

Indiana University  
**SCHOOL of SOCIAL WORK**

**S520/R076: Evaluation Processes for Social Work**

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TR 9:00-11:40  
Rm. 2104

**I. Course Description**

This course introduces students to the knowledge and skills needed to evaluate their own practice and the effectiveness of social service programs within which they work. A range of qualitative and quantitative evaluation approaches are presented to insure skill in using a variety of evaluation designs, methodologies and techniques applicable to generalist practice roles in social work practice with the bulk being single-system designs. Attention is given to the social work practice continuum of problem definition, goal setting, intervention, and evaluation of goal attainment. The role of evaluation in every evaluation situation is carefully examined. The social worker's ethical responsibility to monitor one's practice, as well as to recognize ethical issues which may arise in the evaluation of practice and in the use of evaluation findings are examined.

**II. Course Objectives**

As a result of having completed the requirements of this course, the student will have demonstrated:

1. An understanding of and a commitment to the responsibility to evaluate the effects and effectiveness of her/his own practice in both interpersonal practice and planning and management settings.
2. An understanding of the role that social work values and ethics play in selecting and applying research methods to the evaluation of practice, with special attention to issues related to diverse and oppressed populations.
3. An understanding of the range of quantitative and qualitative research designs, methods, instruments, measurement models and analytical tools available for use in assessing the outcomes of practice and the effectiveness of specific interventions or programs.
4. Beginning skills in defining goals in measurable terms.

5. A beginning skill in choosing and implementing appropriate measures for evaluating one's own interpersonal practice.
6. An awareness of the instruments appropriate for use in the assessment of client functioning and the determination of needs.
7. An understanding of the range of potential effects that varying evaluation methods can have on the process of practice.
8. The purposes of program evaluation in the context of human service organizations.
9. An understanding of the types of evaluation activities appropriate for various stages in the development and implementation of programs:
  - a. Planning and needs assessment,
  - b. Start-up and process evaluation,
  - c. Ongoing operation, monitoring and outcome evaluation.
10. The relationship between program evaluation and basic research.
11. The social, organizational and political contexts within which evaluation occurs.
12. The standards of evaluation research -- utility, feasibility, propriety and accuracy.
13. A beginning skill in differentially selecting the most appropriate approach to the evaluation of practice in specific micro and macro practice situations.

### **III. Course Content**

The content to be covered throughout this academic term is organized into two general components or phases. While the amount of time devoted to each component may vary depending upon student interest and involvement; the order of content will be addressed essentially as outlined below. The readings related to each phase of the course are listed at the end of each component.

The course begins with a general introduction to the nature and scope of evaluative research as it relates to social work practice. Following this general foundation, we will do an in-depth exploration of single-system designs. The section concludes with a review of some of the more important statistical measures and their role in the evaluation process. Emphasis is placed on the interpretation and meaning of the statistics rather than on derivation and calculation. This section will take roughly the first half of the course.

During the second phase of the course, the analysis shifts to a focused consideration of program evaluation. We will explore group designs of research as they relate to the evaluation of practice at the programmatic and organizational levels.

Upon completion of the course, it is hoped that the student will have attained a reasonable grasp of the foundation knowledge necessary to effectively incorporate evaluation processes into her/his practice routines. This course is a prerequisite for the more advanced course that is offered as part of the concentration year curriculum.

### **Phase 1: Introduction to Single-System Design/Practice-Related Research**

The initial two class sessions provides an overview of the purposes, rationale and content areas to be addressed throughout the course. It is based on a commitment to the belief that the ongoing evaluation of our social work practice intervention strategies, the effects of which can be empirically demonstrated, ultimately serves the best interests of our clients, promotes the growth and professional development of individual practitioners, and contributes to the overall credibility of the profession. Discussion will emphasize the basic elements essential to building single-system design research into practice, the parallels between practice and evaluation, and the utility of using single-system designs in a managed care setting.

**Jan. 10, 2002** Introduction to the course.

- Why should we conduct practice and program evaluations?
- What questions can be answered empirically and what questions do you want answered?
- Critical thinking
- Research definitions
- Basics of single-system designs

**Jan. 17, 2002** Continue from week one.

**Jan. 24, 2002** Basic Principles of Measurement

- Read Tripodi Chs. 1 and 2 **Assignment #1 due**
- Topics to be covered in this and the next week
  - Developing a measurement and recording plan
  - Behavioral observation
  - Individualized rating scales
  - Standardized questionnaires
  - Logs
  - Reactive and non-reactive measures
  - Selecting a measure
  - Computer assisted assessment

**Jan. 31, 2002** Baselines and Interventions

- Read Tripodi Chs. 3 and 4

**Feb. 7, 2002** Follow-up and Design Variations; Case Studies

- Read Tripodi Chs. 5 and 6

**Feb. 14, 2002 (Valentines Day)** What is Program Evaluation and Ethical Issues in Program Evaluation

- Read Royse et al. Preface and Chs. 1 and 2

**Feb. 21, 2002** Needs Assessment and Qualitative Methods in Program Evaluation  
Read Royse et al. Chs. 3 and 4 **Assignment #2 due**

**Feb. 28, 2002** Continue with previous week

**March 7, 2000** Formative, Process, and Summative Evaluations; Client Satisfaction Surveys

- Read Royse et al. Chs. 5 and 8

**March 11-17** Spring Break

**March 21, 2002** Group Research Designs; Cost Effectiveness and Cost Analysis Designs

- Read Royse et al. Chs. 9 and 10 **Assignment #3 due**

**March 28, 2002** Measurement Tools and Strategies in Program Evaluation

- Read Royse et al. Ch. 11

**April 4, 2002** Pragmatic Issues and Making Sense of Evaluation Data

- Read Royse et al. Chs. 13 and 14 **Critique due**

**April 11, 2002** Writing Evaluation Proposals, Reports, and Journal Articles

- Read Royse et al. Ch. 15

**April 18, 2002** Begin Student Power Point Presentations and Poster Display in the Commons

**April 25, 2002** Finish Student Power Point Presentations and Poster Display in the Commons; **Final Papers Due**

**May 2, 2002** **FINAL EXAM**

**Required text:**

Royse, D. D., Padgett, D., Logan, T. K., & Thyer, B. A. (2000) Program evaluation: An introduction (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). Chicago: Thompson Learning.

Tripodi, T. (1998). A primer on single-subject design for clinical social workers. Washington, D.C.: NASW Press.

**Recommended text:**

Fischer, J. & Corcoran, K. (2000). Measures for clinical practice: A sourcebook (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), volume 1. Couples, families, and children, volume 2. Adults. New York: The Free Press.

**Course Format & Assignments**

Class sessions will consist of lectures, class interactions, and discussions with many examples from practice. The style will be informal and class participation is expected. The assignments from which the course grade is derived include:

1. Homework assignments - completion of three small projects worth **25** points each for a total of **75** points. **Due 1/24, 2/21, and 3/21** The assignments can consist of any three of the following:
  1. Maintain a log or journal throughout the course. At least 14 class periods to receive full credit.
  2. Review, compare, and contrast a published qualitative study with a published quantitative study on program evaluation.
  3. Observe and analyze interactions in a site visit and use one or more scholarly journal articles to help discuss your analysis.
  4. Critical event analysis in an evaluation context.
  5. Develop and/or implement outcome measures.
  6. Write a brief (2-3 pages) paper discussing the use of the computer as a tool to measure client progress.
  7. Develop a coherent argument for a formative and summative evaluation at your practicum. What would you evaluate and back your argument with scholarly journal articles.
  8. Create an evaluation (from a case you are familiar with from work, practicum, or your life) using one of the design variations in Tripodi chapter 6. Justify the use of this design.
  9. Others with prior approval.
2. Final Project - Completion of a single-system design project that will allow the student to use various skills learned during the course and provides for a basis to utilize and incorporate research in the practice setting. A research paper incorporating hands on research is the final expected product. **200 points** Worksheets to walk through this project are at the back of this syllabus. **Due on April 25<sup>th</sup>.**

3. Final examination worth 150 points: This will be a combined short answer, essay, and multiple choice test. Most of the final will be case examples that you are to detail an intervention and evaluation strategy with the emphasis on evaluation. **Final will be on 5/2**
4. Critique an article on program evaluation from the journal Research on Social Work Practice or one of your choosing with permission. **Due on April 4, 2002. 75 points**  
Suggestions of issues to discuss include, but are not limited to:
  - Author bias
  - Is the study empirical or not (are the conclusions based on evidence or conjecture?)
  - How could this article help a social work practitioner, or can it?
  - Issues of reliability and validity if a quantitative study.
  - Issues of confirmability, dependability, transferability, and credibility if qualitative.
  - How would you have conducted this study differently?
  - Ethical issues
  - Well written or not (boring or somewhat exciting)
  - Was it easy to make sense of the article and the data presented?
  - Enclose a copy of the article.

Grading:	Assignment #1	25 points
	Assignment #2	25 points
	Assignment #3	25 points
	Project	200 points
	Critique	75 points
	Final Exam	<u>150 points</u>
	Total Points	500 points

### Grades

A+ = 490-500	A = 465-489	A- = 450-464
B+ = 440-449	B = 415-439	B- = 400-414
C+ = 390-399	C = 365-389	F = 364 and below

### Course Policies

1. Students should have read assigned materials in the order specified by the instructor and should be ready to participate knowledgeably and constructively in class activities.
2. Students are expected to be present when class begins and to hand in all assignments on time. Failure to observe these requirements will be considered in assigning final grades.
3. Academic dishonesty (including cheating on exams and plagiarism in papers) is not consistent with ethical conduct in social work practice and is unacceptable in social work classes. In cases of academic dishonesty, university guidelines will be followed. **Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing (offering the work of someone else as one's own) will fail the course.** Failure of a required social work

course will result in automatic dismissal from the social work program. A student's right to appeal such dismissal is outlined in materials distributed at student orientation meetings.

To avoid plagiarism, credit sources whenever you use someone else's language or ideas. Such crediting must be detailed and specific. Normally, simply including a work in your list of references is insufficient. Rather, you must specifically acknowledge a source sentence by sentence, as necessary. See the *APA Manual* (4<sup>th</sup> edition) for guidelines for in-text references.

4. In accordance with the Indiana University School of Social Work grading policy, students must earn at least a "C" to pass this course.
5. A formal evaluation of the course and its instructor will be completed at the end of the course, consistent with the School's academic policy.

I will be available to talk with students before and after most class sessions. Please feel free to contact me if you wish to have a private discussion about the class, assignments or anything else that matters to you. I will not post office hours, but can make myself available whenever needed. In addition, messages may be left on my work number voice mail, at my home, or on e-mail. I welcome ongoing discussions of your experience with this class, the material, and the school of social work.

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### **S520 Learning Exercise #2**

1. In order to shape and refine your evaluation problem, you will need to “review the literature,” check current research and social work journals as well as current books to see what research work has already been done in your problem areas.
2. Review articles on both your problems you selected in your first learning exercise. Decide which of the problems would be easiest to evaluate an intervention on. Keep in mind time constraints. This relates to feasibility of an evaluation project. If it doesn't look too feasible, you may need to select an entirely new problem and then do more reviewing of the literature.
3. After completing your review of the literature, re-write the evaluation problem (identify key variables) you intend to use for your evaluation project in this class. Even if your design is qualitative.
4. Clearly define and assess your chosen problem (operational definition of the identified variables and targets for intervention). Even if your design is qualitative.
5. Detail the beginnings of the single-system design you intend to use for this project.
6. Detail a beginning recording plan and plan for measurement.

### **S520 Learning Exercise #3**

1. Select and detail your sources of data, and tools for data collection.
2. Succinctly describe your evaluation project as you conceive it at this time (Which design are you using ie. AB, ABA, ABAB, AB1B2, etc.):
3. Detail of how you plan to measure the behaviors, attitudes, target problem, etc. in your evaluation project.
4. Write down the variables you will be measuring and what level of measurement they are.

**S520 Assignment #4**

1. Detail your data collection methods (before, during, and after your intervention(s).
2. What are the problems you anticipate you will have with validity and reliability in your evaluation project?
3. Describe in detail the social history of your client system.

**S520 Learning Exercise #5**

1. Display the analysis of your data. Write up the results of your single-system evaluation.