

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

<b>Course Number:</b>	SWN395K	<b>Instructor's name:</b>	S. Rivaux, PhD, LMSW
<b>Unique Number:</b>	94730	<b>Office Number:</b>	SSW 3.104A
<b>Semester:</b>	Summer 2013	<b>Office Phone:</b>	(512) 698.3831
<b>Meeting Time:</b>	MW 1:30-4 PM	<b>Office Hours:</b>	W 12:30-1:30 & by appointment
<b>Meeting Place:</b>	SSW 2.132	<b>Instructor's e-mail:</b>	s_rivaux@austin.utexas.edu

**I. 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.

**II. 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.

**III. 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.

#### **IV. Course Readings**

**Required text:** Grinnell, R. M., Gabor, P. A., & Unrau, Y. A. (2012). Program evaluation for social workers: Foundations of evidence-based programs. New York, New York: Oxford University Press.

**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. A reasonable online resource to review basic statistics is: "Online Statistics Education: A Multimedia Course of Study". Project Leader: David M. Lane, Rice University. Available: <http://onlinestatbook.com/2/index.html>

**Other required readings** will be posted on Blackboard under "course documents." Students are responsible for checking the Blackboard course site regularly for these and 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.

#### **V. 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](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

#### **V. Grading and Course Requirements**

##### **Accumulated points and grading scale**

94-100 = A      87-89.9 = B+      80-82.9 = B-      74-76.9 = C      67-69.9 = D+      60-63.9 = D-

90-93.9 = A-      84-86.9 = B      77-79.9 = C+      70-73.9 = C-      64-66.9 = D-      <=59.9 = F

Grades will NOT be rounded up.

**Course requirements and grade assignment:** Two quizzes (20%), one program evaluation proposal (%), class participation/attendance (10%), and providing documentation of completed CITI training.

**Quizzes (30%):** Two quizzes (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.

**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. Further, students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive punctually. Students are permitted **one** excused absence. A student will also be considered absent if they arrive or leave more than 15 minutes from official class start or end unless that student provides a reasonable reason for doing so and receives instructor permission in advance. Medical documentation will be required to avoid losing grade points for more than one absence. Please inform the professor if you will be late or not attend class.

**Labs (20%):** Four labs (5% each) will provide opportunities to practice skills relevant to social service program evaluation. Labs will begin during class so students can get input from the instructor and their colleagues. Final write-up of each lab will be due to the instructor by email prior to the next class session. Possible lab topics include: critiquing evaluations, developing logic models, developing measures, and data analysis/presentation. However, based on student need, alternate topics may be addressed.

**Program evaluation proposal (40% 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 (20%):** 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 (10%):** 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:** 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](http://www.utexas.edu/research/rsc/humansubjects/training/index.html).

## **VII. 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 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 for keeping the university informed about changes to their e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently 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 UT-Austin 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.

**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.

### **VIII. Additional Class Policies Affecting Course Grade**

**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 the permission of the professor, late assignments will not be accepted without penalty. Students are expected to submit hardcopies of all required assignments on the specified due date at the beginning of class. Electronic versions of assignments will be allowed only under special circumstances if a student cannot be present in class. Students will lose 3 points for each day that an assignment is late. If the 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.

**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.

**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 students a systematic, campus-wide method of evaluating courses and instructors. Instructors can use the course to compare their course ratings with school averages. Also, the SSW Dean and Executive Committee use CIS results as an aspect of faculty and course evaluation. 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!

## IX. Course Schedule

Date	Description	Prepare for class with
Class 1 6/10	Introduction to course Review syllabus Discuss group project and assign groups Intro discussion of program evaluation	Royse, Thyer, & Padgett - Ch 1
Class 2 6/12	Discuss ethical issues in program evaluation Discuss Institutional Review Board and human subjects protections training Discuss CITI training requirement	Royse, Thyer, & Padgett - Ch 2 "Class 2" readings from Blackboard
Class 3 6/17	Discuss needs assessment Discuss formative and process evaluation <b>Documentation of CITI training completion due</b>	Royse, Thyer, & Padgett - Ch 3 & 5 "Class 3" readings from Blackboard
Class 4 6/19	Discuss qualitative and mixed methods in evaluation	Royse, Thyer, & Padgett - Ch 4 "Class 4" readings from Blackboard
Class 5 6/24	Discuss single-system research designs Discuss client satisfaction studies	Royse, Thyer, & Padgett - Ch 6 & 7 "Class 5" readings from Blackboard
Class 6 6/26	Review sampling and research designs (These should be familiar from your Methods course.) Review for mid-term quiz	Royse, Thyer, & Padgett - Ch 8 & 9 "Class 6" readings from Blackboard
Class 7 7/1	<b>Mid-term quiz</b> Mid-term course survey Review proposals	Study for mid-term quiz Prepare questions regarding proposals
Class 8 7/3	Review mid-term quiz Discuss cost analyses Discuss proposal issues	Royse, Thyer, & Padgett - Ch 10 "Class 8" readings from Blackboard
Class 9 7/8	Discuss measurement tools, measurement strategies, etc.	Royse, Thyer, & Padgett – Ch 11 & 12 "Class 9" readings from Blackboard Review statistics website
Class 10 7/10	<b>Complete proposal draft due</b> Discuss pragmatic and feasibility issues in program evaluation Begin discussing data analysis	Royse, Thyer, & Padgett – Ch 13 & 14 "Class 10" readings from Blackboard Review statistics website
Class 11 7/15	Discuss data analysis	Royse, Thyer, & Padgett – Ch 14 "Class 11" readings from Blackboard Review statistics website
Class 12 7/17	Disseminating evaluation findings Discuss using data to make decisions and inform program planning	Royse, Thyer, & Padgett - Ch 15 "Class 12" readings from Blackboard
Class 13 7/22	<b>Final quiz</b> Discuss proposals / proposal review	Study for final quiz Prepare questions regarding proposals
Class 14 7/24	<b>Final proposals due</b>	
Class 15 7/29	<b>Presentations of proposals</b> <b>Assessments of group member contributions due</b> <b>Course survey</b>	