

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
Department of Social Work
SOWK 7500A – Valdosta Cohort
ADVANCED RESEARCH AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

Instructors: Hanae Kanno, Ph.D., MSW,MA and Michael Sanger, Ph.D., MSW
 Office: Pine Hall Offices of Dr. Kanno and Dr. Sanger
 Office Hours: By appointment
 Telephone: Dr. Kanno: 412-443-6406 (Cell); Dr. Sanger: 229-249-4869
 E-Mail: Dr. Kanno:hkanno@valdosta.edu; Dr. Sanger:msanger@valdosta.edu
 Classroom: Pine Hall 114
 Semester: Spring 2014
 Credits: Three

***This course will be co-taught by Dr. Kanno and Dr. Sanger. Dr. Sanger will teach the course from Week 1 to Week 7 on January and February and Dr. Kanno will teach the course from Week 8 to Week 15 on March, April, and May.**

CATALOG DESCRIPTION Emphasizes the integration of research and advanced generalist social work through evaluation of practice and program evaluation. Advanced statistical concepts are applied to direct practice and five types of program evaluation.

COURSE DESCRIPTION This is the second course in research and evaluation methods. The primary focus is on the application of research methods within a program evaluation paradigm to rural human service programs. A review of single system research design in practice evaluation will be included in the course for comparative purposes. In this course, the student will be introduced to the range of program evaluation types and specific theories that are foundational to developing sound and practical evaluations. Issues related to program evaluation implementation in rural human service practice settings will be examined with an emphasis on dynamics related to small communities and the scarcity of established resources. Students will be introduced to the practical problems and implications of effective program evaluations in such environments with a focus on internal and external political considerations. Students will learn to identify methods most applicable to rural based social service program evaluations, including the application of methods and statistics studied in preceding coursework. Students will be introduced to advanced data analysis methods which build upon Foundation Level research and practice methodologies. Ethical implications of program evaluation theories and methods with respect to diversity and populations-at-risk will be explored. The ethics of including marginalized stakeholders and the implications of this inclusion on the evaluation processes, findings, and recommendations will be part of course inquiry. Effective roles for working with external and internal (to the agency/program) evaluators will be considered.

RELATION TO OTHER COURSES This course builds on all of the foundation courses, particularly the preceding research course (SOWK 6500 Research and Evaluation Methods in Social Work). It has direct implications for social work policy (SOWK 7400), and requires an understanding of the person-in-environment and problem-solving

perspective introduced in HBSE I (SOWK 6201) and HBSE II (SOWK 6202). An understanding of program evaluation methods is essential for maximally effective program administration and design (SOWK 7320 Advanced Practice in Organizations and Communities). This course builds on information presented in Generalist Practice II (SOWK 6302), as well as both field courses (SOWK 7611 and SOWK 7612).

COURSE OUTCOMES.

Course outcomes are what you should have achieved or can be expected to do, by the end of the course. We know that you will not be able to do any of these perfectly. Our expectation is that you can accomplish them enough so that you can begin to use them in your professional practice! The following is a list of behaviors and competencies that you should achieve as a result of this course. These course outcomes are derived from the MSW program objectives, and will help you build toward achievement of those objectives. Lessons, materials, methods and assignments are organized toward your achievement of the objectives and toward what you as a student will be able to do differently, as a direct result of participating in the course.

- Co 1 Determine when it is best to use outcome or process evaluation or a combination of both and select the most appropriate evaluation approach for the purpose of a research question.
- Co 2 Compare and contrast quantitative designs (“pre-experimental”, experimental, quasi-experimental) and recognize the limits of each in answering evaluation questions.
- Co 3 Recognize how to work with the stakeholders to negotiate, define, and refine evaluation questions.
- Co 4 Conduct a feasibility evaluation using appropriate methods of data collection.
- Co 5 Develop a program logic model for your evaluation.
- Co 6 Use the PLM to identify program strengths, weaknesses, program gaps, program incongruities, evaluation foci and evaluation obstacles.
- Co 7 Share information with stakeholders regarding program strengths, weaknesses, program gaps, program incongruities, evaluation foci and evaluation obstacles –program readiness and possible hidden agendas before the evaluation.
- Co 8 Develop an evaluation plan that addresses the questions posed. The plan should describe carefully the design or designs to be used as well as the data collection methods and methods of analysis.
- Co 9 Describe how the ethical issues of risk, informed consent, confidentiality and cultural competence will be addressed in all aspects of implementation of the evaluation.
- Co10 Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation design - including those related to validity, reliability, and generalizability – and include other methods of data collection and analyses in the design that can strengthen it.
- Co11 Describe how the information gathered through the evaluation could be used by the organization or other decision makers to improve program.

Co12 Select the most appropriate methods of data collection and analyses for the design.

Co13 Applies the fundamental norms and values of evaluation practices including the application of systematic inquiry, competence, respect for all stakeholders, integrity/honesty, consideration of public welfare, feasibility and utilization.

Co14 Utilize quantitative and qualitative research methods in the service of the evaluation.

Co15 Negotiate a research question(s) with stakeholders.

REQUIRED TEXT

There is no required text. Relevant readings and lecture powerpoints slides (PPTs) will be provided through weekly class module in the D2L course shell. **-->You have to read each weekly readings and lecture PPTs before each class and review those after each class.**

Definitions of Program Evaluation:

- **The systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgments about the program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future program development.**
- **Assessment of the effectiveness of ongoing activities such as in health care delivery, education, rehabilitation, or other social programs or interventions.**
- **Program evaluation is essentially a set of philosophies and techniques to determine if a program 'works'. It is a practice field that has emerged, particularly in the USA, as a disciplined way of assessing the merit, value, and worth of projects and programs.**

COURSE OUTLINE

WEEK 1: Jan 14-20 (Face-to-face class: Jan 14)

“Introduction”

Overview (and examples) of program evaluation

Evaluation of practice versus evaluation of programs

Philosophical assumptions of program evaluation

Defining a program

Why evaluate a program? What do you get out of doing this?

Components of a program – are programs logical?

The basis of a good program evaluation is a good research question.

***Read “Week 1 Reading 1 by Weinbach (Today’s Program Evaluations: Some Common Issues)” and “Week 1 Reading 2 by Weinbach (Program Components and Their Meanings)”.**

WEEK 2: Jan 21-27 (Face-to-face class: Jan 21)

The politics of evaluation is based on ...

Stakeholders

Who are they?

What do they want?

Who gets ignored?

What are their agendas?

What do they want to know?

“Pragmatic Issues”

Research questions revisited!

***Read “Week 2 Reading 1 by Patton (Focusing Evaluation Questions)” and “Week 2 Reading 2 (‘Balancing Act’)”.**

WEEK 3: Jan 28-Feb 3 (Face-to-face class: Jan 28)

Program evaluation – two general types

Program evaluation: What is evaluated and how?

Program objectives and their importance to measurement

Measurement and operationalizing measures

Indicators

***Read “Week 3 Reading 1 by Weinbach (Program Components and Their Meanings)” and “Week 3 Reading 2 (Selecting Criteria and Setting Standards)”**

Quiz 1 at the end of the class on Jan 28 (It will cover the contents in Week 1 to Week 3, which are related to the first section of the program evaluation paper.)

WEEK 4: Feb 4-10 (Face-to-face class: Feb 4)

Feasibility evaluation, a mini-process evaluation.

Using qualitative methods in the feasibility evaluation

Program components and the program logic model

How to use the logic model

***Read “Week 4 & 5 Reading 1 (Identifying Problems in Program Models)” and “Week 4 & 5 Reading 2 (Understanding and Applying Program Logic Models)”**

First section of paper due at 11:59pm, Feb 10th.

WEEK 5: Feb 11-17 (Face-to-face class: Feb 11)

Feasibility and qualitative evaluation

The feasibility of an evaluation

Research questions – Can they be measured?

Operationalizing research questions – does the program have a purpose?

Beginning to understand data collection

Qualitative research

***Review “Week 4 & 5 Reading 1 (Identifying Problems in Program Models)” and “Week 4 & 5 Reading 2 (Understanding and Applying Program Logic Models)”.**

WEEK 6: Feb 18-24 (Face-to-face class: Feb 18)

Questions about feasibility – is the program actually measuring client progress?

Sources of data and Data collection methods

Intro to research questions and research design

***Read “Week 6 Reading (Sources of knowledge for Program Evaluations)”.**

WEEK 7: Feb 25-March 3 (Face-to-face class: Feb 25)

Outcome evaluations and quantitative research

Group designs and research questions

The pre-experimental design

A note on client satisfaction

Quiz 2 at the end of the class on Feb 25 (It will cover the contents in Week 4 to Week 7, which are related to the second section of the program evaluation paper.)

WEEK 8: March 4-10 (Face-to-face class: March 4)

Outcome evaluations con’t

Research designs –quasi-experimental and experimental designs

Measurement and what to measure

Goal attainment scaling and measuring programs with individualized objectives

***Read “Week 8 Reading 1 Group Research Designs” and “Week 8 Reading 2 Single Group Designs”**

Evaluation from field instructor due in class on March 4th.

Second section of paper due in by 11:59pm, March 10th.

Revision of section one is due in by 11:59pm, March 10th.

WEEK 9: March 11-17 (Face-to-face class: March 11)

Formative and Process Qualitative Methods in Evaluation

Types of formative evaluations

Definition(s)

Utility

***Read “Week 9 Reading 1 by Weinbach (Preexplanatory Outcome Evaluations)” and “Week 9 Reading 2 by Weinbach (Explanatory Outcome Evaluations)”**
SPRING BREAK (March 17-21)

March 18: No Class due to Spring Break

WEEK 10: March 25-31 (Face-to-face class: March 25)

Formative and Process evaluation (con't.)

Program monitoring

But does the program work? – back to outcomes and quantitative

“Measurement Tools and Strategies” revisited

Importance of measurement

What to measure:

Operationalizing a research question

Objectives to outcomes

***For the people who will use qualitative research methods in their program evaluation, read “Week 10 Reading 1(Identifying Key Issues and Concern)”, “Week 10 Reading 2 (Using Qualitative Approaches)”, and “Week 10 Reading 3(Implementing the Naturalistic Inquiry)”.**

WEEK 11: April 1-7 (Face-to-face class: April 1)**“Measurement Tools and Strategies” revisited**

Importance of measurement

What to measure:

Operationalizing a research question

Objectives to outcomes

Beginning of data analysis

Quiz 3 at the end of the class on April 1 (It will cover the contents in Week 8 to Week 11, which are related to the third section of the program evaluation paper.)

WEEK 12: April 8-14 (Face-to-face class: April 8)

Designs revisited for the real world
 Comparing a program with itself
 Repeated measures and single system designs
Data analysis –selecting the right test

WEEK 13: April 15-21 (Face-to-face class: April 15)

A special type of Program evaluation: Cost as a criterion
 Cost-benefit analysis (CBA)
 Putting it all together
 From evaluation questions to type of evaluation
 Design selection and methods of analysis

Third section of paper due April 18th at 9:59pm in drop box.

Revision of section two is due in by 9:59pm, April 18th in its own drop box.

WEEK 14: April 22-28 (Face-to-face class: April 22)

Presentation of each other's program evaluation
 Wrap-up
 Making Sense of Evaluation Data
 Discerning Meaning
 Ethics
 "Pragmatic Issues" revisited
 Politics
 "Threat" of evaluation'

Presentation of program evaluation, April 22 at face-to-face class

WEEK 15: April 29-May 2 (Face-to-face class: April 29)

Presentation of each other's program evaluation (Continued from Week 14)
 Wrap-up

Presentation of program evaluation, April 29 at face-to-face class

Fourth section of paper due midnight, May 2 at 9:59pm in dropbox.

Revision of section three is due at 9:59pm, May 2 in its own drop box

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Incomplete Policy:

As a general matter of course, no incomplete grade, "I", will be allowed; however, there may be exceptional cases in accordance with university policy regarding Incomplete ("I") grades. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with this policy.

EVALUATION MEASURES and GRADING

1. QUIZZES

Before each section of the program evaluation is due, there will be quizzes. You will take the quizzes at face-to-face class three times (Quiz 1, Quiz 2, and Quiz 3). Each quiz will range in value 50 points. Each quiz will cover the concepts needed to complete each section (from section 1 to section 3).

150 POINTS TOTAL FOR QUIZZES

2. EVALUATION PROPOSAL.

SECTION 1. 4 TO 6 PAGES DOUBLE-SPACED WITH 12 POINT FONTS

100 points total. DUE February 10th

SECTION 2. 4 TO 6 PAGES DOUBLE-SPACED WITH 12 POINT FONTS

200 points total. DUE March 10th

SECTION 3. 7 TO 8 PAGES DOUBLE-SPACED WITH 12 POINTS FONTS. THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE APPENDICES.

200 points total. DUE April 14th

SECTION 4. 2 TO 3 PAGES DOUBLE-SPACED WITH 12 POINT FONTS. INCLUDE WITH COMPLETE PROPOSAL

50 points total. Due April 28th

3. CONDITIONAL POINTS FOR EVALUATION BASED ON REVISION

Section 1 revision. 50 points possible. Due: March 10th

Section 2 revision. 50 points possible. Due: April 18th

Section 3 revision. 50 points possible. Due: April 28th

TOTAL ASSIGNMENT REVISION POINTS = 150 points

4. FIELD INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION OF YOUR WORK

YOUR FIELD INSTRUCTOR MUST KNOW ABOUT YOUR EVALUATION PROPOSAL.

DUE in class on March 4th, Week 8

FIELD INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION = 50 points

5. PRESENTATION OF PROGRAM EVALUATION

Present what you have done/wrote in your program evaluation proposal from Section 1 to Section 3 in class on either day of April 22nd (Week 14) or April 29th (Week 15). Each person has to present for 10-15 minutes. Prepare for handouts or PPT slides for your presentation.

PRESENTATION OF PROGRAM EVALUATION = 70 points

6. CLASS/DISCUSSION PARTICIPATION

There are a total of 80 points for class/discussion involvement. Much of the learning will come through active class/discussion participation. Everyone is expected to participate through questions, comments, and answers. Being right is not as important as being involved. You could hurt your grade by not participating!!!

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS = 80 points

****There are optional discussion threads for each section of the paper in the D2L course shell. These threads allow you to ask questions about each section before it is due. There is no requirement to use these discussion threads, but using them will help you (and others) produce a better product for each section.

GRADING CRITERIA

The earned points will be converted to letter grades based on a percentage of the highest total point total earned in the course:

Total score for this course = 1050

A= 945 – 1050

B = 840– 944

C = 735– 839

D = 630– 734

F = Less than 630

DIVISION OF SOCIAL WORK and UNIVERSITY POLICIES

The goal of the Division of Social Work is to prepare students for the professional practice of social work. The Division requires students to adhere to professional practices and standards in all classes and practicum. These practices and standards are outlined in the MSW Student Code of Conduct which can be found on pages 69-74 of the current *MSW Student Handbook*. The Code of Conduct must be signed by all students beginning MSW students.

The following standards are not negotiable: Students may depend on well-planned classes and knowledgeable instructors. Professors are committed to the facilitation of student success. Learning is a complex phenomenon for which BOTH instructors and students are responsible. Evaluation criteria are stated clearly in the syllabus. However, if students have questions about grading, it is the students' responsibility to discuss these matters with their instructors. The course syllabus represents a contract between students and the instructor. Professors reserve the right to modify syllabi, and students will be notified in writing when such changes are made. Likewise, students are responsible for reading and following instructions on the syllabi.

Class Attendance/Participation: Because the MSW Program is a professional program, class attendance is MANDATORY except for cases of illness or family emergency, and documentation of the emergency must be provided. Dr. Kanno must be contacted prior to the absence. The Attendance Policy is extremely important and can be found in the current *MSW Student Handbook*. Students are expected to be on time for class and to return from breaks in a timely manner. Likewise, students are expected to participate in class discussions and activities.

Use of Cell Phones in Class

Students who choose to “surf the web” or post on Facebook during class will receive a grade deduction of **10 points per class** in which this occurs. Students who choose to text under the desk and use their phones inappropriately in class also will lose **10 points per class**. These technologies distract student learners. Based on complaints from other students in the MSW Program, use of these devices class often distracts other students who can observe and overhear these activities. Students are expected to advise the instructor if they are on call and to put phones on silent and leave the classroom to take call. Phone calls during class, just as phone calls during client sessions, are not acceptable professional behavior. These behaviors are identified in the *MSW Student Code of Conduct*.

Submission of Assignments: All assignments must be submitted ON TIME and IN THE MANNER directed by the faculty (e.g., sent to an assignment drop box, etc). The timeline is designed to assist students in organizing their work across the semester and knowing when assignments are due. Deadlines are extremely important for professional social workers. Students are expected to model professional behavior in the classroom including timeliness and attention to professional responsibilities and adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics. Lateness and not submitting assignments are not acceptable in professional practice. Students will lose points for late papers unless the student has a medical excuse or family emergency. **The timely submission of papers is an expected part of each assignment. Late submissions will lose 10% of the total points per day.**

EXAMINATIONS: Students who miss major exams or final exams without a valid medical excuse or documentation of an emergency will receive a zero on the examination. No make-up exams will be administered.

REWRITES: No re writes of papers or assignments will be allowed to improve a course grade, unless specified in the course syllabus or through specific instructions of the professor. See course assignment for program evaluation rewrite instructions.

APA Format: ALL written materials (unless otherwise specified) for the course MUST be submitted in APA format. When required (written papers), students will lose 10% of the total points per assignment for a submission that is not in APA. Students unfamiliar with APA format may purchase the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2001), available at the VSU Bookstore as well as at local stores (ISBN: 1-55789-790-4, Washington, DC: American Psychological Association).

Plagiarism: I will check whether you do plagiarism in your each assignment using a VSU software program that detects plagiarized materials. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are not acceptable in a professional social work program. **Students who engage in this type behavior will receive failure in the course, and possible dismissal from the MSW Program.** Academic dishonesty is prohibited by the university as well as the Division of Social Work. The following link outlines VSU's Academic Honesty Policies.

<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/AcademicHonestyPoliciesandProcedures.shtml>

The Academic Dishonesty Policy for the Division of Social Work is found in the *MSW Student Handbook* found as a link off the following Division web site:

<http://ww2.valdosta.edu/sowk/index.shtml>

Grading: For each assignment, point values are provided as well as a minimum length for all papers. Grading include a focus on content, writing skills, and clarity of ideas. Points will be taken off for writing that contains numerous errors, making the document difficult to read and understand. APA format must be used with a reference list at the end as specified in the *APA Manual*, if references are used. **Ten percent, 10%, of the total number of points per assignment will be deducted for papers that are not in compliance with this format.** Course grades will be determined by the total points received for the semester. **To reiterate, the timely submission of papers is an expected part of assignment completion, and all late submissions will lose 10% of the total points per day. Please remember the Deficiency Points Policy described in the MSW Student Handbook.**

Incompletes: Incompletes will be given only in cases of extreme emergencies with proper documentation, and only if your advisor, the program director, and your instructor agree that it is appropriate. Policies governing Incompletes are found in the *MSW Student Handbook*.

Academic Performance: Students are expected to maintain a 3.00 grade point average in the MSW Program. A discussion of all academic expectations and grading can be found in the *MSW Student Handbook*, including the Division's policy of Academic Deficiency Points given for grades lower than C.

Cancellation of Classes: The University President may cancel classes under specific emergency conditions. The most frequent cause of cancellation is inclement weather. Please check the main page of the VSU web site if you have concerns about inclement weather or an emergency situation: <http://www.valdosta.edu>

ADDITIONAL STUDENT INFORMATION

Technology Assistance: Students having technology problems may contact the Help Desk (phone 229-245-4357) or e-mail a question at helpdesk@valdosta.edu. The Help Desk is located on the 2nd floor of the Odum Library. Their hours are 8:00 AM – 9:00 PM, Mondays – Thursdays; 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM, Fridays; 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM, Saturdays; and 1:00 PM – 9:00 PM, Sundays. If students are having problems with D2L, call BLAZEVIEW D2L Help Center Toll Free: 1-855-772-0423. Hotline is available 24/7, 365 days a year. Students also should talk with their instructors if the technology problems are not easily resolved.

Specific Learning Needs: Students requiring classroom accommodations or modifications because of a documented disability should discuss their needs with the professor at the beginning of the semester. Students who are not registered with the Access Office for Students with Disabilities should contact VSU's Access Office or call 229-245-2498 (229-219-1348 for TTY). The office is located in Room 1115 Nevins Hall.

Students Experiencing Academic Difficulties: Students with academic concerns are strongly encouraged to contact the staff of the Student Success Center or call them at 229-333-7570. The Student Success Center is located on first floor of Langdale Hall on the main VSU campus. Services provided by the Success Center include tutoring, writing assistance, and help with time management. Students are encouraged to make appointments with Center Staff through the web link or by telephone. The Center is available to all VSU students, and evening appointments are available.

Additional Services: The Counseling Center (phone 229-333-5940; e-mail pjraynor@valdosta.edu). Services are free of charge to students with emotional/mental, social, substance abuse and other problems. The Farber Health Services provides physical health services (phone 229-333-5886).

Emergency Campus Policy: The Police Contact Number is **229-259-5555**. The Campus Police Division is located in Pine Hall. Officers will escort students on campus, and emergency phones are placed across campus. Students are **strongly encouraged to program the campus emergency number, 911** (for local police) **and *447** (GA State Highway Patrol) **into their cell phone.**