

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK**

**Social Work 526- Evaluating Clinical Practice**

**Fall 2002: Thursdays 9:00-11:30**

**Instructor: Samuel A. MacMaster**  
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**Code of Conduct**

It is the student's responsibility to have read the College of Social Work Ethical Academic and Professional Conduct code that is in the College of Social Work MSSW Handbook ([www.csw.utk.edu](http://www.csw.utk.edu))

**The Honor Statement**

An essential feature of The University of Tennessee is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the University, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity. (*Hilltopics, 2002*).

**Disability**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability or if you have emergency information to share, please contact the University of Tennessee Office of Disability Services at **(865-974-6087)**. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

**Course Description**

This course focuses on the development of knowledge and skills necessary to evaluate clinical practice with individuals, families, and small groups. Building upon the foundation research course, this course examines methods for measuring clinical outcomes for individuals, families, and small groups using multiple measurement methods, and determining change in client outcomes using single-system designs.

**Course Rationale**

Clinical social workers face complex human situations presented by clients that come from diverse backgrounds, and the interventions social workers have at their disposal vary in the degree of effectiveness with any given individual, family, or small group client/client system. In order to provide the most effective intervention for particular clients, clinical social workers must be able to measure and monitor client outcomes in a sensitive, practical, and accurate manner, and determine the extent of client change in a timely fashion in order to modify or terminate interventions as needed.

## Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students are expected to be able to:

1. Use a single system research design to evaluate clinical practice;
2. Gain access to and critically read research literature;
3. Describe the strengths and limitations of the various measurement concepts and tools for evaluating the outcomes and processes of interventions;
4. Identify the obstacles that may be encountered in outcome and process evaluation for various interventions and to identify the steps necessary to overcome these obstacles;
5. Identify the probable short- and long-term benefits and costs of systematic outcome and process evaluation to the practitioner, the client(s), the employing agency, the community, and to the profession of social work;
6. Describe the connection between systematic evaluation of one's own practice using a single system design and knowledge pursued through experimental, quasi-experimental, and qualitative designs;
7. Use computer based resources for the assessment, monitoring, and analysis of intervention research;
8. Report and disseminate intervention research;
9. Conduct practice evaluation within the ethical guidelines of the profession of social work;
10. Avoid potential biases in direct intervention research with clients with varying racial ethnic, age, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic, physical and/or mental ability characteristics, and/or from high-risk, vulnerable and other disadvantaged groups.

## Required Textbook

Bloom, M., Fischer, J., & Orme, J. (2002). Evaluating practice: Guidelines for the accountable Professional, Fourth Edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

## Recommended Textbooks

Patterson, D. (2000). Personal computer applications in the social services. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Fischer, J., & Corcoran, K. (2000). Measures for clinical practice: Couples, families and children. Boston: Free Press.

Fischer, J., & Corcoran, K. (2000). Measures for clinical practice: Adults. Boston: Free Press.

## Course Requirements

The instructor strongly encourages active student participation in class. Students are expected to attend all classes, to prepare fully before each class, and to complete all assignments as scheduled. This is a participatory class; participation will count toward the course grade. Students will be expected to be prepared for class and bring to class for discussion examples of concepts and materials from their own practice experience.

There are six written assignments: five brief papers and a final paper; a presentation; and three to four pop quizzes.

## Assignments & Grading

Assignment 1 Synopsis of Client System	(05%)
Assignment 2 Psych-Social Assessment	(10%)
Assignment 3 Literature Review	(10%)
Assignment 4 Measurement Plan	(10%)
Assignment 5 Data Analysis	(10%)
Assignment 6 Formal Presentation	(10%)
Pop Quizzes	(05%)
Assignment 7 Final Paper	(40%)
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Total	100%

## The Grading Scale:

### **A (95-100) Outstanding/Superior.**

Exceptional performance. Consistently exceed expectations.

### **B+ (90-94) Very Good.**

Student consistently meets, and occasionally exceeds, normal expectations for the course.

### **B (80-89) Good.**

Student consistently meets normal expectations for the course.

### **C+ (77-79) Average**

There is unevenness in grasping course content. Student is inconsistent in meeting normal expectations for the course.

### **C (70-76) Poor**

There is lack of understanding of course content. Student does not meet course expectations.

### **F (69-Below) Very Poor**

There is a lack of attendance or incomplete assignments. Course expectations are not met.

## COURSE OUTLINE

WEEK 1: Introduction to Evaluation in Clinical Practice  
August 22

Introduction to Class and Expectations  
Review of Syllabus and Assignments; & Selection of Small Groups  
Brief introduction to Single Systems Design  
Discussion of Evaluation and the Clinical Process as it relates to Ethical Practice

WEEK 2: Evaluating the Clinical Process, or Single Systems Design Demystified  
August 29

Readings:

Bloom, Fischer and Orme Text: Chapters:  
1, Integrating Evaluation and Practice;  
11, Basic Principles of Single System Design; &  
25, Not for Practitioners alone

Fortune, A., & Reid, W. (1999). Single system experiments. In A. Fortune & W. Reid (Eds.), Research in social work (pp. 123-162). New York: Columbia.

Slonim-Nevo, V. (1997). Evaluating practice: The dual roles of clinician and evaluator. Families in society, 3, 228-239

WEEK 3: Reviewing Basic Skills: The Psych-Social Assessment  
September 5

Problem Assessment and Identification

Readings:

Jordan, C. & Franklin, C. (1995). Assessment models. In C. Jordan & C. Franklin (Eds.), Clinical assessment for social workers (pp 14-35). Chicago: Lyceum.

Kaplan, H., & Sadock, B. (1992). The doctor-patient relationship. In H. Kaplan & B. Sadock (Eds.), Synopsis of psychiatry (pp 1-13). Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins.

American Psychiatric Association (1994). Multiaxial assessment In Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM-IV) (pp 25-37). Washington, D.C.: APA

### **BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF CLIENT OR CLIENT SYSTEM DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS**

WEEK 4: Specifying Problems and Goals; and Developing a Measurement Plan  
September 12

Readings:

Bloom, Fischer and Orme Text: Chapters:  
2, Basic principles of conceptualization and measurement;

- 3 Specifying problems and goals,
- 4 Developing a measurement and recording plan

WEEK 5: Measurement Plan Continued  
September 19

**DRAFT OF PSYCH-SOCIAL ASSESSMENT DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS**

WEEK 6: Empirically Based Practice: An Introduction to Using Literature in Clinical Practice &  
Selecting Empirically Supported Interventions  
September 26

Problem Intervention

Readings:

Tripodi, T. (1994). Phase 2: Intervention. In T. Tripodi (Ed.), A primer on single-subject design for clinical social workers (pp. 64-85). Washington DC: NASW Press.

Nelson, J. (1978). Use of communication theory. Social work research and abstracts, 14, 12-19.

Greene, G. (1989). Using the written contract for evaluating and enhancing practice effectiveness. Journal of independent social work, 4, 135-55.

Also available on-line at <http://cc.byu.edu/courses/sw660/readings/WrittenContract.htm>

**PSYCH-SOCIAL ASSESSMENT DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS**

WEEK 7: Methods of Measurement  
October 3

Discussion of Behavioral Observation, Individualized Rating Scales, Standardized Questionnaires, Logs, Reactivity and Nonreactive Measures, & Selecting a Measure

Readings:

Bloom, Fischer and Orme Text: Chapters:

- 5 Behavioral Observation;
- 6, Individualized rating scales;
- 8, logs;
- 9, reactivity and non-reactive measures;
- 10, selecting a measure

Introduction to using Spreadsheets in Clinical Practice

**LITERATURE REVIEW DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS**

**\*\*\*\*\*NO CLASS OCTOBER 10 FALL BREAK\*\*\*\*\***

WEEK 8: Methods of Measurement: Standardized Scales  
October 17

## Selecting and Using Standardized Questionnaires

### Readings:

Bloom, Fischer and Orme Text: 7, standardized questionnaires;

## WEEK 9: Designs October 24

### Baselines, A-B Designs, Experimental Designs, & Other Designs

#### Readings:

Bloom, Fischer and Orme Text Chapters:

12, Baselineing;

13, From the case study to the basic single-system design: A-B;

14, The experimental single system designs;

15, Multiple designs for single systems

Reid, W. (1993). Fitting the single-system design to family treatment. Journal of social service research, 18, 83-99.

Slonim-Nevo, V., & Vosler, N. R. (1991). The use of single-system design with systemic brief problem-solving therapy. Families in society, 72, 38-44.

Friman, P., Hoff, K., Schones, C., Freeman, K., Woods, D., & Blum, N. (1999). The bedtime pass: An approach to bedtime crying and leaving the room. Archives of pediatric adolescent medicine, 153, 1027-1029.

Thyer, B., & Curtis, G. (1983). The repeated pretest-posttest single subject experiment. Journal of behavior therapy and experimental psychiatry, 14, 311-315.

Blythe, B. Evaluating the treatment of a sexually assaulted child.

Fortune, A., & Reid, W. (1999). Qualitative research. In A. Fortune & W. Reid (Eds.), Research in social work (pp. 342-357). New York: Columbia.

MacEachron A., & Gutavsson, N. (1997). Reframing practitioner research. Families in society, 651-656.

Alter C., & Evens, (1990). Qualitative designs. In Alter, C. & Evens, W. (1990). Evaluating your practice: A guide to self-assessment (pp. 52-84). New York: Springer Publishing Co.

Reid, W., & Davis, I. (1987). Qualitative Methods in Single-Case Research. In Naomi Gottlieb (Ed.) Perspectives on practice evaluation (pp. 56-72). Seattle: Center for Social Welfare research, University of Washington.

Simeonsson, R., Bailey, D., Huntington, G., & Brandon, L. (1991). Scaling and Goal Attainment of Goals in Family-Focused Early Intervention. Community mental health journal, 27, 77-83.

**DRAFT OF MEASUREMENT PLAN DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS**

WEEK 9: Analysis  
October 31

Basic Principles, Visual Analysis, & Clinical Significance

Readings:

Bloom, Fischer and Orme Text Chapters:

19, Basic principles of analysis;

20, Visual analysis of single systems design data

**MEASUREMENT PLAN DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS  
DRAFT OF ANALYSIS PLAN DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS**

WEEK 10: Statistical Analysis made Ridiculously Easy  
November 7

Descriptive Statistics, Tests of Statistical Significance for Single-System Design, &  
Selecting a Procedure for Analyzing Data

Readings:

Bloom, Fischer and Orme Text Chapters

21, Descriptive statistics;

22, Tests of statistical significance;

23, Computer analysis;

24, Selecting a procedure for analyzing data

**ANALYSIS PLAN DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS**

WEEK 11: Student Presentations  
November 14

WEEK 12: Student Presentations; Course Review  
November 21

**FINAL PAPERS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS**