

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

**Syllabus: SW-526 - Evaluating Clinical Practice  
Spring 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/>)

**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, 2007*).

**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 191 Hoskins Library (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 and practice courses, 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.