

**JOINT MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM**  
**North Carolina A&T State University**  
**The University of North Carolina at Greensboro**

**SWK 513/SOWK 718 Research Designs and Data Analysis for Social Work Practice**

**Master Syllabus**

Faculty: Dr. Elizabeth Lindsey

**I. Rationale**

Advanced generalist social workers must be able to evaluate their own direct practice with clients as well as carry out programmatic evaluations. The goals of this course are to teach students the importance of evaluating social work practice and to provide them with the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct social work evaluations of direct practice and social work programs. Students will learn skills required to: (1) conceptualize evaluation questions; (2) design and carry out evaluations of direct practice and programmatic evaluations, using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, including single-subject and group designs, needs assessments, outcome, and process program evaluations; and (3) utilize evaluation findings to inform direct practice and program development and management. As a result of this course, students will be able to apply quantitative and qualitative evaluation strategies to address practice and program issues in their selected areas of practice. Students will also learn to utilize the SPSS software package to analyze quantitative data.

**II. Liberal Arts Perspective**

This course draws upon students' liberal arts education related to such areas as scientific method, reasoning and logic, mathematics, and statistics. In addition, liberal arts courses such as sociology and anthropology will contribute to student understanding of qualitative evaluation methods such as ethnography and field research. The development of effective writing and oral communication skills which are also a part of a liberal arts education will form the basis for reading, writing, and orally presenting evaluation reports. Oral communication skills are also important when involving clients, service providers, decision-makers, and other constituencies in the evaluation process.

**III. Linkage of this Course to Other Courses**

This is the second course in the research sequence. In this course students build on the knowledge and skills developed during the first course on research methods by applying that

knowledge to evaluation of social work practice, in both direct and indirect practice. While taking this course, students will also be taking the first course in their area of practice and will be doing their first semester of field practicum in their area of practice. The practice and field instruction courses will inform the work students do in Research Designs and Data Analysis for Social Work Practice, as they will learn about issues in direct practice and program evaluation that are relevant to their particular practice areas. When they take the Social Work in Administration course in their final semester, students will apply knowledge and skills in practice evaluation gained from successful completion of this course to the roles and functions associated with social work management in relation to supervision and improving social service delivery at the organizational level.

#### **IV. Professional Values and Ethics**

Students will learn how to identify and evaluate ethical issues associated with practice evaluation and how to utilize professional values, ethics, and professional standards in all elements of designing and implementing evaluation research.

#### **V. Diversity**

The importance of taking into account ethnic, gender, demographic, biopsychosocial and cultural variables in the conduct of social work evaluation will be stressed in this course. Students will learn specific strategies for taking these diversity factors into account when designing and implementing social work evaluations.

#### **VI. Populations-at-Risk and Social and Economic Justice**

The JMSW Program has identified several specific populations-at-risk in the geographic area served by the program: African Americans; urban poor; Appalachian and rural poor; Asian Americans and immigrants; Hispanic Americans and immigrants; and Native Americans. In this course, students will identify specific populations-at-risk in their areas of practice and develop strategies to address the needs and concerns of these groups in relation to specific evaluation questions.

Students will learn the importance of practice and program evaluation to the social work mission of enhancing human well-being and helping meet the basic human needs of all people, especially those who are vulnerable, oppressed, poor, or otherwise at risk. Strategies for designing program evaluations to that will be meaningful to decision makers, funding bodies, and other constituencies with the interest and power to effect social change will be addressed. The use of social work evaluation to create and modify social policy and agency practices to be more responsive to human needs will also be stressed.

## VII. Course Objectives

### Cognitive Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should understand:

1. Evaluation as a fundamental part of social work practice and the role of research and evaluation in broadening the knowledge base of social work practice. (FYO 11; AGO 2 & 3)
2. The role of professional values, ethics, and standards, including the NASW Code of Ethics, as guidelines for making ethical decisions regarding evaluation issues. (FYO 6; AGO 10)
3. Culturally sensitive practices within social work evaluation, programming, and services. (FYO 4; AGO 4 & 5)
4. Political and financial issues involved in utilization of evaluation findings with clients, staff, administrators and in program planning and development, including strategies for gaining acceptance and utilization of such findings. (FYO 7, 14; AGO 5, 6, 9, & 11)
5. Relevant and salient issues for direct practice and program evaluation in their selected area of practice. (AGO 3, 5, 9, & 11)

### Experiential Objectives

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

1. Select, evaluate, and use research literature in designing and implementing practice evaluations. (FYO 10 & 11; AGO 3)
2. Select appropriate qualitative and quantitative research designs and methods for assessing practice effectiveness in direct service with individuals, groups, communities, and programs within their selected area of practice and derive implications for practice from the results (single subject designs, group designs, needs assessment, and program evaluation designs). (FYO 5,10 & 11; AGO 1, 2, 3, 11, & 12)

3. Use social work values, ethics, and professional standards in designing and implementing social work evaluations. (FYO 6; AGO 10)
4. Use professional social work practices to involve diverse and at-risk client populations in the development and implementation of evaluation strategies. (FYO 4; AGO 4, 5, & 11)
5. Use professional consultation and knowledge of resources appropriately when designing and implementing social work evaluations. (AGO 3 & 11)
6. Utilize the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze quantitative evaluation data. (AGO 3)

### Affective Objectives

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

1. Maintain open, inquiring mind and a questioning attitude about professional practice that will enhance their understanding of and intervention with clients, in evaluation of direct practice and program development. (FYO 9; AGO 3, 9, 11, & 12)
2. Have confidence in their ability to carry out a single subject design, needs assessment, and program evaluation and apply findings to practice situations and program development. (AGO 3 & 12)

### **VIII. Course Content**

1. Role and context of evaluation in social work practice and within the student's chosen area of practice.
2. Use of computer and information technology in social work practice and social service agencies, including use of SPSS software to analyze quantitative data
3. Single case study designs
  - a. Single-subject designs, including use of objective measures
  - b. Qualitative data collection and use in single-subject designs
4. Program evaluation (quantitative and qualitative approaches)
  - a. Needs assessment
  - b. Formative evaluation & monitoring

- c. Outcome evaluation
- 5. Strategies for addressing issues of diversity, social and economic justice, and populations-at-risk in designing and implementing practice and program evaluations within the student's chosen area of practice
- 6. Ethical issues in evaluation research
- 7. Presentation and implementation of evaluation findings

## IX. Sample Assignments

### Evaluation Research Project

Students may design and implement one of the following: a single subject design evaluation of social work intervention, which includes the use of objective measures; 2) a program evaluation or needs assessment; or 3) evaluation of a group. Except for the single subject design option, students would be expected to work in groups with other students to complete this project.

### Article Reviews

Students may review and critique two published evaluations, one a single-subject design, the other a program evaluation.

### Exams

Exams may be given to test student acquisition and retention of concepts covered in text and in class.

### Homework/Computer Lab Assignments

Students may be given homework and/or computer lab assignments, including exercises in using SPSS, which can be used for assessment purposes.

**X. Texts**

Babbie, E., & Halley, F. (2003). *Adventures in social research: Data analysis using SPSS for 11.0/11.5 for Windows* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press.

Nugent, W.R., Sieppert, J.D., & Hudson, W.W. (2001). *Practice evaluation for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

**Supplemental Text**

Weinbach, R. W., & Grinnell, Jr., R. M. (2001). *Statistics for social workers* (5<sup>th</sup> edition). White Plains, NY: Longman. (p. 128)

**XI. Required Readings (suggested; at discretion of instructor)**

Ginsberg, L.H. (2001). *Social work evaluation: Principles and methods*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. Chapter 2: "The Administration and Ethics of Program Evaluation."

Grinnell, Jr., R. M. (1997). *Social work research and evaluation: Quantitative and qualitative approaches* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Itasca, ILL: F. E. Peacock. (Chapters 21 & 23)

Royse, D., Thyer, B. A., Padgett, D.K., & Logan, T.K. (2001). *Program evaluation* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Chicago: Nelson- Hall. (Chapters 7, 8, 12, & 15).

York, R. O. (1998). *Conducting social work research: An experiential approach*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. (Chapters 13 – 14).