Graduate Social Work Program
UALR School of Social Work
Course Outline

Course Number: SOWK 8259, 8159
Course Title: Evaluation Research I and II
Instructor: Tara V. DeJohn, PhD, LCSW
Prerequisites: Social Work Research Methods
Semester Credit: 3 hours (2/1, Fall/Spring)
Email: tvdejohn@ualr.edu
Phone: office: 501-569-3562 or cell: 225-278-2577 (text or call)
Office Hours: Monday, 1:00-4:00. and by appointment
Office Location: Room 401P, Ross Hall

I. Description of Course

This course introduces students to the methods of social service practice evaluation through needs assessment and program evaluation. The course builds on the foundations provided in Social Work Research Methods (SOWK 7370), extending them into macropractice research at the organizational and community level. The rationale for this course is the strong need for service effectiveness and accountability in social services. The course emphasizes empowerment evaluation as a mechanism to foster improvement and self-determination. A theories-of-change approach is used to guide evaluation.

An integral part of this course is the service learning component. Service learning combines community service with academic instruction. It pairs service tasks with structured opportunities that link the tasks to reflection, self discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of knowledge, values and skills. A successful service learning experience changes both the student and the recipient of the service. In the classroom component of this course, you will learn the fundamentals of evaluation research. Outside of the classroom, you will work with a community-based organization, social service program or neighborhood group to develop and carry out an evaluation suitable for submission, which applies the fundamentals. To complete this task:

(1) This course has been conceptualized in two parts. First, over the course of the semester, students will identify a real-life client system in need of evaluation or needs assessment, and will gain entry to the client system. The client system will be a social service program or agency, a community-based organization, or a neighborhood group. Students will conduct an evaluability assessment by examining the program’s objectives, implementation strategies, and management philosophy and needs. The evaluability assessment will consist of a formal description of the program as originally conceptualized, an assessment of the present program’s implementation from the viewpoints of program personnel and stakeholders, and identification and/or development of measures to ascertain program effectiveness. Students will seek to identify the explicit and implicit theories and underlying assumptions about change that underlie the program.

(2) Second, the evaluability assessment will be used to guide the development and implementation of the actual program evaluation or needs assessment that students will carry out for the identified macro client system. Students will implement a needs assessment, analyze findings, communicate results, and critically assess the strengths
and limitations of the completed evaluation project. Students will complete a reflective assignment following the completion of the grant, utilizing Kolb’s Learning Cycle.

These courses are required for students in the Management and Community Practice concentration and may be taken as an elective by other students in the social work or to fulfill the Program Evaluation requirement for Gerontology students.

II. Objectives of the Courses

Upon completion of the courses, the student will have:

1. Beginning understanding of the ethical and political issues involved in assessing program evaluability, including sensitivity to and knowledge of diversity issues within macrolevel client systems. (Includes practice behaviors 2.1 for competency 2 and 5.1 for competency 5)

2. Knowledge of the purposes and methodologies for conducting needs assessments in the context of social work practice. (Includes practice behavior 4.1 for competency 4)

3. Knowledge of the purposes and methodologies for conducting program evaluations in the context of social work practice. (Includes practice behavior 4.1 for competency 4)

4. Beginning understanding of traditional, participatory, and empowerment evaluation strategies and the differences between them. (Includes practice behaviors 6.1 & 6.2 for competency 6 and 5.1 for competency 5)

5. Beginning proficiency in the development of measurable and behavioral objectives for social welfare program evaluation. (Includes practice behavior 6.1 for competency 6)

6. Knowledge of the tasks entailed in planning for needs assessments and program evaluations.

7. Knowledge of the tasks involved in process and impact evaluations and an understanding of the relationship between these areas in evaluation research. (Includes practice behaviors 6.1 & 6.2 for competency 6)

8. Knowledge of single system and group evaluation designs, and an understanding of their appropriate use in evaluation research. (Includes practice behaviors 6.1 & 6.2 for competency 6 and 9.1 for competency 9)

9. Demonstrated ability to work with a client system and conduct an evaluability assessment. (Includes practice behaviors 10.1 – 10.9 for competency 10)

10. The ability to carry out a program evaluation based upon their evaluability assessment. (Includes practice behavior 6.2 for competency 6 and 10.4 – 10.12 for competency 10)

11. The ability to critically analyze and communicate findings from completed program evaluation or needs assessment to macrolevel client system. (Includes practice behaviors 3.1 & 3.2 for competency 3, 9.1 for competency 9, and 10.10 – 10.12 for competency 10).

III. Units and Contents

Sessions 1 & 2: INTRODUCTION TO EVALUATION RESEARCH

Introductions

- Why evaluate programs?
- The quality improvement process.
Introduction to program evaluation.
Collaboration with Stakeholders.
Ethics of Evaluation.
Discussion of course requirements and possible projects.

ACCOUNTABILITY
External Project Approach.
Internal Monitoring Approach.
Participatory and Empowerment Evaluation.
Needs Assessment.
Process, Outcome, and Efficiency Evaluation.

Practice Behaviors
- MCP 2.1: Apply ethical decision-making skills to those issues specific to macropractice situations and settings
- MCP 6.1: Use appropriate theories, models, and research methods to support their approaches to initial assessment, intervention and evaluation
- MCP 6.2: Work with client systems to clarify and deepen program logic models and to incorporate meaningful evaluation in their ongoing activities

Required Readings:

Recommended Readings:

Sessions 3 & 4: POLITICS AND ETHICS

Certificate of Completed IRB Training Due
- Appropriate Uses of Evaluation
- Political Influences on the Evaluation Process.
- Professional Standards.
- Principles of Evaluation Practice.
CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE EVALUATIONS
- Cultural awareness.
- Intercultural Communication.
- Cultural Frameworks.
- Adapting Evaluations.
- The Practice of Culturally Competent Evaluation.

QUALITATIVE METHODS
- What is Qualitative Evaluation
- Gaining Access to Site
- Sampling in Qualitative Evaluation.
- Data Collection.
- Analyzing Qualitative Data.

Practice Behaviors
- MCP 2.1: Apply ethical decision-making skills to those issues specific to macropractice situations and settings
- MCP 4.1: Work with macrolevel client systems to help them recognize and engage diversity and difference in ways that further organizational missions and community goals.
- MCP 5.1: Work with macrolevel client systems to help them recognize and challenge the manifestations of systemic oppression, discrimination, and disempowerment
- MCP 6.1: Use appropriate theories, models, and research methods to support their approaches to initial assessment, intervention and evaluation
- MCP 6.2 Work with client systems to clarify and deepen program logic models and to incorporate meaningful evaluation in their ongoing activities
- MCP 9.1: Help macrolevel client systems observe, critically assess, and respond to changes, or need for changes in the political, economic, social technological and cultural systems that affect them.

Required Readings:

JCSEE Program Evaluation Standards

Session 5: DESIGNING PROGRAMS & PREPARING FOR EVALUATION
- Agency Mission, Goals and Objectives.
- Agency as it relates to Program.
- Program Logic Models.
- Explicating Program Theory.
- Program Goals.
- Program versus Practice Objectives
- Program Scope and Evaluation.
- Planning with Stakeholders.
- Asking Evaluation Questions.
- Reviewing Literature.
- Developing Schedules.
- Identifying Data Needs.
- Focusing Evaluation Efforts.
- Capacity building in the community.
- Empowerment Evaluation.

**Practice Behaviors**

- MCP 6.1: Use appropriate theories, models, and research methods to support their approaches to initial assessment, intervention and evaluation
- MCP 6.2: Work with client systems to clarify and deepen program logic models and to incorporate meaningful evaluation in their ongoing activities
- MCP 9.1: Help macrolevel client systems observe, critically assess, and respond to changes, or need for changes in the political, economic, social, technological and cultural systems that affect them.
- MCP 10.1: Substantively and effectively prepare for action with individuals, groups, organizations, and communities
- MCP 10.2: Use empathic responding and other interpersonal skills: and
- MCP 10.3: Development with their client systems a mutually agree-on focus of work and desired outcomes

**Required Readings:**


**Session 6: NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

**Logic Model Due**

- What is a Needs Assessment?
- Social Problems and Needs.
- Planning a Needs Assessment.
- Defining Social Problems.
- Specifying the Extent of the Problem.
- Specifying Targets.
- Describing Service Needs.
- Qualitative and Quantitative Methods for Describing Needs.
- Community Readiness.
Practice Behaviors

- MCP 6.1: Use appropriate theories, models, and research methods to support their approaches to initial assessment, intervention and evaluation
- MCP 6.2: Work with client systems to clarify and deepen program logic models and to incorporate meaningful evaluation in their ongoing activities
- MCP 10.1: Substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, groups, organizations, and communities
- MCP 10.2: Use empathic responding and other interpersonal skills: and
- MCP 10.3: Development with their client systems a mutually agree-on focus of work and desired outcomes

Required Readings:

Session 7: PROCESS EVALUATION

- Evaluability Assessment.
- Process Evaluation.
- Organizational, Activity and Outcome Objectives.
- Formative evaluation.
- Monitoring program implementation.
- Quality assurance.
- Data sources in process evaluations
- Data Collection.
- Monitoring systems.
- Analysis of program implementation data.
- Dissemination.
- Student discussion of possible evaluation projects

Practice Behaviors

- MCP 6.1: Use appropriate theories, models, and research methods to support their approaches to initial assessment, intervention and evaluation
- MCP 6.2: Work with client systems to clarify and deepen program logic models and to incorporate meaningful evaluation in their ongoing activities
- MCP 10.1: Substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, groups, organizations, and communities
- MCP 10.2: Use empathic responding and other interpersonal skills: and
- MCP 10.3: Development with their client systems a mutually agree-on focus of work and desired outcomes

Required Readings:
Session 8: OUTCOME & IMPACT EVALUATIONS

- Purpose and use of outcome evaluation.
- The evaluator-stakeholder relationship.
- Operationalizing program objectives.
- Scope of evaluations.
- Identifying data needs.
- Selecting what to monitor.
- Deciding when and how to monitor data.
- Analysis and feedback of data.
- Representing the concerns of the sponsor and multiple stakeholders.
- Summative evaluation;
- Assessment of expected outcomes;
- Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Design;
- Information complied in impact evaluations;
- Data sources in impact evaluations;
- Issues of quality and efficiency;
- Determining Costs and Benefits;
- Cost Effectiveness and Cost Benefit Analyses.

Practice Behaviors

- MCP 3.1: With client systems, evaluate, select, and use appropriate tools for assessment, intervention and evaluation
- MCP 6.1: Use appropriate theories, models, and research methods to support their approaches to initial assessment, intervention and evaluation
- MCP 6.2: Work with client systems to clarify and deepen program logic models and to incorporate meaningful evaluation in their ongoing activities
- MCP 10.1: Substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, groups, organizations, and communities
- MCP 10.2: Use empathic responding and other interpersonal skills: and
- MCP 10.3: development with their client systems a mutually agree-on focus of work and desired outcomes

Required Readings:

Session 9: EVALUATION DESIGNS

- One-Group Designs
- Two-Group Designs
- Validity: Internal & External
Practice Behaviors

- MCP 6.1: Use appropriate theories, models, and research methods to support their approaches to initial assessment, intervention and evaluation
- MCP 6.2: Work with client systems to clarify and deepen program logic models and to incorporate meaningful evaluation in their ongoing activities
- MCP 10.1: Substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, groups, organizations, and communities
- MCP 10.2: Use empathic responding and other interpersonal skills: and
- MCP 10.3: Development with their client systems a mutually agree-on focus of work and desired outcomes

Required Readings:

Session 10: MEASUREMENT

LITERATURE REVIEW DUE

- Why Measurement is Necessary
- Numeric Counts.
- Standardized Measures.
- Reliability and Validity.
- Locating Standardized Instruments.

Practice Behaviors

- MCP 6.1: Use appropriate theories, models, and research methods to support their approaches to initial assessment, intervention and evaluation
- MCP 6.2: Work with client systems to clarify and deepen program logic models and to incorporate meaningful evaluation in their ongoing activities
- MCP 10.1: Substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, groups, organizations, and communities
- MCP 10.2: Use empathic responding and other interpersonal skills: and
- MCP 10.3: Development with their client systems a mutually agree-on focus of work and desired outcomes

Required Readings:

Session 11: DATA SOURCES, SAMPLING, AND DATA COLLECTION

- Data Sources.
- Sampling.
• Existing Data.
• New Data.
• Developing a Data Collection Monitoring System.
• Program Monitoring.
• Monitoring Organizational Functions, Service Utilization, and Outcomes.

Practice Behaviors
• MCP 6.1: Use appropriate theories, models, and research methods to support their approaches to initial assessment, intervention and evaluation
• MCP 6.2: Work with client systems to clarify and deepen program logic models and to incorporate meaningful evaluation in their ongoing activities
• MCP 10.1: Substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, groups, organizations, and communities
• MCP 10.2: Use empathic responding and other interpersonal skills: and
• MCP 10.3: Development with their client systems a mutually agree-on focus of work and desired outcomes

Required Readings:

Session 12: MAKING DECISIONS WITH DATA
• Implementing the evaluation plan
• Collecting data
• Data Analysis
• Communicating results
• Understanding strengths and limitations of study
• Debriefing

Practice Behaviors
• MCP 3.1: With client systems, evaluate, select, and use appropriate tools for assessment, intervention and evaluation
• MCP 3.2: Communicate effectively through multiple mediums with a diverse range of stakeholders, partners, and collaborators
• MCP 6.1: Use appropriate theories, models, and research methods to support their approaches to initial assessment, intervention, and evaluation
• MCP 6.2: Work with client systems to clarify and deepen program logic models and to incorporate meaningful evaluation in their ongoing activities
• MCP 10.4: Collect, organize, and interpret client-system data;
• MCP 10.5: Assess, client systems’ strengths and limitations;
• MCP 10.6: Develop clear and mutually agreed-on goals and objectives of interventions; and
• MCP 10.7: Select appropriate intervention strategies
• MCP 10.8: Initiate actions to achieve group, organizational, and community goals, helping client systems to resolve problems and capitalize on opportunities;
• MCP 10.9: Increase client systems’ own capacities to accomplish their goals;
• MCP 10.10: Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate their own practice interventions;
• MCP 10.11: Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate the effectiveness of social welfare programs
• MCP 10.12: Apply the findings of evaluation to make modifications in their own behaviors and choices, and in program design and implementation

Required Readings

IV. Methods of Instruction
Lecture and class discussion, structured experiences, completion of assigned readings, completion of assigned projects, class presentations by students

V. Textbooks

Required Text


Additional Required Readings:
Additional readings will be supplied by the instructor with the majority accessible through the university’s library database system. Students are encouraged to add to recommended readings throughout the course.

Recommended Texts:


VI. Method of Evaluation
Students will conduct:
(1) An evaluability assessment of an actual program with an organization or community group. Students will be matched with a program and gain entry into it. They will write a report which includes a description of the formal program as it was conceptualized; an explication of the theory or theories upon which the program is based, an assessment of how the program is actually being carried out from the perspective of program staff and other stakeholders, and a delineation of expected outcomes and impact of the program. The description of the program
will be based on documentation they identify as well as other hearsay information pertaining to the program.

Students will use qualitative methods to assess how the program is actually being carried out from the perspective of program staff and stakeholders. The program’s theoretical basis will be gleaned from review of documentation as well as interviews with key informants. The findings will be compiled, and a written and oral report will be presented to the class as well as the client system. Each group will operate in consultation with the instructor, and give the class updates on their project’s progress throughout the semester. (Fall semester)

(2) A program evaluation or needs assessment based upon their evaluability assessment. Students will collect data and critically analyze and communicate findings using appropriate qualitative and/or quantitative methodology. Findings will be presented in both oral and written format to class and the client system in which the evaluation took place. (Spring semester)

**Individual Assessment:**

**Part I (Fall)**

1. Students will develop a logic model for the project they are evaluating. (*10% of the course grade*)

2. Students will submit three (3) *Prep for Class Worksheets* throughout the semester and incorporate reflection/application of readings to their work on their projects and submit them to the instructor for individual assessment. (*10% of course grade*)

3. Completion of UALR IRB Training. (*10% of course grade*)

4. Literature and Background for Evaluation Project. (*20% of course grade*)

5. A paper will be written which details the evaluability assessment. It will contain a description of the formal program as conceptualized, an explication of theory, and an assessment plan of the actual program. (*30% of course grade*)

6. An oral presentation of the project will be made to the class at the end of the semester. (*20% of course grade*)

**Part II (Spring semester)**

1. A paper will be written that conveys the findings of the Program Evaluation (*60% of course grade*)

2. Oral presentation of the project to the class and verification of presentation to relevant client system (*30% of course grade*)

3. Reflective paper on service learning experience (*10% of grade*)

See Appendix I for complete details of assignments and methods of course evaluation.

**Grading scale:**

- A= 92–100
- B= 82–91
- C= 72–81
- F= Below 72
VII. The Class Attendance Policy of the Graduate Social Work Program:
Learning in a graduate professional program is based in large part on the interaction that occurs between the instructor and the students in the classroom. Regular attendance at class is an expected professional responsibility of the student. Absences of greater than 20% of the total class time can constitute grounds for course failure.

The University has specific information regarding attendance and inclement weather. To remain informed of this policy and weather related information visit http://ualr.edu/policy/home/admin/weather/

VIII. Disability Support Services:
Your success in this class is important to me, and it is the policy and practice of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to create inclusive learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have a documented disability (or need to have a disability documented), and need an accommodation, please contact me privately as soon as possible, so that we can discuss with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) how to meet your specific needs and the requirements of the course. The DRC offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process among you, your instructor(s) and the DRC. Thus, if you have a disability, please contact me and/or the DRC, at 501-569-3143 (V/TTY) or 501-683-7629 (VP). For more information, please visit the DRC website at ualr.edu/disability.

IX. Honor Code
All students registered for all courses in the School of Social Work are expected to adhere to the rights, responsibilities, and behavior as articulated in the UALR Student Handbook and the NASW Code of Ethics. An essential feature of these codes is a commitment to maintaining intellectual integrity and academic honesty. This commitment insures that a student of the School of Social Work will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thereby affirming personal honor and integrity.

X. Bibliography


(Revised 08/10/14 TVD)