

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
PROGRAM EVALUATION**

Course Number:	SW 395K	Instructor's name:	S. Rivaux, PhD, LMSW
Unique Number:	94005	Office Number:	SSW 3.104A
Semester:	Summer 2014	Office Phone:	(512) 698.3831
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Course Description

Social work program evaluation involves the application of social research methodologies to the conceptualization, design, planning, administration, implementation, effectiveness, and utility of human services programs and policies. This course will introduce students to the different types of program evaluation, including formative evaluation (e.g. needs assessment, implementation assessment, process evaluation) and summative evaluation (e.g. impact assessment, outcomes assessment, and cost analysis). The course will cover experimental, quasi-experimental, and non-experimental study designs, including the strengths and limitations of each. Some review of relevant data analytic methods will be presented. The influence of the historical, cultural, and political context of evaluation research will be examined.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the various purposes of program evaluation.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the history of program evaluation.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of the political context on evaluation research.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the potential effects of the cultural context in which the program or policy takes place.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the iterative process of program evaluation and the participatory role of the stakeholders.
6. Demonstrate knowledge of basic models of program evaluation (i.e. experimental, quasi-experimental, and non-experimental study designs).
7. Demonstrate knowledge of the threats to validity associated with each study design.
8. Demonstrate knowledge of the role of qualitative research methods in program evaluation.
9. Demonstrate the ability to conceptualize evaluation questions and to develop appropriate objectives and valid indicators (measures) to answer the evaluation questions.
10. Demonstrate an understanding of the sources of program evaluation data depending on the purpose of the evaluation.
11. Demonstrate a working knowledge of general linear model methods for the analysis of evaluation outcomes.
12. Apply knowledge of program evaluation models and principles by designing an evaluation of a program.

Teaching Methods

The primary means of instruction will be informal lectures, in-class exercises in small groups, and class discussions about the assigned reading. Students will be expected to have done the assigned reading before class, to actively participate in class, and to collaborate with one another. Guest lectures may be included to supplement course content.

Course Readings

Required text: Royse, D., Thyer, B. A., & Padgett, D. K. (2010). Program evaluation: An Introduction. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Statistics review: Basic understanding of statistical concepts will be required for this class. Students are not required to use any specific text for this, though the instructor will offer recommendations if needed. Additionally, there are many online stats texts, study aids, simulations out there. The following are among the more useful that I've found:

Rice: <http://onlinestatbook.com/2/>

UCLA: <http://wiki.stat.ucla.edu/socr/index.php/EBook>

BMJ: <http://www.bmj.com/about-bmj/resources-readers/publications/statistics-square-one>

StatSoft: <http://www.statsoft.com/Textbook/Elementary-Statistics-Concepts/button/1>

Other required readings will be posted on Blackboard under "course documents." Students are responsible for checking the Blackboard course site regularly for additional readings and for having read them prior to the class for which they are assigned.

Note that students are responsible for the material in the assigned readings whether or not the material is discussed in class.

Websites relevant to this course

American Evaluation Association (2004). Guiding principles for evaluators. Retrieved from <http://www.eval.org>

CDC Evaluation Framework and Resources. <http://www.cdc.gov/eval>

Sources for meta-analyses and systematic reviews of behavioral interventions

<http://www.campbellcollaboration.org> (meta analysis of the effects of interventions in the social, behavioral, crime and justice, and educational arenas)

<http://www.cochrane.org> (meta analysis of the effects of health and mental health interventions)

http://www.psych.org/psych_pract/treatg/pg/prac_guide.cfm (practice guidelines for psychiatrists for each psychiatric/mental/cognitive disorders)

<http://evidencebasedprograms.org>: Social programs that work

Grading and Course Requirements

Accumulated points and grading scale

94-100 = A 87-89.999 = B+ 80-82.999 = B- 74-76.999 = C 67-69.999 = D+ 60-63.999 = D-

90-93.999 = A- 84-86.999 = B 77-79.999 = C+ 70-73.999 = C- 64-66.999 = D- <=59.999 = F

Grades will NOT be rounded up.

Course requirements and grade assignment: Two quizzes (30%), labs and short quizzes (30%), one program evaluation proposal (30%), class participation/attendance (10%), and providing documentation of completed CITI training.

Quizzes (30%): Two quizzes (mid-term and final, 15% each) will assist the instructor in evaluating students' grasp of the course substantive material. Quizzes will cover all materials assigned and/or discussed in this course.

Labs and short quizzes (30%): Short quizzes will help both students and the professor assess understanding of class content and the course pace. Labs will provide opportunities to practice skills relevant to social service program evaluation. Final write-up of each lab will be due to the instructor by

email prior to the next class session. Possible lab topics include: case studies, critiquing evaluations, developing logic models, developing measures, and data analysis/presentation. However, based on student need, alternate topics may be addressed.

Class attendance and participation (10%): It is important that social work practitioners take responsibility for their own continued learning and act in a professional manner. Thus, students are expected to do assigned readings before the class meeting for which they are assigned, to compile questions regarding the material for class discussion, and to actively participate throughout class meetings.

Students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive punctually. Coming late and/or leaving early by more than 15 minutes will be considered a “missed” class unless that student provides a reasonable reason for doing so and receives instructor permission in advance. It is expected students will attend all classes if at all possible, students are permitted **one** excused absence in the event of unexpected emergencies, illness, medical appointments, university-sanctioned events, or religious holidays. To have a permitted miss, you must email the instructor before that class period. Medical documentation will be required to avoid losing grade points for more than one absence. Missing more than one class will result in a 2 per class deduction from the student’s final grade. Please inform the professor if you will be late or not attend class.

In the event a class must be cancelled, students will be provided an assignment to help them work with the material for that day. Conscientious completion of such assignments will count as attendance for that class. Assignments that are not completed or poorly completed will be considered an unexcused absence.

Program evaluation proposal (30% total): Since most program evaluations are developed using a team approach, the program evaluation proposal will be a group project. The project will be divided into several mini-assignments so that students may obtain instructor and colleague feedback to develop the final project proposal. The proposal will include an introduction, a short literature review, a detailed description of proposed evaluation methods, an assessment of the proposal’s methodological strengths and limits, a timeline, and a proposed budget. The groups will present the final proposal to the class. Grading for this project will be as follows:

Draft proposal sections (15%): Each group will write a draft proposal for evaluating a particular agency or program that is of interest to group members. The overall purpose of the evaluation proposal is for students to practice writing a rigorous yet feasible, scientifically valid, and relevant evaluation plan. Specific goals of this assignment are to: a) Familiarize the student with the evaluation research literature, and theoretical frameworks of program evaluation; b) Allow the student to generate evaluation questions that are relevant to the stakeholders, answerable given the operationalization of the target variables and the available and potential data sources, and conducive to scientifically solid research design, c) Allow the student to describe the methods of data collection and the strategy for analyses that optimally suit the chosen evaluation questions, setting, data, and target population. Note that we will likely review sections of project proposals as a class so that students gain experience in both critiquing evaluation proposals and in providing useful critique to colleagues.

Final proposal (10%): Groups will submit a revised proposal that includes all feedback received on the draft proposal. Should students have a sound reason for NOT addressing some piece of feedback, students are expected to address this as they would in the “real world” – that is, rather than just ignore feedback, they must write a detailed commentary about why addressing the feedback would be unwarranted and discuss this with the instructor PRIOR to submitting the final project.

Presentation (5%): Proposals may be presented in either Powerpoint or Poster format. Each student

in the group should participate equally in developing and presenting the project.

Assessment of contributions (ungraded, but required): Since group members will rely on each other to get a good grade on this project, it is very important that group members contribute actively and equally. Thus, with submission of the final paper, each student must also send the instructor a paragraph describing the contributions of each group member (themselves included) and assessing each member's performance in producing the paper and presentation. Should any individual not share sufficiently in the workload, the instructor may assign a lower grade commensurate with the individual's contributions. Students are responsible for talking to the instructor if group members are not participating equally in the project.

Human subjects protections training (ungraded, but required): Most social science research uses information about human subjects. Due to the potential for abuses in the research context, federal and university rules govern how research on human subjects can be conducted. All University research about human subjects must be approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) before starting to ensure that the study minimizes risk to human subjects (beneficence), ensures all subjects consent to participate with full information about the project and its risks (autonomy), and promotes equitable conduct of research (justice). Students are expected to show documentation that they've completed the human subjects protection course (CITI) at: www.utexas.edu/research/rsc/humansubjects/training/index.html.

University and School Notices and Policies

The University of Texas Honor Code. The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Professional conduct in class. The professor expects students to act as professionals in class. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another's opinions. We will not, nor should we, always agree with one another. In this environment we should be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometime we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. However, the professor does require that students engage one another with respect and professionalism.

Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>).

Use of Class Materials: The materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, exams, quizzes, and homework assignments are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized copying of the class materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary actions being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of class materials without the specific, express approval of the instructor may be a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty, which could result in further disciplinary action. This includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of sharing those materials with other current or future students. Do not upload course materials or share them electronically without the express permission of the course instructor.

Policy on Social Media and Professional Communication. Public social networks are not private. Even when open only to approved or invited members, users cannot be certain that privacy will exist among the general membership of sites. If social work students choose to participate in such forums, please assume that anything posted can be seen, read, and critiqued. What is said, posted, linked to, commented on, uploaded, subscribed to, etc., can be accessed and archived, posing potential harm to professional reputations and prospective careers.

Social work students who use social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and other forms of electronic communication (i.e. blogs, etc.) must be mindful of how their communication may be perceived by clients, colleagues, faculty, and others. Social work students are expected to make every effort to minimize material which could be considered inappropriate for a professional social worker in training. Because of this, social work students are advised to manage security settings at their most private levels and avoid posting information/photos or using any language that could jeopardize their professional image. Students are asked to consider the amount of personal information posted on these sites and are obliged to block any client access to involvement in the students' social networks. Client material should not be referred to in any form of electronic media, including **any** information that might lead to the identification of a client or compromise client confidentiality in **any** way. Additionally, students must critically evaluate any material that is posted regarding community agencies and professional relationships, as certain material could violate the standards set by the School of Social Work, the Texas Code of Conduct for Social Workers, and/or the NASW Code of Ethics.

Social work students should consider that they will be representing professional social work practice as well as the University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work program while in the classroom, the university community, and the broader area communities.

Documented Disability Statement. Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471- 6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

Religious Holidays. By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence. Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to their e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time- sensitive. Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

Safety. As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should notify the professor regarding any safety concerns.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL). If students are worried about someone who is acting differently, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

Emergency Evacuation Policy. Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation

- Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.
- Familiarize yourself with all building and classroom exit doors. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor's instructions.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you are given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.
- Link to information regarding emergency evaluation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: www.utexas.edu/emergency
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.

Course Policies and Notices

Blackboard: The instructor uses Blackboard (a web-based, course-management system with password-protected access) as the primary means of communicating with students. All course materials will be posted on the course's Blackboard site. Blackboard may also be used to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to give online quizzes or surveys. Students are responsible for checking this site regularly for class announcements and for new postings. Support in using Blackboard can be obtained from the ITS Help Desk by calling 475-9400 between 8AM-6PM on Monday through Friday. Please plan accordingly.

Late Assignment Policies: Except in the case of extreme emergencies, and then only with prior permission from the professor, late assignments will not be accepted without penalty. Students will lose 3 points for each day that an assignment is late. This includes ungraded, but required, assignments. Should a student need to miss an in-class assignment or short quiz, they should negotiate a make-up assignment with the instructor in advance. If any due date is a problem, then the student must contact the professor and negotiate another due date at least **48 hours PRIOR** to the date specified in the course syllabus.

Incompletes: Students are expected to complete all course work by the last day of class and to complete all assignments by the dates due. Only in emergency situations will an incomplete grade be given for a course and only when, prior to the emergency, the student has been in attendance and has done satisfactory work.

If an incomplete grade should be assigned, there will be a written agreement with the instructor about when and how the work will be completed.

Computer and Other Electronic Device Use Policy: Students are expected to use laptops and handheld computers in class for class-related purposes only. To engage in other types of computer use and/or electronics use (e.g., accepting or making phone calls, texting, surfing the net, etc.) is unprofessional and disruptive to the course. Thus, students who violate this policy may be asked to leave the classroom.

Feedback on Learning: During this course the professor will ask students to provide feedback on their learning in informal as well as formal ways. It is very important for the professor to know the students’ reactions to what is taking place in class, so students are encouraged to inform the professor on how her teaching strategies are helping or hindering student learning, ensuring that together the professor and students can create an environment effective for teaching and learning.

Course and Instructor Evaluations: At the end of the semester, I will use the standard Course Instructor Survey (CIS) provided by the University of Texas at Austin. The CIS offers provides a systematic, campus-wide method of evaluating courses and instructors. I hope that every student will complete the CIS. Although important, these evaluations are after-the-fact. Therefore, I strongly encourage you to provide input and feedback regarding the course during the semester so that together we can make this course of maximum benefit to you!

Course Schedule

The anticipated schedule of activities for this course is below. Reading due dates are the class for which the reading is listed. The instructor reserves the option to modify the schedule if deemed necessary. References to chapters are from the course textbook. Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard.

Date	Description	Prepare for class with
Class 1 6/9	Introduction to course Review syllabus Discuss group project and assign groups Intro discussion of program evaluation	Royse, Thyer, & Padgett - Ch 1
Class 2 6/11	Discuss ethical issues in program evaluation Discuss Institutional Review Board and human subjects protections training Discuss CITI training requirement Brief review of basic stats/research concepts Lab One due: Ethics case study	Royse, Thyer, & Padgett – Ch 1 & 2 “Class 2” readings from Blackboard
Class 3 6/16	Discuss needs assessment Discuss formative and process evaluation Documentation of CITI training completion due	Royse, Thyer, & Padgett - Ch 3 & 5 “Class 3” readings from Blackboard
Class 4 6/18	Discuss qualitative and mixed methods in evaluation Lab Two due: Logic model development	Royse, Thyer, & Padgett - Ch 4 “Class 4” readings from Blackboard
Class 5 6/23	Discuss single-system research designs Discuss client satisfaction studies Proposal section draft due: Logic Model	Royse, Thyer, & Padgett - Ch 6 & 7 “Class 5” readings from Blackboard
Class 6 6/25	Review sampling and research designs (These should be familiar from your Methods course.)	Royse, Thyer, & Padgett - Ch 8 & 9 “Class 6” readings from Blackboard

	Review for mid-term quiz Lab Three due: Article critique	
Class 7 6/30	Mid-term quiz Mid-term course survey Review proposals	Study for mid-term quiz Prepare questions regarding proposals
Class 8 7/2	Review mid-term quiz Discuss cost analyses Discuss proposal issues Proposal section draft due: Method / Approach	Royse, Thyer, & Padgett - Ch 10 "Class 8" readings from Blackboard
Class 9 7/7	Discuss measurement tools, measurement strategies, etc.	Royse, Thyer, & Padgett – Ch 11 & 12 "Class 9" readings from Blackboard Review statistics
Class 10 7/9	Complete proposal draft due Discuss pragmatic and feasibility issues in program evaluation Begin discussing data analysis	Royse, Thyer, & Padgett – Ch 13 "Class 10" readings from Blackboard Review statistics
Class 11 7/14	Discuss data analysis Lab Four due: Measure development	Royse, Thyer, & Padgett – Ch 14 "Class 11" readings from Blackboard Review statistics
Class 12 7/16	Disseminating evaluation findings Discuss using data to make decisions and inform program planning Lab Five due: Data analysis	Royse, Thyer, & Padgett - Ch 15 "Class 12" readings from Blackboard
Class 13 7/21	Final quiz Discuss proposals / proposal review	Study for final quiz Prepare questions regarding proposals
Class 14 7/23	Presentations of proposals Course survey	Prepare proposal presentation Prepare questions regarding proposals
Class 15 7/28	Final proposals due Assessments of group member contributions due	