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.

1 Revised 8-2011 by Dr. Sally Mathiesen and Dr. Susan Woodruff
Students will use the process of evidence-based practice to identify, analyze, appraise, and select a "best" practice related to a practice question relevant to advanced practice. In addition, the students will critique measurement instruments that are used to evaluate practice effectiveness. This information will then provide a foundation of knowledge of evidence that will be applied in the advanced practice courses.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Knowledge

Students should be able to:

1. Describe the role that evaluative research plays in social work practice to improve program outcomes and/or practice effectiveness.
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.
3. Describe the principal components of an evaluation plan typically used to assess the effectiveness of practice including specification of an evaluation design, the identification and measurement of target problem(s), and the analysis and interpretation of data.
4. Describe selected concepts, strategies, and procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of social work programs and practices.
5. Recognize the scientific, analytic, and ethical approach to building knowledge for practice.

Skills

Students should be able to:

1. Analyze a practice situation in terms of the need for a program and the desired outcomes for a target population.
2. Identify a practice-effectiveness question to guide the search for evidence to address the practice situation.
3. Design a plan to gather empirically-based knowledge for making decisions about the effectiveness of an intervention that addresses the practice situation.
4. Evaluate research studies and critically think about applying research findings to the practice situation.
5. 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.
6. Apply critical thinking skills in evaluating a practice intervention.
Values and Ethics

Students should be able to:

1. Recognize the importance of utilizing relevant research literature in the selection of interventions with clients
2. Apply the NASW Code of Ethics in evaluating a practice intervention.
3. Describe the importance of conscious use of self as a researcher when interacting with groups/organizations/communities in studying program outcomes for diverse populations.
4. Recognize and clarify conflicting values and ethical dilemmas that interfere in a practitioner’s ability to design research studies in an unbiased manner.

III. EXPECTED STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES/COMPETENCIES

At the end of the semester, the students are expected to demonstrate the ability to:

1. Assess and convert the need for practice-relevant information into an answerable practice-effectiveness question.
2. Search for, analyze, appraise, and synthesize the evidence in selecting a “best” evidence-based practice.
3. Use evidence of effectiveness to guide and inform their social work professional knowledge and skills.
4. Apply empirically based knowledge, including evidence-based interventions, in their evidence-informed professional practice.
5. Identify and critique measurement instruments that evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention, including evidence-based interventions.
6. Collaborate with others in building a network to store and manage the knowledge of evidence.

IV. COMMON REQUIRED TEXTBOOK


**Please note that other required readings may be posted on Blackboard or provided in class by the professor.**
V. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

There are three (3) major assignments for this course: 2 objective exams, and a poster presentation of a program evaluation plan. The poster presentation will include an individual written interpretation and discussion of the program evaluation.

ASSIGNMENTS 1 & 2: EXAMS -- 60% of total course grade (2 @ 30% EACH) -- OCTOBER 8 AND NOVEMBER 26

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

Assigned readings are listed in the syllabus. 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 and a Number 2 lead pencil for each exam. It is strongly recommended that students bring more than one scantron card. Scantron machines sometimes miscalculate scores when eraser marks are present. You will receive the grade given by the machine after grading. Therefore if you erase on your card you should plan to complete a new one to ensure receiving full credit for your work. 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 – 40% of Course Grade

30% of course grade for poster (MATERIAL FOR POSTER DUE NOVEMBER 19; POSTER DISPLAY SESSION ON DECEMBER 3)—all group members receive the same grade.

10% of course grade: Individual Interpretation of Results (2-page summary; details presented below): DUE NOVEMBER 19

NOTE: Content to be displayed on the poster, as well as each student’s individual interpretation of the results, must be submitted to the instructor by November 26 for evaluation. The material for the poster must be submitted as ONE FILE. The poster session will occur on December 3.

The purpose of the project is to provide an opportunity for students 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.

NOTE: The instructor may choose to have student groups submit their papers through Blackboard, into the Turn-in-in.com system. If this method is used, it would be used with all students, and further instructions will be provided.

This assignment may be completed in small groups (with a maximum of 4 members) or individually. All members of a group will receive the same grade. It is designed to give the student a near-real experience designing a program evaluation or a related evaluation research activity. 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 his/her evaluation effort in the form of an evaluation rationale.

The evaluation plan will be presented as a 3-panel poster near the end of the semester at a venue on campus where you will answer questions from Dr. Mathiesen, invited students, and other faculty. Poster sessions require the synthesis of large amounts of information into brief bullets. Poster sections usually include: Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion/Recommendations. However, you will present only the Introduction, Methods and Results sections in the poster; the Discussion/Recommendations section will be submitted as an individually written final assignment (see below under “Individual Written Interpretation of
**Program Evaluation**. 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 if desired

**D. References, Appendices, and Copies of Instruments**
   a. Rather than using poster space, have hard copies available for interested viewers
A Note for those Opting to Complete this Assignment as a Group: All group members are responsible for the content of the poster, and all members are required to participate in its 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. All members of the group will receive the same grade. 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. All members of the group (including the member(s) of concern) should meet together with the instructor to discuss the situation and negotiate a solution.

(b) In the event 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.

INDIVIDUAL WRITTEN INTERPRETATION OF PROGRAM EVALUATION--
10% of course grade (DUE NOVEMBER 19)

Each student will submit a 2-page (maximum) written final assignment that represents the Interpretation, Discussion, and Recommendation section of your evaluation project. 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
   - “So What?” What are the implications of your evaluation?
CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE
The expectation:

- Attending all classes with no unexcused absences,
- Completing all class worksheets, evaluations and/or exercises

VI. CLASS POLICIES

Office Hours:
The instructor will maintain office hours as listed on the first page of this syllabus, and may 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. Assignments cover all lectures and assigned readings.
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, browsing the internet, or reading the Daily Aztec during class and the like is unprofessional, unfair to other students and will not be tolerated. (See Student Discipline and Grievance Policy, Section 41301).
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 may 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) **NOTE:** The instructor may choose to have student groups submit their papers through Blackboard, into the Turn-in-in.com system. If this method is used, it would be used with all students, and further instructions will be provided.
7) Please turn off pagers and cellular telephones in class.
8) 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’ written 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:
Written assignments. 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, power points, 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. Group papers will be returned to the first team member listed on the final paper, and the team is responsible for supplying a self-addressed and stamped return envelope. If no envelope is supplied, the paper 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 papers. All papers are to be submitted on the due dates listed in the syllabus. Late papers 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 will not be accepted as excuses for late papers). To receive credit for a late paper, 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 papers 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 paper 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). A paper that is more than 2 weeks late will not be accepted, and the student will receive a zero.

Consequences for plagiarism. Students who are found plagiarizing the works 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.
COURSE TOPICS AND OUTLINE

Please note: The professor may change dates as needed. Any changes will be announced in class and via Blackboard. It is the student’s responsibility to regularly check the Blackboard site for materials and announcements. Students are responsible for all required readings, whether they are covered in class or not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings/ Assignments (due before next class)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
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<td>August 27</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Review syllabus including Poster Assignment</td>
<td>Be sure to come to class with your textbook</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Review of Evidence-Based Practice Process</td>
<td>Royse Ch. 1: Introduction: Why evaluate programs?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Creating practice effectiveness questions</td>
<td>[Review Cournoyer Ch. 1, 2]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>NO CLASS- LABOR DAY</td>
<td>Royse Ch. 2: Ethical Issues in Program Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 3</td>
<td>UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Introduction to program evaluation</td>
<td>Royse Ch. 3: Needs Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 10</td>
<td>Revisit Basic Principles of Conceptualization and Measurement</td>
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<td>Single-subject Design Methodology, Arguments For and Against Single-Subject Design</td>
<td>Tripodi Ch. 1: Introduction</td>
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<td>Begin creating practice effectiveness/ program evaluation questions</td>
<td>[Review Cournoyer Ch. 2]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Sept. 17</td>
<td>Needs Assessment; Skill builder</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Sept. 24</td>
<td>Qualitative Evaluation; Skill builder</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Oct. 1</td>
<td>Formative Research and Process Evaluation; Skill builder</td>
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</table>
| Week 7  | Oct. 8   | **EXAM #1: Covering all material from Aug. 27-Oct. 1** | Royse Ch. 6: Single System Research Designs (SSRDs)  
Royse Ch. 7: Client Satisfaction |
| Week 8  | Oct. 15  | Single System Research Designs (SSRDs)  
Sampling  
Group Research Designs | Royse Ch. 8: Sampling  
Royse Ch. 9: Group Research Designs |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week 9</th>
<th>Oct. 22</th>
<th>Single system research designs/ client satisfaction assessment skill builder</th>
<th>Royse Ch. 11 &amp; 12: Measurement Tools/Strategies; Selecting Evaluation Instruments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Oct. 29</td>
<td><strong>NO CLASS MEETING—</strong> CHAPTER NOTES WILL BE POSTED ON BLACKBOARD</td>
<td>Royse Ch. 13: Pragmatic Issues in Evaluation</td>
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<td><strong>CLASS MEETING TIME SHOULD BE USED TO WORK ON GROUP PROGRAM EVALUATION ASSIGNMENT</strong></td>
<td>Royse Ch. 14: Data Analysis</td>
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<td>Measurement Tools and Strategies for Evaluating Programs; Skill builder</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Nov. 5</td>
<td>Messy Program Evaluation</td>
<td>Review Royse Ch. 13 and 14</td>
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<td>Data Analysis and Statistical Significance: SPSS Skill Builder</td>
<td>Review Royse Ch. 15: Writing Evaluation Proposals, Reports, Journal Articles for project (Ch. 15 will not be included in Exam 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Nov. 12</td>
<td><strong>NO CLASS- VETERAN’S DAY UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Nov. 19</td>
<td><strong>Content of poster and Individual written summary/integration of program evaluation assignment due</strong></td>
<td>Continue to work on poster presentations</td>
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<td><strong>Content of poster and Individual written summary/integration of program evaluation assignment due</strong></td>
<td>Review on your own for exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>Nov. 26</td>
<td><strong>EXAM #2: covering all materials (except Ch. 15) from Oct. 8 - Nov. 19</strong></td>
<td>Continue to work on poster presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 15</td>
<td>Dec. 3</td>
<td><strong>POSTER PRESENTATIONS SUMMARY &amp; WRAP-UP</strong></td>
<td>Poster Session Location: TBA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Congratulations!! Have a great winter break!
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/


Mullen, E. J., & Bacon, W. F.: Practitioner adoption and implementation of practice guidelines and issues of quality control (pp. 223-235). Proctor, E. K., & Rosen, A.: The
structure and function of social work practice guidelines (pp. 108-127); Gambrill, E.
Evidence-based practice: Implications for knowledge development and use in social work (pp. 37-58).


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