

**UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK**

**Syllabus: SW547 – Evaluation Research
Fall 2008**

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 (<http://www.csw.utk.edu/mssw/>).

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, 2008*).

Disability

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability or if you have emergency information to share, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 2227 Dunford Hall (865-974-6087). This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

Course Description

This course is one of three required core courses for Management and Community Practice concentration students. It focuses on the history and philosophies, conceptual approaches, techniques and methods, and issues in the practice and utilization of evaluation research as applied to the development and evaluation of social work programs and policies. The course utilizes an experiential format, integrating issues in the course with actual program evaluations in the field.

Course 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.

Course 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.