

**The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work
Program Evaluation**

Course Number:	SW 395K	Professor:	Kirk von Sternberg, Ph.D.
Unique Number:	64575	Office Number:	SSW 3.208
Semester:	Fall 2013	Office Phone:	Campus: (512) 471-1648 (only during Tuesday office hours) Hartland: (512) 232-0633 Cell: 512-779-3313
		Email:	vonsternberg@mail.utexas.edu
Meeting Time: Place:	TU 5:30-8:30 SSW 2.118	Office Hours: Dr. vS. TA	TU 3:30-5:30 and by appointment TA by appointment

I. Course Description

Program evaluation for the social worker involves the application of social research methodologies to the assessment of 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. Relevant data analytic methods will be presented. The influence of the historical, cultural, and political context of evaluation research will be examined.

II. Course Objectives

At the end 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.

III. Methods of Instruction

The methods of instruction will be informal lectures (questions and answers are encouraged), class discussions, class exercises, guest presentations, and student presentations.

IV. Course Readings

Required Text:

Grinnell, Gabor, & Unrau (2012). *Program Evaluation for Social Workers: Foundations of Evidence-Based Programs*, Oxford University Press.

Other Required Reading: The professor will provide an on-line link to these readings or provide a hard copy in advance of the assigned reading.

V. Grading and Course Requirements

The final grade for the course will be based on:

1. Class Assignments / Quizzes	12 points
2. Program Evaluation Proposal	40 points
3. Mid-term Test	35 points
4. Class Presentation	10 points
5. Class Participation	<u>3 points</u>
	100 points

Accumulated points and grading scale

100-94 = A	93-90 = A-	89-87 = B+	86-84 = B	83-80 = B-
79-77 = C+	76-74 = C	73-70 = C-	69-67 = D+	66-64 = D
63-60 = D-	59 and below = F			

Course Requirements and Grade Assignment

1. Class assignments / quizzes (15 points): Class assignments will be based on the assigned readings and will be given by the professor to facilitate the understanding of program evaluation. Short quizzes will be given at the professor's discretion to help inform the student and the professor about the level of understanding and the pace of the course. There will be 5 class assignments and/or quizzes of which each will be worth 3 points. The lowest grade will not be counted leaving 4 **at 3 points each = 12 points.**

2. Program Evaluation Proposal: This will be a group project and will be the major assignment for the class. The proposal will include a description of the program to be evaluated and a detailed description of the methods to be used.
- a. Draft Proposal (30 points): Each evaluation student group will write a draft of a proposal for the evaluation of a particular agency/program of its choosing.

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.

The proposal should be written in the following format. NOTE that sections of the proposal will be due in class on specific days. These will actually be due by 10:00pm on the day before the due date (See section V.I.2). We may review these sections as a class.

Proposal Format

<p>A. Specific Aims of the Evaluation Proposal / Executive Summary</p> <p><i>(See format in attached "Evaluation Proposal Outline")</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 page</p> <p>List succinctly:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a brief description of the agency/program (e.g. homeless day drop-in center); 2. the mission, goals and objectives of the agency/program; 3. the theoretical concept/framework of the agency/program, 4. the target client population; 5. the specific program component/intervention being evaluated, 6. the specific evaluation questions (formative and summative); and 7. the primary measures/outcomes of interest. 8. the purpose or aims of the evaluation research (i.e. type of evaluation).
<p>B. Research Strategy</p> <p>1. Background and Significance</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">6 pages</p> <p>Describe the agency and programs in detail. This should include the theoretical program concepts, the mission of the program, its goals and objectives. Explain the need for the evaluation and the various stakeholders' views of that need. Express the evaluation questions in general and specific, measurable terms. Describe the data sources and variables of interest.</p>

	<p>For the impact/outcome evaluation describe the study design, the participants, and the outcome measures.</p> <p>Explain how the proposed project will benefit the program and the various stakeholders.</p>
2. Methods / Approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overview of the evaluation including type (process, impact, outcome, cost-effectiveness). 2. Setting/Program 3. Process Evaluation Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - record reviews - observations - interviews - objective assessment measures 4. Impact/Outcome Evaluation Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - target population/clients, including any inclusion/exclusion criteria; - sample size; - recruitment procedures; - sampling method - data collection methods - outcome measures - data analyses plan 5. Efficiency Evaluation Methods depending on the type: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cost Study - Cost Effectiveness Study - Cost Benefit
C. Description of project timeline	Timeline Chart/table

NOTE: The proposal should be Arial 11 font, single spaced.

- b. **Final Proposal (10 points):** Based on the feedback that the student received on the draft proposal, the student is required to revise and resubmit a revised proposal for a final grade. **Please submit the draft version with this submission.**
- c. **Presentation (10 points):** The student will present the final proposal in a class presentation format. Each student in each proposal group will participate in the presentation. The professor will grade the presentation as a group grade and each student in that group will receive that grade.
3. **Mid-term Exam (35 points):** There will be a written mid-term exam in this course consisting of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions. This mid-term exam will be an in class closed book test over all of the material covered up to that point.

VI. Class Policies

***Remember that as a Masters student, you are ultimately responsible for your own learning and development. The professor is there to support and facilitate your learning, but you need to take the initiative for your own education.

1. Students are expected to attend class sessions and participate in an **interactive** framework between students and professor. Students are expected to **complete the readings prior to class**, and should be well prepared to participate in discussions. Failure to regularly attend classes and to demonstrate through discussions that one has read the assigned readings will be considered in assigning the final grade. Students are to notify the professor if they are going to be absent. Students are responsible for any material missed due to absences.
2. Except in the case of extreme emergencies, and then only with the permission of the professor, **late assignments will not be accepted without penalty.** Students are expected to email all required assignments the day before the due date to the professor. Assignments turned in after the 12:00a.m. deadline will be considered late. If accepted, late assignments will be assessed point penalties at the rate of **5% each day it is late.** If the due date is a problem, then the student should see the professor and negotiate another due date WELL in advance of the due date. Note that the professor will send a reply email when the paper is received; if you do not get a reply, contact the professor immediately. Email is great, but not ALWAYS reliable!
3. Student feedback is welcome. During this course the professor will ask students to provide feedback on their learning in informal as well as formal ways, including through anonymous surveys about how the professor's teaching strategies are helping or hindering student learning. It is very important for the professor to know the students' reactions to what is taking place in class, so students are encouraged to respond to these surveys, ensuring that together the professor and students can create an environment effective for teaching and learning.
4. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback during office hours, by phone, by e-mail, and by appointment if they desire.
5. If students are concerned about their class performance, the professor is more than willing to work with students to help them improve their course grades prior to the end of the semester. **Final grades assigned in the course are not negotiable.**

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 like 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://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/>).

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 to Students

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:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor’s instructions.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you’re given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

Use of Blackboard in Class

In this class the professor uses Blackboard—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://courses.utexas.edu>—to distribute course materials and to communicate. Students can find support in using Blackboard at the ITS Help Desk by calling 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Please plan accordingly.

VII. Class Schedule

Date	Description	Readings
Sept 3	Introduction to Course Review Syllabus Describe evaluation proposal assignment Assign evaluation proposal groups What is Program Evaluation-An Overview	<u>Required for Next Week:</u> 1. Grinnell, Gabor & Unrau CHs. 2 and 3 2. Sample executive summary <i>Prepare presentation of your evaluation target agency/program</i>
Sept 10	<i>Present your evaluation target agency/program</i> Evaluation Steps Describing the Program Developing Logic Model	<i>Prepare logic model</i> <u>Required for Next Week:</u> 1. Grinnell, Gabor & Unrau CHs. 6 and 7 2. Evaluation proposal for New Choices program in the Harris County Jail
Sept 17	<i>Logic model due</i> Needs Assessment Process Evaluation Discuss Executive Summary	<u>Required for Next Week:</u> Grinnell, Gabor & Unrau CH 8 <i>Prepare Executive Summary – program mission, goals, and evaluation relevant objectives. Describe program. Describe Process Evaluation.</i> <i>DO NOT NEED TO INCLUDE DESCRIPTION OF OUTCOME/IMPACT EVALATION PLAN AT THIS STAGE</i>

Sept 24	Executive Summary Due Outcome Evaluations Discuss Executive Summary and Review Group Proposal Status	Required for Next Week: Final report of the SAFP evaluation. Prepare Background and Significance
Oct 1	Guest Speaker: Dr. Noel Landau: Statewide and multi-agency evaluations SAFP Evaluation	Required for Next Week: 1. Grinnell, Gabor & Unrau CH 10 2. Final report of the evaluation of the New Choices program in the Harris County Jail
Oct 8	Background and Significance Due Outcome/Impact evaluation designs Construct validity Internal validity	Required for Next Week: 1. Grinnell, Gabor & Unrau CH. 9 2. Assigned journal article Prepare Method / Approach Section
Oct 15	Efficiency/cost evaluations	Required for Next Week: 1. Grinnell, Gabor & Unrau CH. 13 2. Assigned readings
Oct 22	Guest Speaker: Dr. Catherine Cubbin: Sampling and Data Sources Group Proposal Status	Required for Next Week: Grinnell, Gabor & Unrau CHs. 11 and 12
Oct 29	Method / Approach Section Due Measurement Mid-term Review	STUDY FOR MID-TERM EXAM Prepare Complete Proposal Draft including Executive Summary
Nov 5	Mid-term Exam	Required for Next Week: 1. Grinnell, Gabor & Unrau CHs. 4 and 5 2. Assigned journal article
Nov 12	Complete Proposal Draft Due Ethics Cultural Competence	Required for Next Week: 1. Grinnell, Gabor & Unrau CHs 14 and 15 2. Assigned journal article
Nov 19	Guest Speaker: Cathy Crouch: What is good enough? Data Analyses and Presentation Group Proposal Status – Final issues	Prepare Final Proposal including Executive Summary
Nov 26	Final Proposals Due Data Analyses and Presentation, con't.	Prepare Class Presentation
Dec 3	Student Presentations	

VIII. Course and Instructor Evaluations

At the end of the course, I will use the standard Course Instructor Survey (CIS) provided by the University of Texas at Austin. The CIS offers students a systematic, campus-wide method of evaluating courses and instructors. It also allows instructors to compare their course ratings with averages for their school. The results are also used by the Dean and the School's Executive Committee as one of the aspects of faculty and course evaluation. I hope that every student will complete the CIS. Although important, these evaluations are after the fact. I strongly encourage you to provide input and feedback

regarding the course during the semester so that we can together make this course of maximum benefit to your academic pursuit.

PROGRAM EVALUATION PROPOSAL OUTLINE

I. Executive Summary (1 page)

Provide a clear overview summary of the program evaluation that you are proposing. This should include:

1. a brief description of the agency/program (e.g. homeless day drop-in center);
2. the mission, goals and objectives of the agency/program;
3. the theoretical concept/framework of the agency/program,
4. the target client population;
5. the specific program component/intervention being evaluated,
6. the specific evaluation questions (formative and summative); and
7. the purpose or aims of the evaluation research (i.e. type of evaluation and audience).
8. the primary measures/outcomes of interest.
9. the product and dissemination plan.

II. Research Strategy (6 pages)

Organize the research strategy in the specified order and using the instructions provided below. Start each section with the appropriate section heading.

A. Background & Significance (B&S) (approximately 2 pages)

The B&S section will be a through write-up of points 1-9 of the executive summary. This section should include a description of the agency/program. What is the agency mission, goals and objectives? Who funds the agency? Who are the stakeholders? What services are provided and who receives those services? What is the theoretical foundation for their services? On what specific component of the services is the evaluation going to focus? What are the specific evaluation questions and what types of evaluations are you proposing (i.e. process, impact/outcome, efficiency)? How will the measures (variables or constructs of interest) be operationalized. What research supports your choice of evaluation constructs. What will be the product of your evaluation and how will it be disseminated?

B. Approach (approximately 4 pages)

Use this section to describe how you plan to carry out the program evaluation. This section should be broken up into three sections:

1. Process Evaluation
 - a. For the process evaluation you need to state the evaluation questions. These should include an evaluation of the concurrence of the program with its stated objectives, the construct validity of the program, the fidelity of the program implementation, and issues of efficiency.
 - b. The methods of the process evaluation should include at a minimum record reviews, service observations, interviews, and objective measures.
 - c. The methods should include the source of the data and specific plans for assessing. For instance for the interviews, you want to state how many and who will be targeted (50 clinical staff of which 20 will be randomly chosen and interviewed). Another example would be intake records will be reviewed (how many?) and what type of data will be extracted?

- d. The methods should include how the data will be analyzed and how disseminated. Will there be a feedback loop with the administration and staff?

2. Impact/Outcome Evaluation

- a. For the Impact/Outcome evaluation you need to state the evaluation questions. These should include an evaluation of the program effectiveness in producing its desired outcome.
- b. The methods should include:
 - i. the design of the study (e.g. experimental, quasi-experimental);
 - ii. a description of the sample population;
 - iii. a sampling plan;
 - iv. a randomization scheme if appropriate
 - v. a description of the comparison group if appropriate
 - vi. the inclusion / exclusion criteria
 - vii. the measures/ constructs to be evaluated
 - viii. an analysis plan
 - ix. a dissemination plan

Develop and describe a group experiment or quasi-experiment for evaluating the outcome of the program. The methodology for the study you design should contain the highest degree of internal validity and scientific rigor allowed given the real world setting. You should control as many threats to internal validity as possible and reasonable efforts should be made to minimize measurement bias. **This proposal should provide a concise enough description on how the study is to be conducted so that readers would be able to conduct the study themselves from your description.**

3. Efficiency Evaluation

- a. For the efficiency evaluation, you will only be required to describe the method of evaluation in general terms.
- b. The methods should include the type of evaluation you have chosen:
 - i. Cost analysis
 - ii. Cost effectiveness analysis
 - iii. Cost benefit analysis
- c. The methods should include in general terms the costs you will collect and the outcomes you will use if either an effectiveness or benefit analysis.

C. Timeline Chart/table

The Timeline should include each of the functions (preparation, data collection, analysis, dissemination) of your program evaluation

D. Limitations

Discuss the potential limitations of the study (e.g. design, internal validity for impact/outcome, social desirability, political issues)

E. References

Provide references using APA Sixth edition format

Remember to write this paper in future tense, i.e. "will do".