

**The University of Tennessee
College of Social Work
Memphis Location**

SOCIAL WORK 547 -- Evaluative Research

2002-2003 Academic Year – Fall Semester
Class time: Monday 5:30-8:30
Office Hour: Mondays 4:30 – 5:30

Instructor: Debra Bartelli, DrPH
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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).

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, 2001*).

Disability

If you need course adaptation or accommodations of a documented disability or if you have emergency information to share, please discuss this with me early in the semester.

Course Description

This course focuses on the history and philosophies, conceptual approaches, techniques, methods, and issues in the practice and utilization of evaluation research as applied to the development and evaluation of social work programs and policies. This course uses an experiential approach, integrating issues and topics in the course with actual program evaluations in the field.

Rationale

Social workers in a variety of management and community practice roles must be able to understand, appreciate, and use diverse research and research methods in order to develop and implement ethical, efficacious, and accountable programs and policies. Toward that end, it is essential that social work administrators and planners have the advanced knowledge and skills necessary to retrieve and critically evaluate existing program and policy research and the tools to carry out advanced evaluations of programs and policies. Therefore, this course focuses on the understanding and application of diverse advanced program and policy research methods in order to prepare students to provide the most effective policies and programs to clients and to contribute to the program and policy knowledge base of the profession.

Objectives

By the end of the course, students will demonstrate, through course requirements, the following knowledge and skills.

1. Knowledge of the history, definitions, and philosophies of evaluation research;
2. Skills in accessing relevant evaluation research literature, and how to critically interpret, synthesize, and use it in the development of social work programs and policies;
3. Skills in conducting evaluability assessments, determining program goals and objectives, and determining the needs of populations served;
4. Knowledge of the principles, logic, strengths, and limitations of advanced sampling techniques relevant to evaluation research, and be able to select appropriate sampling strategies for particular evaluation circumstances;
5. Knowledge of the principle, logic, strengths, and limitations of advanced experimental, quasi-experimental, survey, and qualitative research designs, and be able to select appropriate research designs for particular evaluation circumstances;
6. Knowledge of the strengths and limitations of measurement techniques relevant to evaluation research, and be able to select appropriate measurement techniques for particular evaluation circumstances;
7. Skills in data collection, preparation, manipulation, analysis, and presentation of evaluation research data using a microcomputer and statistical software;
8. Skills in appropriate ways to report and disseminate evaluation research results;
9. Knowledge of ethical, political, and organizational factors involved in the conduct of evaluation research;
10. Skills in conducting evaluation research within the ethical guidelines of social work and related codes of ethical behavior;
11. Knowledge of potential biases in evaluation research with minority and disadvantaged groups and the skills to avoid these biases.

Course Requirements

A. Readings

Basic texts have been selected and readings are listed in the bibliography. Additional readings may be assigned in class. In addition to assigned articles, students are encouraged to read from the recommended selections and independently from the professional journals.

B. Assignments and Evaluation

The course grade is based on a combination of class participation, presentations, quizzes, evaluation proposal, and a final paper and will be computed on the following parts.

15%	(15 points)	Class participation
15%	(15 points)	3 quizzes worth 5 points each
20%	(20 points)	Class presentation
20%	(20 points)	Evaluation proposal
30%	(30 points)	Final paper

The grading scale is as follows:

A	90-100 points
B+	87-89 points
B	80-86 points
C+	77-79 points
C	70-76 points
D+	67-69 points
D	60-66 points
F	<60 points

Required Texts:

Rossi, Peter H., Freeman, Howard E., & Lipsey, Mark W. (1999). Evaluation: a Systematic Approach, 6th edition. California: Sage Publications.

Patton, Michael Q. (2002). Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods, 3rd edition. California: Sage Publications.

Project Evaluation Proposal Criteria:

Select a program evaluation research problem which is of interest or concern to you. Ideally, you will select a problem identified in your field placement. You may choose community needs assessment, program monitoring, outcome assessment, or other programmatic or managerial issues to address.

Evaluation proposals must address the following:

- The nature of the programmatic problem
- The type of evaluation you will use to study this problem
- The rationale for choosing a particular evaluation method to study the problem.
- Description of the agency/setting in which the evaluation will take place including:
 - Issue/problem addressed by the agency/program
 - Target population served
 - Services provided
 - Evaluation context
 - Expected outcomes
- Justification of the need to conduct the evaluation study with appropriate literature review.
Justification should include:
 - What has been done in the past
 - What is known and not known
 - Theoretical or conceptual assumptions of the program
- A set of evaluation hypotheses or research questions which you will use to guide and/or test in your study.

In addition to the above, technical aspects of the proposals will also be assessed (format, spelling, grammar, etc.)

Criteria for Final Paper:

You will be expected to carry out and report on the proposed evaluation study. (Attach revised first paper to second paper.) The final paper will be assessed on the following criteria:

1. Methods

A. Sample

- a. What kind of sampling technique did you use?
- b. What was the sample size?
- c. How representative of the program population is your sample

B. Data collection techniques

C. Design

- a. What type of design was used?
- b. Discussion of any internal/external validity issues

2. Measurement

- A. What were your variables?
- B. How were your variables operationalized?
- C. Are there any measurement reliability and validity issues that should be discussed?

3. Type of Analysis

- A. What type of analysis did you use?
- B. What statistical tests were employed, if any?

4. Outcome

- A. What were the results of the evaluation?
- B. What were the problems, if any, encountered?

5. Discussion

- A. What are the implications of the results?
- B. What recommendations do you have for the program?

6. Tables and Graphs

- A. Attach any tables and graphs that will help the reader understand the analysis and refer to these in the discussion

7. Technical Issues (Page numbers, headings, spelling, grammar, etc.)

Readings and Outline:

Class 1: August 26

Structure of the course
Introduction to Evaluative Research
Understanding Evaluative Research

Class 2: September 9

Purposes of Evaluative Research
History and Theories of Evaluation
Overview of Evaluative Research in Social Work

Readings:

Rossi, Freeman, & Lipsey – Chapters 1 & 2

Patton – Part I, pages 1-35

Grinnell, R.M., Jr. (2001). Introduction to research. In R.M. Grinnell, Jr. (Ed.), *Social work research and evaluation: Quantitative and qualitative approaches* (6th ed., pp. 1-19). Itasca, IL: F.E. Peacock Publishers.

Class 3: September 16

Types of Evaluation
Determining Community Needs and Program Goals
 Conducting an evaluability assessment
 Conceptualizing and operationalizing program goals and objectives

Conducting a community needs assessment
Tailoring evaluations to programs (goals and objectives, formative and summative evaluations, evaluability assessments)
Eliciting, expressing and assessing program theory

Readings:

Rossi, Freeman, & Lipsey – Chapters 3, 4, 5

Mohr, L. B. (1992). Impact analysis for program evaluation (2nd ed.)
Newbury Park: Sage. (Chapters 1-4)

Class 4: September 23

Types of Evaluation (continued)
Monitoring (process)
Program outcomes/impacts
Cost benefit and cost effectiveness analysis
Quality assurance

Readings:

Rossi, Freeman, & Lipsey – Chapters 6 & 11

Patton – Chapter 4, pages 143 - 190

Class 5: September 30

Research questions and evaluative hypotheses
Theory and Literature Review
Research Designs for Evaluative Research
Quasi- and experimental designs
Cross-sectional, exploratory and qualitative designs

Readings:

Rossi, Freeman, & Lipsey – Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10

Patton – Part 2, pages 207-427

Cook, T.D. & Campbell, D.T. (1979). Quasi-Experimentation: Design and Analysis Issues for Field Settings. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. Chapter 1.

Class 6: October 7

Research Design (continued)
Internal and external validity

Readings:

Cook, T.D. & Campbell, D.T. (1979). *Quasi-Experimentation: Design and Analysis Issues for Field Settings*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. Chapter 2.

EVALUATION PROPOSAL DUE

Class 7: October 14

Sampling

Review, units of analysis, variables, levels of measurement

Readings:

Patton – Part 2, Chapter 5

Taylor-Powell, E. (1998). Program development and evaluation: Sampling. College Station, TX: Texas A & M Agricultural Extension Service. (Accessible on-line at: http://cf.uwex.edu/ces/pubs/pdf/G3658_3.PDF)

Class 8: October 21

Data collection

Secondary and primary data

Interviews, surveys, telephone, participant observation

Readings:

Patton – Part 2, Chapter 6, 7

Class 9: October 28

Data Management

Micro Computer Lab

Readings:

Nurlus, P.S. & Hudson, W.W. (1993). *Human services practice, evaluation and computers*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks-Cole Publishing Company. Chapter 7.

Class 10: November 4

Measurement Issues

Standardized scales and survey questionnaires

Reliability and measurement validity

Bias

Readings:

Review Rossi, Freeman, & Lipsey – Chapter 7

Class 11: November 11

Data Analysis

Graphic and tabular presentation of evaluative research findings
Reporting and disseminating evaluation results
Descriptive statistics
Understanding chi square, correlation, T-tests

Readings:

Mohr, L. B. (1992). Impact analysis for program evaluation (2nd ed.)
Newbury Park: Sage. (Chapters 5-10).

Class 12: November 18

Cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analysis

Readings:

Review Rossi, Freeman, & Lipsey – Chapter 11

Review Mohr, L. B. (1992). Impact analysis for program evaluation (2nd ed.)
(Chapters 5-10). Newbury Park: Sage.

Class 13: November 25

Ethical Issues in Evaluative Research

Political and organizational factors involved in the planning, conduct, and
interpretation of evaluation research
Professional guidelines for the ethical conduct of evaluation research
Human subjects protection and informed consent
Avoiding bias and understanding the perspectives of minority and
disadvantaged groups in the conduct and interpretation of evaluation research

Readings:

Rossi, Freeman, & Lipsey – Chapter 12

Patton – Pages 269-273; 405-415

Madison, A. (Ed.) (1992). Minority issues in program evaluation. New Directions for Program Evaluation, 43. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

NASW Code of Ethics in Research (Handout)

Class 14: December 2

Project Presentation – **FINAL PAPERS DUE**

Readings

- Abt, Clark (Editor), (1976) The evaluation of social programs. Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications.
- Anderson, Scarvia B. & Samuel Ball. (1978) The profession and practice of program evaluation. Jossey-Bass.
- Benbenishty, R. & Ben-Zaken, A. (1988). Computer aided process of monitoring task-centered family interventions. Social Work Research and Abstracts, 24, 7-9.
- Campbell, D. T., & Stanley, J. C. (1979). Experimental & quasi-experimental design for research (Chapters 2-5). Chicago: Rand McNally & Company.
- Cook, T.D. & Campbell, D.T. (1979). Quasi-Experimentation: Design and Analysis Issues for Field Settings. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Fowler, F. J. Jr. (1988). Survey research methods. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- Gabor, P. & Grinnell, Jr., R. M. (1994). Should program decisions be based on empirical evidence of effectiveness? Yes. In W. W. Hudson & Nurius, P. S. (Eds.), Controversial issues in social work research. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Garfinkel, I., Meyer, D. R., & Sandefur, G. D. (1992). The effects of alternative child support systems on blacks, Hispanics, and non-Hispanic whites. Social Service Review, 66, 505-523.
- Greene, Jennifer C. & Valerie J. Caracelli, (Eds.). (1997). Advances in mixed-method evaluation: The challenges and benefits of integrating diverse paradigms. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Isaac, S. & Michael, W. B. (1995). Handbook in research and evaluation (3rd Ed.). San Diego, CA: EdITS/Educational and Industrial Testing Services.
- Johnson, A. K. (1989). Measurement and methodology: Problems and issues in research on homelessness. Social Work Research and Abstracts, 25, 12-20.
- Madison, A. (Ed.) (1992). Minority issues in program evaluation, New Directions for Program Evaluation, 53. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1984). Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Mohr, L. B. (1995). Impact analysis for program evaluation (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Nasuti, J. P. & Pecora, P. J. (1993). Risk assessment scales in child protection: A test of the internal consistency and interrater reliability of one statewide system. Social Work Research and Abstracts, 29, 28-34.
- Nurius, P. S., & Hudson, W. W. (1993). Human services practice, evaluation and computers. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks-Cole Publishing Company.
- Reichardt, C. S. & Rallis, S. F. (Eds.) (1994). The qualitative-quantitative debate: New Perspectives, New Directions for Program Evaluation, 61. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Shields, J. J. (1992). Evaluating community organization projects: The development of an empirically based measure. Social Work Research and Abstracts, 28, 15-20.
- Silverman, D. (1993). Interpreting qualitative data: Methods for analyzing talk, text, and interactions. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). The art of case study research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Taber, M. (1994). Should program decisions be based on empirical evidence of effectiveness? No. In W. W. Hudson & Nurius, P. S. (Eds.), Controversial issues in social work research. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Taylor-Powell, E. (1998). Program development and evaluation: Sampling. College Station, TX: Texas A & M Agricultural Extension Service. (Accessible on-line at: http://cf.uwex.edu/ces/pubs/pdf/G3658_3.PDF)
- Toomey, B. G., First, R. J., Rife, J. C., & Belcher, J. R. (1989). Evaluating community care for homeless mentally ill people. Social Work Research and Abstracts, 25, 21-26.
- Tracy, E. M., Green, R. K., & Bremseth, M. D. (1993). Meeting the environmental needs of abused and neglected children: Implications from a statewide survey of supportive services. Social Work Research and Abstracts, 29, 21-27.
- Videka-Sherman, L. (1986). Studies of research on social work practice: A bibliography. Silver Springs, MD: NASW.
- Yin, R. K. (1989). Case study research: Design and methods. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- Yin, R.K. (1993). Applications of case study research. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.