

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

**SW 549 Evaluative Research
(3 credit hours)**

SPRING 2009

Prerequisite(s): 510, 512, 513, 517, 519, 520, 522, 537, 538, 539

Instructor information

Instructor: Sam Choi, Ph. D., M.S.W.
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Office Hours: Wednesdays 3:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.

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.utk.csw.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*, 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 University of Tennessee Office of Disability Services at 2227 Dunford (865-974-6087). This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

Course Description

This is a required concentration course. Examines how to (1) convert information needs related to practice decisions into well-structured answerable questions; (2) efficiently locate the best evidence with which to answer such questions; (3) critically appraise such evidence; (4) apply results to practice and policy decisions; and (5) evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the application of such results to practice and policy decisions.

Course Rationale:

Social workers regardless of 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 workers have the knowledge and skills necessary to retrieve and critically evaluate existing program and policy

research and the tools to carry out evaluations of programs and policies. Therefore, this course focuses on the understanding and application of diverse evaluative 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 Competencies: By the completion of this course, the students are expected to be able to demonstrate (through course activities, assignments, and/or exams):

1. Knowledge of the history, definitions, and philosophies of evaluation research in advancing practice of evidence based practice (CT/EBP C.1., C.2., C.3., C.4; Diversity D2.) [*Content: (a) purposes of evaluative research, (b) theories of evaluation, (c) history of evaluation including emergence of the specialty, previous abuses of research with underrepresented client systems and reasons for using evaluative research to develop evidence based practice (d) evaluation research in human service organizations (e) issues of research with diverse client systems*]
2. Skills in utilizing search resources to access relevant evidence based evaluation literature with an emphasis on applying critical thinking in the interpretation, synthesis and development of social work programs and policies. [CT/EBP C.1., C.2., C.3., C.4.) (*Content: (a) Use the evidence-base research process in the utilization of databases to locate practice knowledge (b) critical analysis of evaluative research knowledge sources,(c) the link between evidence based research to program and policy development,(d) using empirical research to develop outcome measures and (e) conduct a review of evidence based literature to determine type of evaluation needed to study various programmatic problems to be inclusive of process evaluation and outcome evaluation; using research to inform practice and practice experience to inform research*)
3. Skills in conducting evaluation assessments, determining program goals and objectives and determining the needs of populations served. (CT/EBP C.1., C.2., C.3., C.4.) [*Content: (a) Critical appraisal of evidence in the development of evaluation design, outcome measures, program goals/objectives, (b) using logic models to visually display program theory, processes and outcomes, (c) making the link between program elements and evaluation design, (d) formulating and assessing population needs through a complete understanding of the contextual variables (e) formulating research questions for evaluation including identification of issues to explore, programmatic problem and the purpose of the evaluation and (f) when and how to conduct a needs assessment*]
4. Knowledge of the principles, logic, strengths, and limitations of sampling techniques relevant to evaluation research, including the ability to select appropriate sampling strategies for particular evaluation circumstances. (CT/EBP C.1., C.2., C.3., C.4.: Diversity D.1., D.2., D.3.) [*Content: (a) purpose and limitations of random selection in evaluative research (b) cultural sensitivity in sampling procedures (c) sampling strategies in the development of an evaluative research design, (d) data collection techniques including secondary data, primary data, Interviews & surveys*]

5. Knowledge of the principles, logic, strengths, and limitations of meta-analysis, experimental design, quasi-experimental design, case-control and cohort studies, pre-experimental group studies, surveys, and qualitative research designs including the ability to select appropriate research designs for particular evaluation circumstances. (CT/EBP C.1., C.2., C.3., C.4.) [*Content: (a) evaluation design including principles, logic, strengths, and limitations of meta-analysis, experimental design, quasi-experimental design, case-control and cohort studies, pre-experimental group studies, surveys, and qualitative research designs (b) ability to use quantitative vs. qualitative methods and (c) understand the hierarchy of evidence as it applies to different study designs*]
6. Knowledge of the strengths and limitations of measurement techniques relevant to evaluation research including the ability to select appropriate measurement techniques for particular evaluation circumstances. [CT/EBP C.1., C.2., C.3., C.4.) (*Content: (a) Standardized scales and survey questionnaires, (b) reliability and measurement validity, (c) significance, error and variables, (d) understand how measurement contributes to the strength of evaluation findings, (e) Selecting appropriate measurement targets from the literature (i.e. client level: Multidimensional (global) assessment scales, uni-dimensional scales with and without clinical cutoff scores), and (f) Selecting the feasibility of outcome target measures such as availability of the measure, existing data, accessibility of data, availability of baseline information from multiple sources*)]
7. Skills in data collection, preparation, manipulation, analysis, and presentation of evaluation research data. [CT/EBP C.1., C.2., C.3., C.4.) [*Content: (a) data collection methods (b) experience collecting data (c) understand data analysis (d) build database using statistical programs, (e) knowledge of statistical tools such as SPSS, (f) Graphic, tabular and statistical presentation of evaluative research findings, (g) Reporting and disseminating evaluation results, (h) descriptive statistics, chi-square, correlation and t-tests*]
8. Skills in appropriate ways to report and disseminate evaluation research results. (CT/EBP C.1., C.2., C.3., C.4.). [*Content: (a) understanding the need for evidence to support program development and fund procurement, (b) ability to clearly disseminate and explain evaluative research findings through the use of executive summaries, evaluative reports and presentations to primary stakeholders*]
9. Knowledge of ethical, political, and organizational factors involved in the conduct of evaluation research (Values/ethics C.1). [*Content: (a) Professional guidelines for the ethical conduct of evaluation research including the NASW and Code of Ethics and Ethical guidelines for evaluative researcher, (b) methods for addressing ethical dilemmas in evaluative research, (c) political and organizational factors involved in the planning, conducting and interpreting evaluation research, (d) human subjects protection and informed consent, (e) Avoiding bias and understanding the perspectives of minority and disadvantaged groups in the conduct and interpretation of evaluation research, (f) skills in conducting evaluation research within the ethical guidelines of social work and related codes of ethical behavior and (g) application of the evidence learned to the generation of reflective practice for better client intervention*]

10. Knowledge of potential biases in evaluation research with minority and disadvantaged groups with an emphasis on skills to avoid these biases to the best extend possible. (Diversity C 1, C.2., C.3. C.4.). [*Content: (a) use of evaluative research in identifying barriers to culturally relevant service delivery for client systems, (b) assess and work sensitively with practice, ethical, and research dilemmas that may arise when working with diverse client systems, (c) assess the limitations and strengths of theories of human development, practice models, interventions, and research methods and instruments when working with diverse client systems and (d) appropriately adapt and apply practice with the best evidence of effective and culturally affirming practice (e) identify and assess the interaction of cultural systems among the multiple identities of the social worker, client system(s), setting, and immediate community, and practice competently within and across these various systems and cultures*]

Readings:

The following book is required of the course and you can purchase it from any book sellers:

Rossi, P., Lipsey, M., & Freeman, H. (2004). Evaluation: A Systematic Approach, 7th edition, California: Sage Publications.

There are also other required readings that are listed in the syllabus and made available in the blackboard.

Evaluation:

The course grade is based on combination of quizzes, student exercise, evaluation report and presentation, and discussion boards which will be computed on the following parts.

20%: Quizzes

20%: Student Exercise

30%: Evaluation Presentation

30%: Discussion Boards

Grading Scale

A (95-100) Outstanding/Superior - Exceptional performance. Consistently exceeds expectations.

B+ (90-94) Very Good. - Student consistently meets, and occasionally exceeds, normal expectations for the course.

B (85-89) Good - Student consistently meets normal expectations for the course.

C+ (80-84) Average - There is unevenness in grasping course content. Student is inconsistent in meeting normal expectations for the course.

C (70-79) 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.

Assignments

Quizzes (20%): Students will have a quiz for several modules in the class for a total of 5 quizzes. The quizzes will cover all reading materials and course materials for that module. All quizzes are located under the modules in "Course Documents". The quizzes are open book and open note, but you are not permitted to share answers or discuss the quiz with other students. Sharing answers or helping each other constitutes cheating and will result in disciplinary action. The quiz will be timed and you have 3 hours to complete the each quiz. Once you open a quiz, you must complete the quiz within 3 hours. Do not open the quiz until you have reviewed the material for that module and you are ready to take the quiz. There will be no make-up quiz. Please do not wait until the last minute to submit your answers for the quiz.

Quiz 1: Overview of Evaluation Research

Quiz 2: Program Analysis & Program Theory

Quiz 3: Need Assessment and Formulation of Research Questions

Quiz 4: Evaluation Design (Quantitative Research)

Quiz 5: Evaluation Design (Qualitative Research and Mixed Methods)

Student Exercise (20%): The following modules include student exercise. Students require completing each exercise after reviewing course materials. The student exercise will not be timed but you need to complete it a day before the next module begins.

Module3: Problem Analysis & Program Theory

Module4: Logic Model

Module 5: Formulating Evaluative Research Questions

Module 8: SPSS data analysis

Discussion Boards (30%): Students are expected to participate in a discussion board with their classmates for each module covered in this course in a timely fashion. All discussion boards are located under the modules in "Course Documents." You are required to actively engaging in thoughtful discussions with your classmates. Your grade for the discussion board will be dependent on the quality and appropriateness of your comments. It is important to remember that this is a classroom environment. Therefore, your language and tone on the discussion board should reflect this environment. You are strongly encouraged to challenge and disagree with each other, but this must be done in a respectful manner. The discussion boards will cover the following topics:

Module 1: The use of evaluation research in your agency/field/areas of interests

Module 2: Ethical Issues in Evaluation Research

Module6-7: Evaluation Design

Module 8: Measurement Issues

Module 9: Various Evaluation Research

Evaluation Proposal (30%) (Due on April 16)

After selecting a program evaluation research problem which is of interest or concern, you will present an evaluation proposal. This presentation should be conducted in a professional manner. Therefore, behave professionally, use power point. You can do a team presentation.

1. Introductions and Background
 - Statement/Significance of the Problem
 - Research Questions/ Evaluation hypothesis
2. Literature Review
 - What else has been in terms of researching similar programs?
 - Where else has your methodology been used?
 - What can we learn from what others have done that will make your evaluation better?
3. Program Description
 - What are the program's goals and objectives?
 - What is the theory behind the program?
 - What are the program activities?
 - How often are activities performed?, etc.
 - Who are the clients?
4. Proposed Methodology
 - How would you collect Data?
 - What types of sampling technique and design will you use?
 - What would be pros and cons for using your chosen sampling technique and design?
 - What measures will you use? Variables, defined and operationalized
 - Are there any problems with the measures that make them less than ideal?
 - Type of Analysis
 - Limitation of your methodology
5. Potential Implications for Social Work Practice
 - What would be the contribution of this study in your field?
 - What would be the limitation of your study? And how would you improve it for your future study?
6. Appendix: Logic Model
7. Question & Answer via Discussion Boards

Course Outline

Week 1 Module Begins on January 7

- *Module 1:* Introduction to Evaluation Research
Purpose of Evaluation Research, History of Evaluation, Evaluation of Human Service Organizations
- *Readings*
Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman (2004). Chapter 1.
Dziegielewski, S., Wodarski, J. & Feit, M. (2005). Social Service research: Efficacy necessity and effectiveness. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 32(1), 1-15.
- *Discussion Boards:* Discuss the use of evaluation research in your agency/field/areas of interests (Participate it before Jan 13)
- *Quiz 1: Overview* of Evaluation Research (Complete it before Jan 14)

Week 2 &3 Module Begins on January 14

- *Module 2:* Ethical Issues in Evaluation Research
- *Readings*
Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman (2004). Chapter 12.
Morris, M., & Cohn, R. (1993). Program evaluators and ethical challenges. *Evaluation Review*, 17(6), 621-642.
- *Discussion Boards:* Watch one of following movies and discuss your chosen movie in our blackboard. You will have links to the movie in our blackboard. Please related it to the readings (Participate it before Jan.28)
 - *Miss Evers' Boys*
 - *The Deadly Deception*
 - *Quite Rage: The Stanford Prison Study*

Week 4 &5 Module Begins on January 28

- *Module 3:* Steps in Evaluation Research, Program Analysis and Program Theory
Example of Southern Disaster Relief Mental Health Unit
- *Readings*
Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey (2003) Chapter 2 & 5
Bickman, L. (1987). The functions of program theory. New directions for program evalauton, No. 33 (pp.5-18). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- *Student Exercise:* Problem Analysis & Program Theory (Complete it before Feb.10)
- *Quiz 2:* Program Analysis & Program Theory (Complete it before Feb.11)

Week 6 Module Begins on February 11

- *Module 4:* Logic Models
- *Readings*
Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey (2003) Chapter 5
W.K. Kellogg Foundation, December 2001. *Logic Model Development Guide*. Battle Creek, MI: Author. [this reading can be found on line at <http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub3669.pdf>]
- *Student Exercise:* Logic Model Exercise (Complete it before Feb.17)

Week 7 & 8 Module Begins on February 18

- *Module 5:* Need Assessment and Formulation of Research Questions
- *Readings*
Rossi Freeman & Lipsey, (2003) Chapter 3, 4, 6, and 7
- *Student Exercise:* Formulating Evaluative Research Questions (Complete it before Mar. 3)
- *Quiz 3:* Need Assessment and Formulation of Research Questions (Complete it before Mar. 4)

Week 9 & 10 Module Begins on March 4

- *Module 6:* Evaluation Design I (Quantitative Research)
- *Readings*
Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey (2003) Chapter 8 and 9
- *Discussion Boards:* Explain and discuss your design for your evaluation research using quantitative research (Participate it before Mar 24)
- *Quiz 4:* Evaluation Design (Complete it before Mar 25)

Week 11 Spring Break

Week 12&13 Module Begins on March 25

- *Module 7:* Evaluation Design II (Qualitative Research and Mixed Method)
- *Readings*
Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey (2003) Chapter 9 and 10

- *Discussion Boards:* Explain and discuss your design for your evaluation research using qualitative research and mixed method (Participate it before Apr.7)
- *Quiz 5:* Evaluation Design (Complete it before Apr. 8)

Week 14 & 15 Module Begins on April 8

- *Module 8:* Measurement Issues
- *Readings*
Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (2008). *Research Methods for Social Work* (6th Ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Press. Chapters 6, 7, & 8.
- *Discussion Boards:* Explain and discuss your measurement/measurement issues for your evaluation research (Participate it before Apr. 21)
- *Student Exercise:* SPSS data analysis (Complete it before Apr.22)

Week 16 Module Begins on April 22

- *Module 9:* Presentations
Powerpoint Presentation of your evaluation research in our blackboard
- *Discussion Boards:* Provide comments to your classmates (at least 3 presentations) and if you have any, ask questions to the author. Authors are expected to answer their questions (Participate it before Apr.29)