

University of Nebraska at Omaha
School of Social Work

SOWK 8940 Evaluation of Social Programs (online)

COURSE SYLLABUS

Fall 2007

1.0 INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Jeanette Harder, PhD, CMSW
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Office: UNO Social Work building (Annex 40), Room #203B
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Hours: 7:30am-4:30pm, Monday – Friday

2.0 COURSE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 A study of the various issues and methodology of social program evaluation. Evaluation of agency organizational structure, program design and effectiveness, and social impact will be covered.
- 2.2 This course is offered as a requirement for graduate students working toward the degree of Master of Social Work with an emphasis in administration and planning.
- 2.3 Prerequisite: SOWK 8190 Research and Computer Applications.

3.0 COURSE OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 Understanding of the purposes and constraints and appreciation of the need for social program evaluation.
- 3.2 Familiarity with and appreciation of the various aspects of social service agencies that need to be evaluated in a comprehensive social program evaluation and moderate skill in identifying those variables in existing agencies.
- 3.3 Familiarity with and appreciation of the various instruments that have been developed for use in social program evaluation, moderate skill in the selection of appropriate instruments for particular purposes, minimal skill in analysis of the data generated by them.
- 3.4 Awareness of and appreciation for the purposes by which instruments may be constructed for social program evaluation and minimal skill in developing new measuring instruments.
- 3.5 Understanding of and appreciation for the planning steps necessary to undertake a comprehensive social program evaluation and substantial skill in planning and carrying out a comprehensive evaluation.
- 3.6 Familiarity with the theory of evaluation research and moderate skill in evaluating social work intervention techniques and social service programs.

- 3.7 Understanding of and commitment to the utilization of evaluation research by policy makers, program administrators, program staff, and others in social service agencies and moderate skill in assuring such utilization.
- 3.8 Understanding of and appreciation of the impact of cultural diversity, gender, social status, and racial/ethnic background, upon programs and their evaluation.
- 3.9 Consideration of the relevance of DSM IV classifications in the design of research studies and in the evaluation of advanced practice.

4.0 TEACHING METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 This course is being offered primarily online (aka distance education) with three face-to-face class sessions. Content will be offered through written “lectures,” and textbook and journal readings. It is the instructor’s responsibility to provide content, and the structure and opportunities to learn. Students are expected to do these readings, to participate frequently in the course Discussion Board, and to complete a program evaluation. It is the student’s responsibility to be actively engaged in learning, to be curious about new ideas, to ask questions when needed, and to complete all assignments (including assigned reading).

5.0 TEXTBOOKS

Required textbooks:

- 5.1 Royse, D., Thyer, B. A., Padgett, D. K., & Logan, T. K. (2006). *Program evaluation: An introduction*, 4th ed. Thomson Brooks/Cole. ISBN 0-534-50827-8.
- 5.2 Other readings as provided on electronic reserve in the UNO Library. How to access:
 - a. Go to <http://eres.unomaha.edu/courseindex.asp>.
 - b. COURSE RESERVES PAGES BY INSTRUCTOR: Harder.
 - c. Click on the course#.
 - d. Password: “harder40”.
 - e. Articles are grouped by week. Click on the week and article you wish to read.
 - f. Provide your log-in and password.
 - g. Depending on the type of document, you may just need to click on the document link, or you may need to click on “Web Link: Click here for more information” and follow the prompts.
- 5.3 Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) (2001), 5th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Required technology and software:

- 5.4 Internet connection for access to UNO Blackboard and the UNO library.
- 5.5 Any word processor (you’ll need to submit assignments in either Microsoft Word or rich text format).
- 5.6 Adobe Acrobat reader (you may download at www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html).
- 5.7 Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). You can access this software in many of the computer labs around UNO campus: www.unomaha.edu/its/labs.php

6.0 COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE (tentative)

Table 1 Topics and Assigned Readings

Wk	Date to begin	Topics	Textbook Readings	Readings in addition to "Lecture"*
1	8/27	Orientation and introduction to the course and to online education Meet face-to-face from 5:15 to 8:00pm in DSC 022. Required.	--	Syllabus, Discussion Board participation, Hardcastle & Bisman (2003)
2	9/3	<i>LABOR DAY</i> Intro to program evaluation	Ch.1	Anderson (2002)
3	9/10	Ethics in program evaluation <i>(Due: PE#1)</i>	Ch.2	"Guiding principles for evaluators" UNMC IRB application procedures
4	9/17	Asking the question, logic models, how to conduct a literature review <i>(Due: PE#2)</i>	--	Alter & Egan (1997) Hernandez (2000)
5	9/24	Process evaluation <i>(Due: PE#3A)</i>	Ch.5	Egbert et al. (2006)
6	10/1	Intro to outcome evaluation, group research designs <i>(Due: PE#3B)</i>	Ch.9	Barron-McKeagney et al. (2001) Glasgow et al. (2003)
7	10/8	Measurement tools and strategies <i>(Due: PE#4)</i>	Ch.11,12	Maramaldi et al. (2005)
8	10/15	Goal attainment scales, client satisfaction	Ch.7,8	Donovan et al. (2002)
	10/22	<i>FALL BREAK</i> <i>(Due: PE#5)</i>	--	--
9	10/29	Data analysis (the "what") <i>(Due: PE#6)</i>	Ch.13	--
10	11/5	F2F Data analysis (the "how") Meet face-to-face from 5:15 to 8:00pm in DSC 022. Required.	--	--
11	11/12	F2F Data analysis (more of the "how") Meet face-to-face from 5:15 to 8:00pm in DSC 022. Required. <i>(Due: PE#7)</i>	--	--
12	11/19	Writing recommendations, utilization of evaluation, writing the report, pragmatic issues <i>(Due: PE#8)</i>	Ch.14,15	Oshana (2004) Schaefer (2001) (posted on Blackboard)
13	11/26	Needs assessments	Ch.3	Kenagy (2005)
14	12/3	Qualitative research methods	Ch.4	Harder (2007)

15	12/10	Single-systems research design, course wrap-up	Ch.6	--
16	12/17	-- <i>(Due: PE#9 and PE#10)</i>	--	--

*available through electronic reserves or at a website – information in that week’s “lecture”

7.0 ASSIGNMENTS

- 7.1 **Readings.** Students are responsible for reading the written “lectures” and assigned readings as shown on Table 1. Please complete the readings during the week, beginning with the Monday listed. While the instructor provides guidance, structure, and information, learning is up to the student.
- 7.2 **Discussion Board.**
- Participating in the Discussion Board (on our course’s Blackboard site) allows the student the opportunity to reflect thoughtfully on course material and carefully compose responses. In their postings, students should strive to demonstrate what they have learned and are learning.
 - Students are expected to post messages frequently on the Discussion Board as well as to read and respond to fellow students’ postings. Students need to post a minimum of one answer to each of the questions posed in the “lecture,” within one week of the “begin date” for the lecture. The following week, students need to post a minimum of two responses to fellow classmates’ postings on the previous week’s questions. Discussion Board points will be awarded based on number of original postings, number of response postings, and depth/quality of postings. (A response of “I agree” is not sufficient for full points. The student must express herself more fully, justifying her answer, and informally citing sources, if applicable.)
 - Students reading of the “lectures,” participating on the Discussion Board, and taking quizzes are considered to be the 3 hours of “class time” each week. The completion of other required readings and PE assignments are considered the “homework time.”
 - It is extremely important that we show great respect for each other’s thoughts, ideas, and feelings when posting messages and writing E-mails. Remember that written communication without the benefit of nonverbal messages can be easily misunderstood.
- 7.3 **Quizzes.** A quiz “opportunity” will be presented nearly every week over that week’s material. You may utilize your textbook and fellow students in taking this quiz, however, each student must complete her own quiz. You will be allowed multiple attempts at taking this quiz. Click on “Save” between attempts. Click on “Submit” when you have finished the quiz and are ready for it to be graded. Students may access this quiz on the “date to begin,” discover the answers while they do their weekly reading, and submit their answers online by noon on the following Monday.

7.3 **Program Evaluation (PE) assignments.**

- a. A series of PE assignments will be completed on a program of the student's choice (aka service learning). The instructor will provide information on programs in the Omaha area who would like to partner with a student(s). (Choice of programs will be discussed during the first face-to-face class.) Students can expect to meet with the contact person at the program about four times during the course – Table 2 shows the approximate dates and expectations for these meetings.

The PE assignments are designed to be sequential, and to fit with the course material presented to that point. The bulk of the final report (PE#10) is a compilation of all previous PE assignments. The instructor will forward this report with the program staff following grading. Students are to informally and orally present this material to the program staff (PE#9).

- b. Students may work independently or with one other student on their PE assignments (no more than two students in a group). If working in a pair, both students must be involved in the completion of each PE assignment, both students must be present for the informal, oral presentation at the end of the semester, and both students will receive the same grade for their PE assignments.
- c. Written communication is critical to social work practice. While Discussion Board postings can be written informally, **all other written assignments must be written formally and prepared in APA format.**
- d. **All PE assignments must be submitted to the Instructor by E-mail attachment, and must be received by noon on the due date.** It is advisable for you to document the submission of your papers via the “Send and File” option in Lotus Notes (or comparable option in whatever E-mail software you use). It is your responsibility to ensure that the Instructor has received your assignment by the deadline, and that it is in an accessible format. Submit all papers in Microsoft Word or rich text format. Assignments turned in late will have significant points deducted. No points will be given for assignments that are more than one week late.
- e. If you wish, you may submit a rough draft of any of your written PE assignments to your instructor for feedback. This must be done a minimum of one week in advance of the due date – the instructor will seek to respond to you with comments and suggestions within 3 days.
- f. Students are expected to use professional behavior in all interactions with the program. Be respectful of program staff by communicating well (verbal and written), being prepared for meetings, and fulfilling your promises and obligations. Be sure to schedule meetings well in advance. Upon request and with

advance notice, you may invite your instructor to accompany you on any of your meetings.

Table 2 Planning Meetings with Contact Person at Program

Approximate Dates	Topics to Discuss	Assignments
Between August 27 and September 8	Select and get to know program and contact person. Request documents on agency and program. Inquire about social problem being addressed. Inquire about any professional literature they may know about.	PE#s 1-3
Between September 17 and October 6	Develop logic model. Discuss and gather material related to process evaluation.	PE#4-5
Between October 8 and October 25	Discuss proposed outcome evaluation. Access data.	PE#6-8
Between November 26 and December 10	Present informal results to contact person.	PE#9-10
Anytime	Observe service delivery (with permission of contact person and client(s)). Talk informally with program staff.	all

8.0 GRADING POLICY

Table 3 Student Assessment

# points possible	Assessment Opportunity	Due at 12:00n on this date
50	10 quizzes (5 points each)	Monday following the "lecture"
50	Discussion Board participation	Monday following the "lecture"
15	PE#1 Selection of program to evaluate	September 10
15	PE#2 Statement of problem	September 17
25	PE#3A/B Literature review	A: September 24, B: October 1
10	PE#4 Logic model	October 8
50	PE#5 Process evaluation	October 22
25	PE#6 Proposed outcome evaluation	October 29
15	PE#7 Data	November 12
25	PE#8 Data analysis	November 19
20	PE#9 Informal, oral presentation of PE#10 to program contact person	December 17
100	PE#10 Final program evaluation report	December 17
400	TOTAL	

<u>Cumulative Points*</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Final Grade</u>
392-400	98-100%	A+
376-391	94-97%	A
364-375	91-93%	A-
352-363	88-90%	B+
336-351	84-87%	B
324-335	81-83%	B-
312-323	78-80%	C+
296-311	74-77%	C
284-295	71-73%	C-
272-283	68-70%	D+
256-271	64-67%	D
244-255	61-63%	D-
below 243	below 61%	F

*Final grade is based on cumulative points earned.

No extra credit.

Grade appeal process for CPACS students: Students who wish to appeal a grade which they feel was capriciously or prejudicially given shall first discuss the matter with the instructor within 30 days of the final course grade being posted. If the matter is not resolved, the student must meet with the department/school Chair/Director. If a satisfactory agreement cannot be reached the student must appeal, in writing, to the department/school curriculum committee. If a satisfactory agreement cannot be reached, the student may submit a written appeal to the Office of the Dean within 20 working days of the exhaustion of the departmental procedures.

9.0 RECOMMENDED READING

See “External Links” for helpful websites on evaluation, research, and writing.

- Conner, P. T. (2004). *Woe is I: The grammarphobe’s guide to better English in plain English*, 2nd ed. Riverhead Books.
- Corcoran, K. & Fischer, J. (2000). *Measures for clinical practice: A sourcebook*. New York: Free Press. Volumes 1 and 2.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- DiLeonardi, J. W. , & Curtis, P. A. (1992). *What to do when the numbers are in: A user’s guide to statistical data analysis in the human services*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.
- Field, A. (2000). *Discovering statistics using SPSS for Windows*. London: Sage Publications.
- Galvan, J. L. (1999). *Writing literature reviews*. Los Angeles: Pyrczak Publishing.
- Green, S. B., Salkind, N. J., & Akey, T. M. (2000). *Using SPSS for Windows: Analyzing and understanding data*, 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Kachigan, S. K. (1991). *Multivariate statistical analysis: A conceptual introduction*, 2nd ed. New York: Radius Press.
- Maxwell, J. A. (1996). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- The mental measurements yearbook* (1938-current). The Buros Institute, UNL.
- Patterson, D. A., & Basham, R. E. (2006). *Data analysis with spreadsheets*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Pyrczak, F., & Bruce, R. R. (2000). *Writing empirical research reports*. Los Angeles: Pyrczak Publishing.

- Rossi, P. H., Lipsey, M. W., & Freeman, H. E. (2004). *Evaluation: A systematic approach*, 7th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Szuchman, L. T., & Thomlison, B. (2003). *Writing with style: APA style for social work*. Wadsworth Publishing.
- Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2000). *Using multivariate statistics*, 4th ed. Allyn & Bacon.

Journals devoted primarily to program and policy evaluation:

- *American Journal of Evaluation*, JAI Press (formerly *Evaluation Practice*)
- *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, Carfax Publishing Ltd.
- *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, American Educational Research Association
- *Evaluation & the Health Professions*, Sage Publications
- *Evaluation and Program Planning*, Pergamon
- *Evaluation Review: A Journal of Applied Social Research*, Sage Publications
- *Evaluation: The International Journal of Theory, Research, and Practice*, Sage Publications
- *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, John Wiley
- *New Directions for Evaluation*, Jossey-Bass

10.0 UNIVERSITY POLICIES

- 10.1 Student disabilities. Students who have a documented disability and need academic accommodation are encouraged to contact the instructor as early in the semester as possible to discuss their special needs.
- 10.2 Academic dishonesty and plagiarism. UNO policy reads: “The maintenance of academic honesty and integrity is a vital concern of the University community. Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty shall be subject to both academic and disciplinary sanctions.” *Plagiarism* is the appropriation of the work (be it ideas or words) of another without crediting the source. Such a practice is particularly reprehensible in a community dedicated to the pursuit and advance of knowledge. For more information, see the UNO Student Handbook.