SSS 756 - Evaluation of Social Work Practice (3 credits)
Fall 2015

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Section 2: Eun Koh, MSW, PhD.

I. COURSE PURPOSE

Building upon the foundation curriculum in the social work research methods course (in SSS 590), the advanced graduate curriculum for SSS 756 course focuses on the research process pertaining to the evaluation of social work practice within the context of clinical practice settings. The course contents unfold based on the philosophy of client-centered evaluation of practice using the methodological application of single system designs in learning concepts, practice exercises, and assignments.

The emphasis is placed on gaining knowledge and skills required for social work practice behaviors that pertain to developing competencies in carrying out ethical research and client-centered evaluation of practice, while engaging in critical thinking, evidence-based practice, applying theories of human behavior, and evaluation of intervention services used for resolution or amelioration of human problems with diverse and vulnerable populations, and also while carrying out the role of evaluation research to promote social justice in society.

Based on key concepts and methodological issues inherent to evaluation research, the course contents cover the following main areas used in practice evaluation: (1) Problem formulation for research and evaluation in clinical practice settings; (2) Conducting literature review to determine the state of empirical evidence for a reasonable choice of intervention treatment or provision of services; (3) Delineation of research questions and hypotheses in relation to client problems, needs, goals, and objectives when seeking to evaluate client services or treatment interventions in relation to client behavioral outcomes; (4) Measurement of variables used in the evaluation process; (5) Selection of measuring strategies, tools, and instruments, including their validity and reliability; (6) Use and application of single-system design methodology, addressing issues of internal and external design validity; (7) Identification of appropriate data collection procedures with special attention to diversity issues and engaging in ethical research practices; and (8) Application of quantitative and qualitative data analyses procedures designed to assess progress and change in client behavioral outcomes and practice effectiveness over time.

Students’ knowledge and application skills of core concepts are built and scaffolded by class individual and group discussions, practice exercises, assignments, and an examination.
II. COMPETENCIES AND PRACTICE BEHAVIORS

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), requires that students meet 10 core competencies (for 1-Professional identity, 2-Ethical practice, 3-Critical thinking, 4-Diversity in practice, 5-Human rights & justice, 6-Research based practice, 7-Human behavior, 8-Policy practice, 9-Practice contexts, and 10-Engagement, assessment, intervention, evaluation), which are operationalized as practice behaviors. Each course is designed to cover one or more of the 10 core competencies and each course is also designed to cover some, but not all of the practice behaviors within a competency. Upon completion of this course, students will able to demonstrate the following practice behaviors within the noted competencies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected Primary Competencies Addressed in SSS 756</th>
<th>Practice Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Ethical Practice:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Apply social work ethical principles to guide clinical practice.</td>
<td>1. Social workers recognize and manage personal biases in practice settings.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3. Critical Thinking:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate clinical judgments.</td>
<td>1. Social workers engage in reflective practice&lt;br&gt;2. Social workers evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of multiple theoretical perspectives and differentially apply them to client situations.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4. Diversity in Practice</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. Social workers use their self-awareness to understand the influence of their personal biases and values in working with others.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>6. Research Based Practice:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.</td>
<td>1. Social workers critically evaluate and utilize theoretical models and empirical research methods for the purpose of informing and evaluating social work practice and programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7. Human Behavior:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.</td>
<td>1. Social workers differentially apply theories of human behavior that address the bio-psycho-social-spiritual nature of clients and the social environment to guide social work practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9. Practice Contexts:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Respond to contexts that shape clinical practice.</td>
<td>1. Social workers assess the current political, economic, social, and cultural climate as it affects the most vulnerable members of society.&lt;br&gt;2. Social workers intervene through advocacy to serve the most vulnerable persons within the political, economic, social, and cultural contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10. Engage, Assess, Intervene, and Evaluate:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Engage, assess, and intervene with individuals, families, and groups.</td>
<td>1. Use empathy, active listening, and other clinical skills to establish rapport in order to set treatment goals with clients&lt;br&gt;2. Develop culturally responsive therapeutic relationships&lt;br&gt;3. Attend to the interpersonal dynamics and contextual factors that both strengthen and potentially threaten the therapeutic alliance.&lt;br&gt;4. Develop, with clients, an intervention plan that incorporates client strengths, capacities, and protective factors.&lt;br&gt;5. Develop, with clients, an intervention plan that incorporates client strengths, capacities, and protective factors.&lt;br&gt;6. Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions and program implementation and outcomes.</td>
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III. ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course student is expected to be able to:

1. Understand the purposes of practice evaluation research within social work practice. (Practice Competencies: 2, 3, 4, 6, 10)

2. Engage in the process of problem identification and formulation, including the use of the professional literature in shaping and refining research questions and hypotheses important to research and practice evaluation in social work. (Practice Competencies: 3, 6, 4, 7, 9, 10)

3. Differentially apply various group and single-system designs for use in practice evaluation and critically assess their strengths and limitations in terms of both internal and external design validity. (Practice Competencies: 3, 6, 10)

4. Select appropriate sampling strategies for evaluating practice and identify the implications of such strategies for the generalization of findings. (Practice Competencies: 4, 3, 6, 10)

5. Understand the role of measurement in practice evaluation and the applicability of measurement reliability, validity, and other criteria in selecting measurement tools. (Practice Competencies: 3, 6, 10)

6. Utilize appropriate data collection approaches based on the objectives of the practice evaluation and the needs of research participants. (Practice Competencies: 3, 4, 6, 10)

7. Specify appropriate statistical methods for describing sample characteristics within single-system-design and group-design evaluations. (Practice Competencies: 3, 4, 6, 10)

8. Apply appropriate statistical methods for analyzing change in human behavioral outcomes in both single-system and group designs practice evaluation. (Practice Competencies: 3, 6, 10)

9. Differentiate between the use of clinical, practical, theoretical, and statistical significance in empirical research. (Practice Competencies: 3, 6, 7, 9, 10)

10. Identify ethical issues and utilize ethical guidelines in designing and conducting practice evaluation research. (Practice Competencies: 2, 3, 4, 6, 10)

11. Identify and address issues related to diversity and ethics as they apply to all phases of practice evaluation research, with respect to age, cognitive ability, literacy, language, culture, race, sex, sexual orientation, disability, and socio-economic status. (Practice Competencies: 2, 3, 4, 6, 10)

12. Identify the connections between practice evaluation research with at-risk and vulnerable client populations and the promotion of ethical research for social and economic justice. (Practice Competencies: 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10)
13. Demonstrate skills in critiquing published strengths and weaknesses in the methodology of evaluation research. (Practice Competencies: 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10)

14. Demonstrate skills in developing a feasible research proposal for conducting a social work practice evaluation. (Practice Competencies: 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10).

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Reading


Engel, R. J., & Schutt, R. K. (2013). The practice of research in social work. (3nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, Ca: SAGE (Selected chapter on BB)

Please Note: Additional research journal articles and other assigned readings are placed on CUA course Blackboard (BB) under the links for “Documents” into individual class folders throughout the course. All students are expected to regularly check the BB, and download any posted materials including any power-points, or handouts as needed for class engagement and learning.

B. Other Recommended Resources and Media


C. Course Assignments and Grade Composition

This course uses multiple graded assignments to assist students in developing competencies for practice evaluation: (a) Assig.#1 - Informed Consent for an evaluation of practice context using a SSD-based article, (b) Assig.#2 – Brief Topic Selection for Research Proposal to evaluate a self-selected client-centered practice intervention context, (c) Assig.#3 – Outline for Research Proposal to evaluate a self-selected client-centered practice intervention context, Assig. #4 - Paper 1 of Research Proposal to present the client problem, literature review, research question/hypothesis, practice intervention or services used to address the client problem, and variable identification, (d) Assig.#5 – Midterm Exam to build knowledge of SSD design methodology, (e) Assig.#6 – Paper 2 of Research Proposal to present the

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methodology for variable measurement, SSD design, analysis plan, and implications for evaluating change in the client behavioral outcomes, and (f) Assig.#7 – Presentation of Research Proposal – Linking client problems to practice policy.

### Outline of Assignments Composition and Grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Course Grade %</th>
<th>Due Class</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>Developing Informed Consent: Ethical conduct in research and evaluation</td>
<td>100 points 15%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9-17-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>Brief Topic Selection: Topic selection for SSD research evaluation of practice</td>
<td>100 points 5%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10-1-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>Planning Practice Evaluation Proposal: Research Proposal Outline and class exercise presentations and peer consultation</td>
<td>100 points 5%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10-15-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>Paper 1 of the Research Proposal: Problem formulation, Literature review, RQ/RH, Intervention, and Identification of variables</td>
<td>100 points 25%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10-29-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>Midterm Exam: On BB: Opens Thursday, 11/5/15 8am, and closes Sunday, 11/8/15 by 11:30pm</td>
<td>100 points 15%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11-8-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>Paper 2 of the Research Proposal: Methodology plan for measurement, design, data collection, analysis, and implications.</td>
<td>100 points 25%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12-3-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7</td>
<td>Presentation of the Research Proposal: Linking client centered practice evaluation to client-advocacy and policy</td>
<td>100 points 5%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12-03-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>Class engagement: attendance and participation</td>
<td>100 points 5%</td>
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**Additional Notes on Assignments:**

**Assignment #1: Developing Informed Consent.** Ethical conduct in research and evaluation involves reading an assigned article with single system design (SSD) approach and developing a written Informed Consent for adults using a designated practice intervention. Specific instructions are provided on BB.

**Assignment #2: Brief Topic Selection.** Topic selection for SSD research evaluation of practice involves developing a one-page outline that briefly covers: (a) Specific social human problem that is important for social work practice and that is relevant to practice evaluation that will use a client-centered single subject design approach; (b) Specific practice or treatment intervention that may be used to address the selected social human problem repeatedly over time, (c) One or two possible research questions that may guide the proposed practice evaluation, and (d) At least 3 references that support the rationale for the topic selection. This outline assignment is used to
assure suitability of topic selection for the research proposal paper, and the instructor provides a quick feedback by email. Specific instructions are provided on BB.

**Assignment #3: Research Proposal Outline:** The instructor provides a structured outline with questions to be completed and that will be presented by individual students in group discussion during class 7. In class 7, students share ideas for their research proposal outline, and seek consultation from their peers in groups and from the instructor, who circulates to all groups. Typically, students present their outline contents to their group during the first half of the class, and then each group selects on student to present to the whole class. The instructor facilitates the class process and guides discussion of relevant concepts. Following this class, the students update their individual outlines (assignment #3), and upload them to BB for graded feedback.

In this outline, students address information on (a) specific social human problem that is important for social work practice and that is relevant to practice evaluation that will use a client-centered single subject design approach; (b) specific practice or treatment intervention that may be used to address or ameliorate the selected social human problem repeatedly over time, (c) specific client centered human outcome that will be targeted for change by the proposed practice evaluation, (d) a possible research question that may guide the proposed practice evaluation, (e) specific independent and dependent variables that are examined and studied in the developing research proposal, and (f) specific evidence existing in the literature on research evidence that supports the rationale for the problem topic and intervention selection. Please note that the class 7 exercise and the assignment #3 are used to deepen the student knowledge and also to assure the suitability of topic selection for the research proposal paper.

Please note that a topic that focuses primarily on “evaluating effectiveness of medication” is not suitable for social work evaluation of practice. However, a topic that involves evaluation of practice or intervention or treatment or services with clients, who are on medication, may be appropriate, providing the focus of the proposal targets an intervention that is relevant to social work practice. Please further notice that absence from class 7 may severely jeopardize the development of the research proposal. Any unexcused absence from the class 7 automatically reduces the total grade for class engagement by 10 points.

**Assignment #4: Paper 1 of the Research Proposal:** This paper represents the “first stage” of a research proposal. The focus in this first paper is on identifying a problem area in human behavior that is relevant to social work practice, and that will be used for evaluating the effectiveness of an intervention used in the context of client centered evaluation. It is expected that the selected intervention that is presented in paper 1, is an intervention strategy (or treatment or package of services) that can be applied over time using a client centered approach, and is conceptually or theoretically justified as a rational choice for addressing the described client problem. Subsequently, this intervention strategy will become part of the evaluation strategy that will use single subject design (SSD) methodology, which will be further developed and presented in paper 2. The paper 1 typically: (a) Presents the selected human problem area, information on how the problem affects specific clients, and any relevant background materials and research that pertains to understanding the problem area and its prevalence; (b) Discusses the relevance or importance of addressing the problem in the context of social work practice; (c) Provides a literature review on prior research that pertains to the success or failure of any intervention or practice approaches tried for resolving the presented problem; (d) Specifies the purpose of the proposed intervention and its evaluation; (e) Presents a fairly in-depth description
of the selected intervention or practice approach selected for resolving the problem area, and explains the theoretical rationale by which the selected intervention is meant to resolve or improve the human problem; (f) Specifies the research question and research hypothesis used in the proposed practice evaluation of the selected intervention or practice approach, and (g) Identifies the main variables as independent and dependent. This paper uses APA-6 style for scholarly writing. A specific writing guide is provided during the course (on BB).

**Assignment #5: A Midterm Exam.** This midterm examination is set up and taken through BB (link is under Assignments). The exam includes 25 questions with “true/false or multiple choice” format. The student gets two tries, and a higher grade gets recorded. The exam lasts 90 minutes, and must be completed in one sitting. The questions are randomized on each try. Students are particularly encouraged to review chapter 8 in Engel and Schutt (2013) (on BB) and chapters 11-13 in Bloom, Fischer, & Orme (2009).

**Assignment #6: Paper 2 of the Research Proposal.** The second paper builds the SSD methodology for the selected practice evaluation in the research proposal. This paper 2 continues building on paper 1: (a) Presents the conceptualization and operationalization of the independent and dependent/outcome variables, the tools or instruments used for variable measurement, and addresses the reliability and validity of the selected instruments; (b) Describes the data collection process, and provides brief information on how ethical conduct in research with human subjects would be assured; (c) Identifies and discusses the specific SSD design used for evaluating the change in the selected client behavioral outcomes, and also addresses the design strengths and weaknesses that pertain to causal inference in relation to internal and external validity of the study design; (d) Specifies any inclusion or exclusion criteria being used for the study’s participants’ selection; (e) Identifies the statistical procedures that would be used for testing the proposed hypothesis, and explains how effect size would be assessed in relation to statistical plan or goals selected; (f) Explains how statistical, and clinical or practical significance will be addressed; and (g) Concludes with implication for social work practice and recommendations for future research evaluation. This paper uses APA-6 style for scholarly writing.

Together, paper 1 and paper 2 create a complete research proposal that is used as an example for evaluating social work practice intervention. The total paper may also be used as a scholarly paper that meets university graduation requirements.

**Assignment #7 – Research Proposal Brief Presentation:** In this final assignment, in the last class, students present their research proposals by specifically focusing on the links between practice evaluation context and client advocacy for improvement of practice and policy connections. Based on the client size, the presentations are spread over the last two classes and are expected to last around 10 to 15 minutes maximum. Students are free to choose the format of their presentation. The instructor distributes and collects an evaluation rating sheet for each presentation from all students, and the class evaluation rating offers a consultation rating that counts for 25% of instructor’s award of the grade. Unexcused class absence during project presentation automatically reduces the total grade for class engagement by 10 points.
D. **Grading Policy**

Grades are based on the CUA Grading Policy as described in the *Graduate Announcements* (see MSW Handbook). Full credit will not be given for any assignments that are submitted late. No credit will be given for assignments submitted after they have been reviewed in class. *Please be aware* that unless you notify and make arrangements with the instructor prior to the expected due date of the assignment, it will automatically be considered late, and will be downgraded. *Please be also aware* that handing in the assignment late due to “unexpected” work/employment (paid or unpaid) related tasks or travel is not considered an acceptable excuse and results in penalties at the discretion of the instructor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading System</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Numeric Range</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95 – 100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 89</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 – 86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 82</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70 – 79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 – 69</td>
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</table>

*Please note* that *if you receive a grade of C or lower for any assignment*, you are expected to set up an appointment with the instructor for an individualized support and review of the assignment as soon as possible.

*Please also note* that a provisional report of 'I' (Incomplete) may be given to a student who, for legitimate reasons (e.g. having a serious illness of self) that are determined valid at the discretion of the instructor, has not completed the requirements of the course, provided that at least 50% work already completed is of passing quality (better than a grade of “C”) and provided that the incomplete work can be expected to be successfully resolved by the beginning of the following semester. In order for a student to receive an ‘I,’ an *Incomplete Approval Form* must be completed and signed by the student and the instructor, and also, approved and signed by the chairperson of the program as well.

E. **Preparation, Attendance & Participation**

Students are required to attend classes and are expected to participate meaningfully in class discussion/exercises or online forums as required. The class participation grade is determined by the instructor’s perception of the student’s preparation for and contributions to class discussion/activities. Different students make different kinds of contributions. Some have an easy time with spontaneous group interactions while others are be more comfortable making planned statements about key ideas from the readings or other sources. Both types of contributions are valued and encouraged.

**Class Absence:** It is recognized that an “emergency time” may arise such that a student may be unable to attend class. For any planned or unplanned absences, please make sure that you apprise the instructor in writing (email) and/or in person and as soon as possible. *Please be aware* that more than one class absence jeopardizes your
ability to successfully complete the course. Please be also aware that “unexpected” absences due to work/employment (paid or unpaid) related tasks or travel are not considered an acceptable excuse and may also jeopardize your course participation.

F. Course and Instructor Evaluation
NCSSS requires electronic evaluation of this course and the instructor. At the end of the semester, the evaluation form may be accessed at http://evaluations.cua.edu/evaluations. Additional, informal written or verbal feedback to the instructor during the semester is encouraged and attempts will be made to respond to requests.

V. CLASS EXPECTATIONS

Please refer to NCSSS Announcements, or appropriate Program Handbook for Academic Requirements (http://ncsss.cua.edu/courses/index.cfm), including scholastic and behavioral requirements (see MSW Handbook).

NCSSS is committed to creating an open and inclusive learning environment where all members - including students, faculty, administrators, and staff – strive to listen to and learn from one another. We recognize that in a multicultural society, it is inevitable that issues or tensions relative to diversity and different life experiences arise. It is how we handle these events that matters. Therefore, when such issues occur – inside or outside of the classroom - we agree to engage in respectful and productive discussion with one another until learning is enhanced and understanding is deepened by all involved.

A. Scholastic Expectations
All written work should reflect the original thinking of the writer, cite references where material is quoted or adapted from existing sources, adhere to APA-6 format, and should be carefully proofread by the student before submission to the instructor for grading.

For support with scholarly writing, please consider using the CUA Writing Center http://english.cua.edu/we/ and appointment can be made at 202-319-4286, or by email at https://cua.mywconline.com/.

Please note that all assignments that are late or not delivered on the due date to BB may be automatically reduced by 10 points at the discretion of the instructor.

B. Behavioral Requirements:
Students are expected to maintain accepted standards of professional conduct and personal integrity in the classroom. Students should:

- Attend all classes and contribute constructively to the classroom culture
- Recognize and avoid behavior that jeopardizes the learning/teaching environment of other students or the instructor
- Demonstrate competence in planning academic activities and in following through on those plans
- Reasonably respond to and respect others’ reactions to one’s comments or actions in the classroom
• Use an appropriate level of class time and instructor’s time and attention in and out of class
• Behave in a manner that is consistent with the ethical principles of the social work profession.
• Use electronic or technological devices in a professional manner that respect university rules for class engagement and promote course participation.

C. Academic Honesty
Joining the community of scholars at CUA entails accepting the standards, living by those standards, and upholding them. Please refer to the NCSSS - MSW Program Handbook: http://ncsss.cua.edu/degree-programs/MSW/msw-index.cfm.

D. Confidentiality
Each student is expected to adhere to the Confidentiality Agreement that is signed at the beginning of every semester. This agreement covers discussion and presentations of “practice materials” in classes, supervisory sessions, case conferences, seminars, and other educational settings within the NCSSS BSW or MSW programs that are for professional learning purposes only, and are subject to strict professional standards of confidentiality. These same standards of confidentiality also extend to various forms of written communication and peer consultation.
Adherence to these standards means all students refrain from communicating beyond the classroom setting about practice material that is presented in class. Students will also refrain from using social media outlets (blogs, twitter, Facebook, etc.) or email to discuss or post information on practice settings, program responsibilities and projects with individuals who are not in teaching or supervision roles directly related to the situation.

E. Accommodations
CUA is committed to promoting the full participation of all qualified students with disabilities in all aspects of campus life. Students with disabilities are required to meet the same academic standards as other students at the university. It is only through a student's voluntary disclosure of their disability and request for accommodations that CUA can support disability needs. Students who have a disability and wish to make a request for accommodations must do so first through Disability Support Services (DSS)
Disability Support Services
The Catholic University of America
620 Michigan Ave NE
201 Pryzbyla Center
Washington, D.C. 20064
Phone: 202-319-5211

Once eligibility is determined at CUA DSS, based on the submitted documentation, appropriate accommodations are arranged. Accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis. Please be aware that you are expected to present documentation for seeking any accommodation to your course instructor in the beginning of the course, and arrange a meeting as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations. Seeking a discussion of these accommodations only prior to any testing assignments is not considered an appropriate course of action, and may jeopardize a student request for accommodation.

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F. **Use of Electronic Devices**

Laptops, tablets, or other electronic devices are permitted in the classroom *only for class engagement, and only with an approval from the instructor.* Please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices at the beginning of the class, and please make sure that these devices do not disrupt the learning environment of the classroom. Checking email or using internet for non-course related needs during classroom time are not appropriate course activities, and may result in a student’s removal from class and also in reduction of 10 points from the total class engagement grade for each offense.

G. **CUA Blackboard:**

*Instructions for Blackboard (BB) access:*

Step 1: Start with [https://blackboard.cua.edu/](https://blackboard.cua.edu/)
Step 2: Login using your CUA username and password
Step 3: Enter Course SSS 756

*Please notice* that when you enter BB for this course that on the left of your BB screen, the display link for “Documents” will contain relevant information for class contents in separated class folders, and the link for “Assignments” will include information on all assignments. *Please also notice* that you are expected to electronically upload all assignments into BB unless the class instructor indicates otherwise! Please do not email your assignments! Please do not use Adobe pdf files or other types of software for formatting any written assignments! For uploading all written assignment related information, please use Microsoft *WORD*, Times Roman font sized 12, and format scholarly papers using APA-6.

**SSS 756 Fall 2015 CLASS SCHEDULE**

**Class 1  Introduction to Practice Evaluation**

9-3-15  Review course outline, schedule, and expected assignments
Parallels between social work practice and practice evaluation research
Subtle differences between program and practice evaluation
Types of evaluation research (needs assessment, process evaluation, outcome
evaluation, efficiency analysis)
General types of practice evaluation research
Diversity and social justice issues in practice evaluation
Evidence based practice and intervention in client centered practice

**Readings:**


6.4.2015
Bloom, Fischer, & Orme (2009): Chapter 1 (pp.13 – 21 only: Evidence-Based Practice), and Chapter 25: Not for practitioners alone.


Resources for Evidence-Based-Practice and Research:
- [http://guides.lib.umich.edu/EBP-Research](http://guides.lib.umich.edu/EBP-Research)
- [http://guides.library.vcu.edu/c.php?g=47650&p=298157](http://guides.library.vcu.edu/c.php?g=47650&p=298157)

**Handout: Assignment I** - Instructions for Ethical Conduct in Research and Evaluation

**Handout: Assignment 2** – Instructions for Topic Selection for Research Proposal Paper

**Class 1 Exercise:** Critiquing strengths and weaknesses of *Informed Consent* document.

**Homework: Preparation for Class 2 Exercise:** Please read the two assigned articles by Carney & Buttell (2004) and Barrett & Wolfer (2001), located on BB in a folder for class 2, and complete questions. Bring the articles and most of your completed questions to class 2 for discussion!

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**Class 2 Problem Formulation I**

9-10-15 Comparing evaluation strategies in single system and group design methodologies
Examining the process of developing a research based practice evaluation
Developing a problem statement and review of the knowledge base
Understanding what is an intervention in the context of practice
Examining strategies for observation in single-case versus group design approach
Ethical issues in practice evaluation research and developing *Informed Consent*
The role of the literature review in problem formulation

**Readings:**

Bloom, Fischer, & Orme (2009): Chapter 1


**Class 2 Group Exercise:** (1) Differentiating practice approaches driven by single-subject and group design methodology (bring prepared homework and the 2 articles to class for discussion); and (2) Examining strengths and weaknesses in an Informed Consent as a way to prepare for assignment 1.

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**Class 3  Problem Formulation II**

9-17-15  Considerations for topic selection for social work practice evaluation  
Linking problems to needs to goals, objectives, and outcomes  
Figuring out research question and research hypotheses for practice evaluation  
Identifying independent, dependent variables, intervening collateral variables

**Readings:**


**Class 3 Group Exercise:** (1) Writing research questions and envisioning the process and structure of evaluation: Copes questions and Grant related article questions.

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**Class 4  Variable Measurement**

9-24-15  Measuring human outcomes  
Review conceptual and operational definitions of variables  
Review levels of variable measurement  
Translating observation into measurement, and selecting tools and instruments  
Goal attainment scaling and its use

**Readings:**


**Class 4 Group Exercise:** Practicing developing GAS scaling (handout – using Roach & Elliott article).

**DUE: Assignment #1:** Ethical Conduct in Research and Evaluation: Upload onto BB.

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**Class 5 Measurement Approaches in Practice Evaluation I**

**10-1-15** Consider tools for evaluation of change in client outcomes  
Examples of different types of instruments and tools in practice evaluation  
Rapid assessment instruments  
Differentiating standardized scales and client-practitioner developed scales  
Reliability and validity of instruments  

**Readings:**

Bloom, Fischer, & Orme (2009): Chapter 4: Developing a measurement and recording plan, Chapter 5: Behavioral observation, Chapter 7: Standardized scales.


**Class 5 Group Exercise:** (1) Differentiating reliability and validity in standardized instruments; and (2) Brief peer consultation: Students share their beginning ideas for topic selection for developing a research proposal for practice evaluation (bring a rough draft of assignment 2 to class).

**DUE: Assignment #2:** Topic Selection for Research Proposal Paper: Upload to BB.

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**Class 6 Measurement Approaches in Practice Evaluation II**

**10-8-15** Individualized rating scales and client logs  
Data collection processes  
How and when to collect collateral information on other intervening variables  
Reactivity of measuring tools and instruments  
Selecting a measuring tool or an instrument  
Considering basic principles of single system designs for repeated observations  

**Readings:**
Bloom, Fischer, & Bloom (2009): Chapter 6: Individualized rating scales, Chapter 8: Logs
Chapter 9: Reactivity and nonreactive measures, and Chapter 10: Selecting a measure.

effectiveness of an exercise intervention on quality of life for Hispanic breast cancer

**Class 6 Group Exercise:** Using instructor provided “practice case scenario:” Connecting
research questions to human behavior outcomes to variable measurement.

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**Class 7 Developing and Planning Strategies for Practice Evaluation**

**10-15-15** Class experiential exercise that requires that students bring their “rough draft” of
completed assignment # 3 to class for sharing, discussion, and consultation.
Students break into small groups and present their rough drafts of assignment #3 to
their group, and engage in peer and instructor consultations.
All students first present their assignment within their group, and then each group
selects one student to present his/her draft to the whole class for further discussion.
Instructor circulates to all groups and provides support and guidance as needed.
Please notice that absence from class 7 may severely jeopardize the development of
the research proposal. Any unexcused absence from this class automatically reduces
the total grade for class engagement by 10 points.

**DUE:** Assignment #3: Planning Practice Evaluation: Upload to BB.

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**Class 8 Practice Evaluation Designs: Single-System Designs I**

**10-22-15** Principles of causal inference in single system designs
Developing baselines and principles of data collection in baseline
Basic single-system designs for assessing behavioral change: AB, BA
Experimental single-system designs: ABA, ABAB
Strengths and threats to design validity

**Readings:**

Engel & Schutt (2013): Chapter 8: Single-Subject Design

Bloom, Fischer, & Bloom (2009): Chapter 11: Basic principles of single stem designs, Chapter
12: Baselining, and Chapter 13: From the case study to the basic single system design A-B.

6.4.2015

**Class 8 Group Exercise**: Differentiating SSD designs and their structure for implication of causal inference and considering strengths and weaknesses of internal and external validity.

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**Class 9 Practice Evaluation Designs: Single-System Designs II**

10-29-15  The role of multiple baseline design in SSD evaluation
          Strengths and weaknesses of multiple baselines in AB designs
          Changing intensity and successive intervention designs
          Experimentation, complex, and combined designs
          Comparing and selecting a designs

**Readings:**


**Class 9 Group Exercise**: Practicing with SSD designs, and considering impact on client-centered evaluation of the client targeted human outcome.

**Homework for class 10**: Students form small groups, and each group is assigned to pre-read a research article (located in class 10 folder on BB) that will be used in class 10 discussion. The instructor provides questions to guide the pre-reading of the article. Students are encouraged to bring their notes for these questions to class 10 and use them to develop a coherent group critique of the involved research.

**DUE: Assignment #4 – Paper 1. Upload to BB**

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**Class 10 Practice Evaluation Designs: Single-System Designs III**

11-5-15  Critiquing strengths and weaknesses of SSD evaluation of practice
Students break into groups, and each group works on developing a critique of an assigned article. In the second half of the class, each group presents their critique to the class. Please note that any unexcused absence from this class automatically reduces the student’s total grade for class engagement by 10 points.

**Readings:**

Students pre-read assigned articles with questions provided by the instructor.

Review: Engel & Schutt (2013): Appendix A: Questions (1-10, 14, 15, 19, 23-25) to ask about a research article (on BB).

**Articles for Group Assignments:**


**DUE: Assignment #5 – Midterm on BB by Sunday 11-8-15 by the end of the day.**

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Class 11 Analysis of Single-System Designs I

11-12-15  Developing a measurement and recording plan
Basic principles of analysis: graphing, and visual inspection
Determining statistical and meaningful change against benchmarks
2SD-Band method for determining change and statistical significance
Making sense of practical, theoretical, and statistical significance

**Readings:**


**Class 11 Group Exercise:** Applying 2SD-Band method to evaluate change.

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**Class 12 Analysis of Single-System Designs II**  

11-19-15  
Reviewing 2SD-Band for analysis  
Addressing more complex evaluation analysis  
Evaluating trend in a phase  
Using Celeration Line method for SSD analysis  
Measuring effect size (using the Δ-Index, and g-Index))

**Readings:**


**Class 12 Exercise:** Using Celeration Line method to evaluate change and calculating effect size.

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**Note: 11-19-15 Happy Thanksgiving (No Class)**  

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**Class 13 Student Paper Presentations**  
12-3-15  
Selected students give 10-15 minute presentations on their research proposals:  
Focus is on client centered practice evaluation and links to client advocacy for improvement of practice and policy

**DUE: Assignment #6: Paper 2**

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**Class 14 Student Paper Presentations (LAST CLASS)**  
12-10-15  
Selected students give 10-15 minute presentations on their research proposals:  
Focus is on client centered practice evaluation and links to client advocacy for improvement of practice and policy

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THANK YOU.                HAPPY WINTER HOLIDAYS 2015-16!