

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

**SW 563 Systematic Planning and Evaluation for Interpersonal Practice  
(3 Credit Hours)  
Spring 2009**

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

**Instructor Information**

Instructor: Marlys Staudt, Ph.D.

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Office hours: 1-2 pm Thursdays and by appointment

Class times: 9:40 to 12:25, Thursdays  
in Room 206, Henson Hall

**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](http://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 Hall (865) 974-6087. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

**Course Description**

This is a required advanced course. This course focuses on the development of knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to systematically plan and evaluate interpersonal practice for the purpose of informing clinical decision-making. Building upon the foundation research, human behavior, and practice courses, this course examines evidence-based methods for: conducting assessments; identifying and implementing evidence-based interventions; and measuring and monitoring outcomes for individuals, couples, families, and small groups.

**Course Rationale**

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, couple, family, or small group. In order to provide the most effective interpersonal practice for particular clients, social workers must be able to locate, critically appraise, and implement evidence-based interventions, 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 Competencies:** By the completion of this course, the students are expected to be able to demonstrate (through course activities, assignments, and/or exams):

1. Select appropriate targets of client change and goals in a way that can be measured and monitored in interpersonal practice. (Values & Ethics 1,2,3; Diversity 2,3; Critical Thinking/Evidence-Based Practice 1; Research 2) (Content: conducting an assessment of client needs; goal setting, short and long term goal identification; measurement plan; cultural relevance of measurement tools; validity and reliability of measurement tools; standardized recording plan; importance of client values, preferences, and expectations; practitioner's individual expertise; and clinical characteristics and circumstance)
2. Locate, critically appraise, and apply appropriate evidence-based interpersonal practice interventions for a given client system. (Values & Ethics 1,2,3; Diversity 1,2,3; Critical Thinking/Evidenced-Based Practice 1,3,4; Field 2) (Content: steps of evidence based practice; systematic reviews; development of evidence based treatment plan; cultural relevance of evidence; connection between evidence based practice, social justice and the code of ethics; evidence based practice; importance of client values, preferences, and expectations; practitioner's individual expertise; and clinical characteristics and circumstance.)
3. Select and use the most appropriate single-system designs (defined broadly) to evaluate client change in interpersonal practice. (Values & Ethics 1,2,3; Diversity 1,2,3; Critical Thinking/Evidenced-Based Practice 2; Research 2) (Content: purpose and uses of baselines; circumstances under which different single-system designs are useful, practical, and ethical; purposes of different single-system designs; considerations in selecting different single-system designs)
4. Select and use the most appropriate evidence-based methods to analyze and interpret client change in interpersonal practice. (Values & Ethics 1,2,3; Diversity 2,3; Critical Thinking/Evidenced-Based Practice 2,3; Research 2) (Content: practical, statistical, and theoretical significance; methods for graphing single-system design data; visual analysis of single-system design data; considerations in selecting different methods for analyzing data from single-system designs)
5. Select and use the most appropriate evidence-based methods for the assessment, monitoring, and analysis of client change in interpersonal practice. (Values & Ethics 1,2,3; Diversity 2; Critical Thinking/Evidenced-Based Practice 2,3; Research 2) (Content: direct measures (i.e. behavioral observations), and indirect measures (individualized rating scales standardized instruments); logs; rating scales; influence of 'bias'; characteristics and benefits of standardized scales; methods of measuring behavior; benefits/limits of scales; cultural competence in planning and constructing measures; search terms for choosing a scale; measurement databases such as HAPPI and Mental Measurements Yearbook; administering a scale; standardized measures.
6. Effectively communicate results obtained from the evaluation of interpersonal practice.

(Values & Ethics 1,2,3; Diversity 2,3; Critical Thinking/Evidenced-Based Practice 1,2,3; Research 2) (Content: visual and descriptive analysis; presentation techniques; creating line and bar graphs; techniques for describing and interpreting data)

7. Conduct the evaluation of interpersonal practice within the ethical standards of the social work profession. (Values & Ethics 1,2,3; SJ 1) (Content: NASW Code of Ethics; connection between evidence based practice, social justice and the code of ethics; role of client informed consent in implementing measures and interventions)
8. Critically evaluate the strengths and limitations of the evaluation of interpersonal practice in reference to race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, family structure, relational status, national origin, age, and religion. (Diversity 1,2,3) (Content: cultural relevance of evidence; importance of client values, preferences, and expectations; importance of self-reflection and awareness of clinician's values, preferences,

### **Readings:**

Assigned readings are on reserve in Hodges Library. There is not a textbook for the course.

### **Course Requirements:**

The instructor will present material on practice evaluation and the students will integrate it with their readings and apply the information in their practice experience and field settings. Students will present these applications on a regular basis. Students are expected to read assigned materials, discuss assigned readings in class, attend class and participate in discussions, and present case applications. The number of presentations will depend on the number of students enrolled in the class. These are primarily “informal and relaxed” presentations of different components of your practice evaluation effort, and are intended for you to receive feedback and for other students to learn from your efforts.

Please notify me if you need to be absent. Absences and consistent tardiness will result in the loss of points. More than 2 absences will result in the loss of five points per absence.

### *Assignments*

- Blackboard participation related to your reaction to assigned readings, related to the challenges/benefits of evidence-based practices and practice evaluation in social work, including role of ethics in practice evaluation (**Competencies 1, 2, and 7**).
- An in-class discussion, about assigned articles related to the evaluation of interpersonal practice within ethical standards of social work profession and strengths/limitations of evaluation in reference to race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, etc. (**Competencies 7 and 8**).
- The first presentation and paper require you to present a treatment plan where you select appropriate client behaviors and outcomes to measure and monitor (**Competency 1**).
- The second presentation and paper require you to describe a measurement plan for assessing and monitoring desired client outcomes, including your assessment of whether and in what way administration of these measures is ethical and appropriate, given client age, ethnicity, cognitive functioning, etc. (**Competencies 5, 7, and 8**).

- The third paper requires you to locate and evaluate evidence-based interventions (**Competency 2**).
- The third presentation and fourth paper require you to operationalize the intervention and describe how you will monitor it and why you chose it, including issues related to client's culture and values (**Competencies 2 and 8**).
- One quiz is based on a lab assignment and requires you to analyze and interpret client change (**Competencies 4 and 6**).
- One quiz requires you to be able to select appropriate single-system designs to evaluate client change (**Competency 3**).

### *Grading*

Points will be allocated as follows:

Participation in class and presentations: 40 points

Four small papers, each worth 30 points: 120 points

Two quizzes, each worth 20 points: 40 points

Total possible points: 200 points

184-200 points: A

176-183 points: B+

160-175 points: B

156-159 points: C+

140-155 points: C

120-139 points: D

119 points or less: F

### **Course Outline:**

#### **Session 1: January 7, 2009**

Introduction, review of syllabus, course objectives and requirements

The importance of evaluation in direct social work practice will be discussed. The ways in which evaluation can contribute to treatment planning, to decisions about termination and the revision of treatment plans, worker accumulation of practice wisdom, and to improvement and refinement of worker skills, will be discussed. We will re-visit the purpose of assessment and how the process of assessment leads to the formulation of desired outcomes. We will discuss the meaning of evidence-based practice.

Students will be asked to talk about their placement setting, the types of presenting problems they see, and how their agencies undertake evaluation activities.

**GROUP DISCUSSION ONE: Please prepare for the Blackboard group discussion next week by reading the assigned articles.**

**Session 2: January 14, 2009**

Class will not meet as I will be out of town. Therefore, instead of having an in-class discussion of the articles, we will do so using Blackboard.

**Readings:**

**Azrin, S. T. & Goldman, H. H. (2005). Evidence-based practice emerges. (pp 67-93). In RE Drake, MR Merrens, & DW Lynde (Eds.). Evidence-Based Mental Health Practice: A Textbook. New York: Norton.**

**Love, S. M., Koob, J. J. & Hill, L. E. (2007). Meeting the challenges of evidence-based practice: Can mental health therapists evaluate their practice? *Brief Treatment and Crisis Intervention*, 7, 184-193.**

**Nelson, T. D., Steele, R. G., & Mize, J. A. (2006). Practitioner attitudes toward evidence-based practice: Themes and challenges. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 33, 398-409.**

**Session 3: January 21, 2009**

- Practice evaluation is a way of thinking about your practice. In this session we will consider the whole of treatment planning--formulating problems, interventions, outcomes and the rationales provided for decision-making. We will do this by examining protocols and research on "systematic planned practice."
- Instructor will provide an overview of moving from conceptualization to measurement and deciding what to measure and begin to discuss specific measurement strategies.
- **Reading:**

**Rosen, A. (1993). Systematic planned practice. *Social Service Review*, March, 84-100.**

**Session 4: Jan. 28, 2009**

- Students will present their preliminary treatment plans, using the SPP framework.
- The instructor will begin to present information on specific measurement strategies. Sources of measures. How can client willingness to participate in data collection be facilitated? What instructions, assistance, guidelines, should be provided to clients? Instructor will review validity, reliability, and other measurement properties.

- **GROUP DISCUSSION TWO:** Please prepare for the second group discussion next week. Read the Marlow article and the Rzepnicki articles and come to class prepared to discuss them. I will ask for students to lead the discussion.

### **Session 5: February 5, 2009 PAPER 1 Due**

- Group discussion of the articles.
- The instructor will continue to present information on specific measurement strategies. Sources of measures. How can client willingness to participate in data collection be facilitated? What instructions, assistance, guidelines, should be provided to clients? Instructor will review validity, reliability, and other measurement properties.

#### **Readings:**

**Gambrill, E. (2006). Where to look: Deciding how to gather needed information. In Social Work Practice: A Critical Thinker's Guide (pp.459-486). Oxford University Press.**

**Marlow C. (2004). The evidence-based practitioner: Assessing the cultural responsiveness of research. In Briggs, H. E. & Rzepnicki, T. L. (Eds.), *Using Evidence in Social Work Practice: Behavioral Perspectives* (pp. 257-272). Chicago: Lyceum.**

**Rzepnicki, T. L. (2004). Informed consent and practice evaluation: Making the decision to participate meaningful. In Briggs, H. E. & Rzepnicki, T. L. (Eds.), *Using Evidence in Social Work Practice: Behavioral Perspectives* (pp. 273-290). Chicago: Lyceum.**

### **Session 6: February 12, 2009**

- Students will present their target behaviors, how they are operationalized and measured.
- Time for individual consultation.

### **Session 7: February 19, 2009 Paper 2 is due**

- Group designs

**Thyer, BA & Myers, LL (2007). Group evaluation designs (chp 4, pp 81-111). In A Social Worker's Guide to Evaluating Practice Outcomes.**

**Westbury, E. & Tutty, LM. (1999). The efficacy of group treatment for survivors of childhood abuse. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 23,31-44.**

### **Session 8: Feb. 26, 2009**

- Single system designs: Baseline, evaluation, and experimental designs
- Goal attainment scaling and strategies for short-term practice
- Problem-solving your evaluation challenges: Time for informal group discussion and individual consultation.

**Cheung, KM. (1999). Effectiveness of social work treatment and massage therapy for nursing home clients. *Research on Social Work Practice, 9, 229-247.***

**Nurius, P. (1992). Practice evaluation methods: Practical variations on a theme. In CW LeCroy (Ed.) Case studies in social work practice (pp. 268-277). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.**

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

**Thyer, BA & Myers, LL (2007). Single system designs (chp 3, pp 41-80). In A Social Worker's Guide to Evaluating Practice Outcomes.**

### **Session 9: March 5, 2009**

- Reading and understanding intervention research.

**Mueser, KT & Drake, RE (2005). How does a practice become evidence-based? (p 217-241). In RE Drake, MR Merrens, & DW Lynde (Eds.). *Evidence-Based Mental Health Practice: A Textbook*. New York: Norton.**

**Siegel, C., Haugland, G., & Schore, R. (2005). The interface of cultural competency and evidence-based practices (pp. 273-299). In RE Drake, MR Merrens, & DW Lynde (Eds.). *Evidence-Based Mental Health Practice: A Textbook*. New York: Norton.**

**Williams, L. M., Patterson, J. E., & Miller, R. B. (2006). Panning for gold: A clinician's guide to using research. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 32, 17-32.***

### **Session 10: March 12, 2009**

#### **Measuring the treatment.**

To what will change be attributed? What is the independent variable in your design? This requires specifying and monitoring the intervention.

#### **Readings:**

Cormier, W. H. & Cormier, L. S. (1991). Selecting helping strategies. In Cormier & Cormier (Eds.), Interviewing strategies for helpers: Fundamental skills and cognitive behavioral interventions (3rd ed.) (Pp. 292-306). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

**MARCH 19--No Class, Spring Break**

**Session 11: March 26, 2009 PAPER 3 DUE**

- Students will present the interventive technique and will discuss how this strategy was chosen among others, and to what degree it met the selection criteria. The monitoring plan should also be discussed. Students should prepare hand-outs and/or use power point. Role plays and video presentations are encouraged.

**Session 12: April 2, 2009 PAPER 4 DUE**

- Analyzing single system design data. Gathering and presenting the facts.
- What do you do with the data? Data summary, ordering, presentation. Clinical and statistical significance, visual analysis.

**Readings:**

**Bloom, M., Fischer, J., & Orme, J. G. (2006). *Evaluating Practice: Guidelines for the Accountable Professional*. Chapter 20 through Chapter 22.**

**Chapter 20: Visual analysis of single-system design data.**

**Chapter 21: Descriptive statistics.**

**Chapter 22: Tests of statistical significance for single-system designs.**

**Session 13: April 9, 2009**

Computer Lab. Class will not meet this week. Students will have an assignment that requires the input and analysis of single system design data.

**Session 14: April 16, 2009**

- Instructor will present information on engagement and process variables important to consider in practice evaluation.

**Readings:**

**Gambrill, E. (2006). Engaging clients. In *Social Work Practice: A Critical Thinker's Guide* (pp.381-403). Oxford University Press.**

**Safran, J. D., Muran, J. C., Samstag, L. W., & Stevens, C. (2002). Repairing alliance ruptures. In *Psychotherapy Relationships that Work*. J. C. Norcross (Ed.), (pp. 235-254). Oxford.**

**Session 15: April 23, 2009**

Course evaluations. Small groups and/or individuals present their summary of the final practice evaluation efforts.

## Course at a Glance

January 7: First class session --introduction to the course

January 14: CLASS NOT MEETING: Blackboard discussion

January 21: Lecture on treatment planning, using systematic planned practice framework.

January 28: Students present their treatment plans.

February 5: Lecture on measurement of target behaviors. **Paper one is due**

February 12: Student presentations on measurement of target behaviors.

February 19: Lecture on group designs. single system designs. **Paper two is due**

February 26:: Lecture on single system designs.

March 5: Lecture on intervention research.

March 12: Lecture on specifying and monitoring the intervention. **Quiz 1 due**

March 19: Spring Break—No Class

March 26: Students will present the operationalization of their intervention. **Paper three is due**

April 2: Analyzing single system design data. **Paper four is due**

April 9: No formal class—computer lab on own with instructor consultation.

April 16: Lecture and discussion about engagement and process variables relevant to practice evaluation.

April 23: Course evaluation and discussion of practice evaluation efforts. **Quiz 2 due**

**Paper One is an overview of your client situation and desired outcomes, based on the SPP framework. 4-6 pages**

*Client/situation:* Provide relevant client information (age, gender, prior treatment, etc.) What is (are) the problem(s) as stated by the client, significant others, or referral source? Provide your formulation of the problem and, if it differs from the client, how you arrived at this formulation (what assessment information did you collect to lead you to formulate the problem differently). What are the priority problems for treatment and what is the rationale for these priorities?

*Outcomes:* State the desired intermediate and ultimate outcomes. Which of these are you likely to measure, and why? (Do not yet talk about specific measurement strategies—that's the next paper).

*Intervention:* Briefly state the intervention you are using or plan to use to address the desired outcomes. Reflect a bit about why you're using this intervention and your current knowledge of its effectiveness and how you know that.

**Paper Two should be brief and concise, 4 to 6 pages.**

The purpose of the paper is to think about the client's desired outcomes and how you could measure them. The paper should lead to the development of a measurement plan.

1. Briefly describe the client situation with a focus on presenting problems and desired outcomes. Decide upon some dimension of client behavior as an outcome for assessment and monitoring over time. Defend (in terms of its relevance to the client's problem situation and your treatment plan) the importance and relevance of the outcome you have chosen to focus upon.
2. Develop operational definitions of the outcome(s) you plan to assess.
3. Describe three different ways you could measure the outcome (even though you may not implement each of them).

For each measure, describe:

- a) How, when, and where will data be collected? What are the procedures for observing and recording the data? Be specific.
  - b) The reliability and validity of each measure.
4. Reflect on the ideal measurement plan compared to what you can implement in practice (they may or may not be different).

**Paper 3 consists of a review of the literature related to interventions for your client's target behaviors.** There is some flexibility in how you approach this paper, and I suggest you meet with me (or email me) to discuss your approach and key words. Some students may want to focus on what is known about one treatment approach, whereas others may want to read about more than one treatment approach. Some of you may need to expand your search terms, because of the limited availability of studies in your area; others may be overwhelmed because of the number of studies in your area. However, no matter the approach, as a result of this paper you should become more versed in what is known about effective interventions for your client(s) and gaps in research. We will talk much more about this paper in class and various approaches to it. This paper will be about 10 to 12 pages, including references.

**Paper 4 should be brief and concise, 3 to 6 pages. The operationalization of the intervention is best presented in bulleted or numbered format. If you have a lengthy intervention you may want to operationalize a treatment phase or session.**

The purpose of this paper is to think critically about what you do with your client, and to monitor and pay close attention to whether you are actually implementing what you intend to implement.

1. Identify and operationally define the interventive technique or strategy and their components.
2. Identify the criteria by which this interventive strategy was selected from the range of other possible interventions.
3. Develop and describe a plan for monitoring the actual implementation and integrity of the intervention.