still fails to complete the assignment within the extended time frame negotiated with the instructor, the penalty for lateness will be increased to one full letter grade (e.g., from A to B). An assignment that is more than 2 weeks late will not be accepted, and the student will receive a zero.

Consequences for plagiarism. This instructor has been trained on TurnItIn, grammar and plagiarism detector software. Students who are found plagiarizing the work of others will be subject to standards set forth by the University (see Graduate Bulletin). This may include failing the assignment, failing the class, or expulsion from the University.
## CLASS SCHEDULE AND TOPICS

Please note: **Instructor may change dates as needed.** Any changes will be announced by the instructor both in class and by email.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Lecture Topic</th>
<th>Readings/Assignments (due before next class)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Aug 26    | - Course Introduction  
- Review syllabus including poster project  
- Review of EBP | Be sure to come to each class already having read the assignment, and any assigned materials.  
Royse Ch 1: Introduction—Why evaluate programs? |
| Sept 2  
NO CLASS | LABOR DAY HOLIDAY | Royse Ch 2: Ethical Issues in Program Evaluation |
| Sept. 9   | Introduction to Program Evaluation and Ethical Issues | Royse Ch 3: Needs Assessment |
| Sept. 16  | Needs Assessment; Skill builder | Royse Ch 4: Qualitative & Mixed Methods in Evaluation |
| Sept. 23  | Qualitative Evaluation; Skill builder | Royse Ch 5: Formative and Process Evaluation |
| Sept. 30  | Formative Research and Process Evaluation; Skill builder | Review on your own for Exam 1 |
| Oct. 7    | **Exam 1** covering all material to date | Royse Ch 6 & 7: SSRD and Client Satisfaction |
| Oct. 14   | Single System Research Designs (SSRDs) and satisfaction surveys | Royse Ch 9: Group Research Designs |
| IVC       | Measurement Tools and Strategies for Evaluating Prgs; Skill builder | Royse Ch 13: Pragmatic Issues in Program Evaluation |
| Nov 4     | Messy program evaluation; Skill builder | Royse Ch 14: Data Analysis |
| Nov. 11   | VETERANS’ DAY HOLIDAY | Work on poster and interpretation paper |
| NO CLASS  |                             | |
| Nov. 18   | Data Analysis and Statistical Significance; SPSS skill builder | Review on your own for Exam 2 |
| Nov 25    | **Exam #2** covering all material since Oct 7 | Work on poster and interpretation paper |
| Dec 2     | **Poster session. Main campus class**  
- 2-page Interpretation paper due at poster session | Work on poster and interpretation paper |
| Dec. 9    | **Poster session. IVC campus class**  
- 2-page Interpretation paper due at poster session | Have a good break! |
| IVC       |                             | |
BIBLIOGRAPHY

(NOTE: These works are intended to be supplements to the assigned course readings and may be used in group presentations and/or to augment student understanding of course concepts.)


Campbell Collaboration. Available at: http://www.campbellcollaboration.org

Cochrane Collaboration. Available at: http://www.cochrane.org/index.htm


Evaluation Center. Available at www.tecathsri.org/


Revised 2010