THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

SW549 – Evaluative Research
Section 001
(3 Credit Hours)
Spring 2106

Instructor: Mary Rogge     Email: mrogge@utk.edu
Section: 001      Phone: 974-7500 (w)
Class Times: Thursdays, 12:20 – 3:20 p.m.   Fax: 974-4803
Class Room: Henson Hall, Rm 318
Office: 424 Henson Hall
Office hours: _T & TH 9:45 – 11:00 a.m.
( ‘Others by appt.’)

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

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). Students are also expected to sign and adhere to the Social Work Field Placement Code of Conduct.

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).

University Civility Statement
Civility is genuine respect and regard for others: politeness, consideration, tact, good manners, graciousness, cordiality, affability, amiability and courteousness. Civility enhances academic freedom and integrity, and is a prerequisite to the free exchange of ideas and knowledge in the learning community. Our community consists of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and campus visitors. Community members affect each other’s well-being and have a shared interest in creating and sustaining an environment where all community members and their points of view are valued and respected. Affirming the value of each member of the university community, the campus asks that all its members adhere to the principles of civility and community adopted by the campus: http://civility.utk.edu/

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 100 Dunford Hall (865) 974-6087. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

Dimensions of Diversity
The College of Social Work and the University of Tennessee welcome and honor all people. In accordance with the U.S. National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the U.S. Council on Social Work Education (CSWE 2015 Educational Policy Statement), “the dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including” age, class, color,
culture, mental or physical disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, gender identity, immigration status, marital status, national origin, political ideology, race, regionality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. The College values intellectual curiosity, pursuit of knowledge, and academic freedom and integrity. “A person’s diverse life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim” (CSWE 2015 Educational Policy Statement). The College of Social Work promotes social justice and social change, and strives to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice.

Course Description
This is a required concentration course. An advanced exploration of the techniques, methods, and issues relevant to ethical practice in Evaluative Research. Topics covered include history, philosophies and conceptual approaches in Evaluative Research; analysis of the strengths/limitations of Needs Assessment and Program Evaluation methods; the analysis and management of program data using statistical software; and the measurement of program goals/objectives through process and outcome evaluations. With an emphasis on critical thinking and evidence-based practice, students will utilize these skills to perform evaluations in their areas of interest.

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:

1. **Knowledge of the history, definitions, and philosophies of evaluation research in advancing practice of evidence based practice.** MLCP 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 3.7
   (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.** MLCP 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9
   (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. MLCP 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 [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. MLCP 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 3.7, 3.8 [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. MLCP 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 [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. MLCP 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 (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. MLCP 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 [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.**
   MLCP 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 [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.** MLCP 1.5 [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.** MLCP 3.7, 3.8, 3.9 [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]

**Course Requirements**

**Required Text**


**Recommended Book (FYI)**

*I was recently introduced to the following text. Had I learned of it earlier, I would have integrated into our coursework. It’s available at resultsleadership.org and Amazon. Having now read it, I encourage you to make it a “keeper” in your MLCP set of resources!*

Additional Readings and Resources

Required readings other than Posavac (2011) are listed in the Course Outline below and are available in “Course Materials” on the SW538 Blackboard site. Additional readings or material may be assigned. Some required readings or other assigned material might be changed over the course of the semester.

Familiarize yourself with these other useful resources:


Blackboard

This course uses many Blackboard features through Online@UT. Please be sure that the UTK email address listed for the course is your current one. If you would like additional help to navigate Blackboard, contact helpdesk@utk.edu or 974-9900.

Assignment due dates are highlighted in the Course Outline)

B. Course Assignments and Evaluation Plan

The course grade will be based on a combination of your class participation, papers, projects conducted at your field placement, online quizzes, presentation of your evaluation project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes (2 x 10 pts each)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Proposal</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Analysis Assignment</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Attendance & Participation (CCs 1-10)
Students must successfully and satisfactorily 1) demonstrate having completed required readings and actions identified in the syllabus each week before class sessions, 2) attend class and arrive for class on time, and 3) participate actively and constructively in class discussions and exercises. During the first half of class and final class sessions, students will be quasi-randomly assigned to work in pairs or trios to lead aspects of weekly class discussions and activities. Engaging in active and constructive feedback during student presentations is an important part of class participation. Participation activities in some weeks might include completing exercises before or during class and integrating one or more external presenters into the discussion of topics and competencies addressed that week.

Quizzes (timed, online, 2 x 10 pts. each, 15-30 multiple choice items each)

Quiz 1 will cover material in the first four weeks of class and focus on evaluation basics (purpose, definitions, etc.); theory and logic modeling; planning and types of evaluation; sampling; and measurement (CCs 1, 3, 4, and 6).

Quiz 2 will cover material in weeks 5 – 8 of class and focus on ethics, evaluation with vulnerable populations; evaluation design; qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods; and cost benefit and cost effectiveness analyses (CCs 5, 9, and 10).

Data Analysis Assignment (CC 7)

This assignment can be completed as part of the in-class sessions that address data management and analysis. You'll be provided a data set to use for data entry, coding, and analysis, and will answer a series of questions about that data for this assignment.

Evaluation Proposal (Competencies 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10)

This paper is based on an evaluation problem in your field placement (or another social agency if you do not have a placement). Do not collect data or proceed with the evaluation until the proposal has been approved.

1. Introduction
   Provide a clear notion of the issue or problem you are evaluating. What is the significance of the issue or problem and the rationale for studying it? Describe the issue, your program and agency, ad the purpose of and rationale for the evaluation. (You may choose needs assessment, monitoring of program implementation, outcome assessment, etc).

2. Literature Review
   The literature review should provide a relevant context for understanding prior programs and evaluation efforts of these and/or similar programs. Survey the literature for similar program evaluation efforts. Identify gaps in the literature. End this section by clearly stating the purpose(s) and question(s) of your evaluation.

3. Methodology
   State your proposed evaluation design, data collection procedures, sampling design, description of participants, description of the instruments (attach them), and proposed procedures for analyzing the data.
**Final Paper (Competencies 1-10)**

Sections 1 through 3 are the same as those from your proposal, in revised format. For example, you will explain what you actually did rather than what you proposed to do!

4. **Results**
   Report findings relative to your stated evaluation question and purpose. As appropriate, include tables and charts.

5. **Discussion**
   Explain and summarize the findings, discuss the practice implications and implications for future evaluations, and discuss the strengths and limitations of the study.

6. **References (APA style)**

7. **Appendices**
   Include, for example, copies of the measures, other evaluation materials (for example, recruitment flyers, etc.), graphs and figures that are too extensive to include in the paper.

Your final paper is due by NOON on the Thursday after your in-class presentation.

**Class Presentation (Competencies 1-10)**

You will each have 30 minutes, maximum, on the day you present. Please use Powerpoint or Prezi and send me a copy of your presentation via email by 11:59 p.m. (aka, by MIDNIGHT) the day before you present. If you use Prezi, send your presentation to me in a Powerpoint format that I can print out easily. If there is another, new, cutting-edge presentation software that looks really good and you would like to use, contact me ahead of time and we'll consider it seriously! Include the following information in your presentation:

1. Why you have done this study, based on population needs, agency and program goals, and literature review.
   What type of evaluation did you do?

2. Research Questions or Hypotheses

   Synopsis of:

3. Data Collection and Sampling Technique, Design used

4. Variables, defined and operationalized

5. Type of Analysis

6. Results, using handouts for the class and instructor (if appropriate)
7. Strengths, limitations of the evaluation effort.

8. Discussion and recommendations.

**Grading**

- **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. Better than satisfactory performance.
- **B (85-89)** Good – Student consistently meets normal expectations for the course. Satisfactory performance.
- **C+ (80-84)** Average – There is unevenness in grasping course content. Student is inconsistent in meeting the normal expectations for the course. Less than satisfactory performance.
- **C (70-79)** Poor - There is a lack of understanding of course content. Student does not meet course expectations. Performance well below the standard expected of graduate students.
- **D (70-78)** Clearly unsatisfactory performance and cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements.

**Class Policies**

1. Students are expected to complete all assignments and submit them by the due date. Exceptions will be granted only in extraordinary circumstances in advance of the due date.

2. Incompletes will be given only according to the rules specified in the written policies of the most recent edition of Hilltopics.

3. All written assignments are due by the time and on the day specified in the course outline. Grades for assignments received after that time will be reduced unless prior approval is given.

4. Cheating and plagiarizing will not be tolerated. Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will be subject to the disciplinary procedures outlined in the College of Social Work and University of Tennessee student policies.

5. University policy regarding religious holidays will be observed. Any student may request to be excused from class or rescheduling of an assignment to observe a religious day from his/her faith.

6. You may bring your laptops to class to take notes and for other appropriate classroom work. It is not appropriate to surf the Internet, check your email, or use electronic devices for any non-class related activity while in class. The instructor reserves the right to disallow the use of laptops in class if students use them inappropriately (e.g., instant messaging, typing emails, or web surfing). Participation points may be deducted or students asked to leave the classroom if laptops, phones or other electronic devices are used inappropriately. All cell phones and smart phones must be silenced and put away during class. Text messaging is strictly prohibited. If you have a special circumstance, talk to the instructor in advance. All
mp3 players (iPods, etc.) are to be off and stored during class. This includes removal of all headphones, ear buds, and other listening devices from ears, head, and neck during class time.

7. Class will be cancelled only if the University is closed due to inclement weather. Campus and local radio and TV stations will be notified so that appropriate announcements may be made. If class is cancelled, any assignments due that day will be due the next time class meets.

Course Outline

Week 1: 1/14
Introduction to and Purpose of Evaluative Research
Structure and Requirements of the Course
History and Theories of Evaluation
Overview of Definitions of Evaluation Research in Social Work
Problem Definition and Problem Analysis
Assessing Needs

Required readings and actions:

Posavac, Ch. 1, Program Evaluation: An Overview, pp. 3-21.
Ch. 6, The Assessment of Need, pp. 108-124.

Download SPSS software through UTK OIT, at http://oit.utk.edu/software

Recommended: n/a

Group discussion: Your agency and initial thoughts about your evaluation project

Week 2: 1/21
Program Theory
Logic Models

Required readings and actions:

Posavac, Ch. 3, Developing and Using a Theory of the Program, 44-67.

Draft a logic model for your proposed project and bring it to class!

Visit this Kellogg Foundation website and review at least two of the following articles to become familiar with the connections between theory and logic models:


Andrews, M.L2013). Sanchez, V., Carrillo, C., Allen-Aninins, & Cruz, Y.B. (2013). Using a participatory evaluation design to create an online data collection and


**Recommended:** n/a

**Group discussion:** We’ll take some class time to discuss and present your draft logic models.

**Week 3: 1/28**
Planning the Evaluation
Types of Evaluation
Conceptualizing Program Goals and Objectives
Formulating Research Questions

**Required readings and actions:**

Posavac, Ch. 2, Planning an Evaluation, pp. 22-43.
   Ch. 7, Monitoring Implementation…Operation of Programs, pp. 125-145.


**Recommended:**


**Group discussion:** What are your research questions and evaluation purpose? What type of evaluation are you planning?
(Optional Draft of Evaluation Proposal is Due by NOON)

Week 4: 2/4
Sampling
Selecting Measures
Review of Level of Measurement
Review of Reliability and Validity

Required readings and actions:

Posavac, Ch. 4, Developing Measures of Implementation and Outcomes, pp. 68-90.


Recommended:


Group discussion: What are your measures? How do you assess their reliability and validity? (We’ll devote part of this class to reviewing and making suggestions on your proposed measures).

(Please email to me the surveys and measures on which you are working by NOON, Wed. 2/3.)

(Quiz 1 is due by NOON, Sunday, 2/7)

Week 5: 2/11
Ethical Issues in Evaluation Research
Qualitative Evaluation Methods

Required readings and actions:

Posavac, Ch. 5, Ethics in Program Evaluation, pp. 91-107.
Ch. 8, Qualitative Evaluation Methods, pp. 146-165.


**Recommended:**


**Group discussion:** What ethical issues might you confront in your evaluation? How could you incorporate qualitative evaluation methods in your evaluation?

*(Evaluation Proposal is Due by NOON)*

**Week 6: 2/18**

Quantitative and Mixed Method Evaluation Research

**Group Designs**

**Required readings and actions:**

- Posavac, Ch. 9, Outcome Evaluations with One Group, pp. 165-187.
- Ch. 10, Quasi-Experimental Approaches to Outcome Evaluation, pp. 186-206.
- Ch. 11, Using Experiments to Evaluate Programs, 207-223.


**Recommended:**


- Karatekin, C., Hong, S., Peischer, K., Uecker, J., & McDonald, J. (20140. An evaluation of the effects of an integrated services program for multi-service use families on


**Week 7: 2/25**
Cost Benefit Analysis
Cost Effectiveness Analysis
Introductory discussion of data coding and entry

**Required readings and actions:**

Posavac, Ch. 12, Analyses of Costs and Outcomes, pp. 224-241.


**Recommended:**


*(Quiz 2 is due by NOON, Sunday, 2/28)*

**Week 8: 3/3**  Guest Instructor (Dr. Rogge is in Washington, DC) Convene in the Computer Lab
Data Management and Analysis:
Introduction to SPSS
Descriptive statistics, averages, percentages, cross tabs
Understanding chi-square, correlation, T-tests
Review of statistical significance testing and statistical tests

**Required readings and actions:**


*Complete SPSS Tutorial (in SPSS, under “Help”)*
Recommended: n/a

Week 9: 3/10 Guest Instructor Convene in the Computer Lab
Data Analysis and Management (Continued)
Continue with Data Entry
Data Coding & Cleaning

Required readings and actions:

Review and begin Data Analysis Assignment (you'll have some time in computer lab to work on this)

Recommended: n/a

Week 10: 3/17 SPRING BREAK

11: 3/24 Convene in the Computer Lab
Final In-Class Session on Data Entry, Coding, Cleaning, and Analysis
Graphic and tabular presentation of evaluation research data

Required readings and actions:

Complete Data Analysis Assignment (you'll have some time in computer lab to work on this, but work on it over spring break)

Recommended: n/a

(Data Analysis Assignment is due by NOON on Saturday 3/26)

Week 12: 3/31
Interpreting, Communicating, and Using Findings

Required readings and actions:

Posavac Ch. 13, Evaluation Reports; Interpreting and Communicating Findings, pp. 242-258.
Ch. 14, How to Encourage Utilization, pp. 259-274.

Recommended: TBA

Week 13: 4/7 Student presentations (these papers are due by NOON 4/14)

Week 14: 4/14 Student presentations (these papers are due by NOON 4/21)

Week 15: 4/21 Student presentations (these papers are due by NOON 4/27)
Week 16: 4/27 Course Wrap-up!