

**ADVANCED SOCIAL WORK EVALUATION**  
**SOWK 669**  
**Minnesota State University, Mankato**  
**Department of Social Work**

**PURPOSE OF COURSE**

Social and behavioral research and evaluation is an integral part of advanced generalist social work practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. The purpose of SOWK 669 Advanced Social Work Evaluation is to teach the knowledge, skills, values, and ethics of both direct practice evaluation and program evaluation at the advanced generalist social work level. Approximately half of the course will focus on each of these two areas. This course focuses on understanding and utilizing systematic research methods, both quantitative/positivist and qualitative/interpretive, to inform social work practice. This course explores research within the context of the social work profession and the delivery of social welfare services to diverse populations, populations-at-risk, and different community settings, with some emphasis on rural and small communities.

Advanced generalist social work practice is informed by theory, data, experience, observation, critical thinking, creativity, empathy, and reflection-in-action all based in the core values and ethics of the social work profession. The purpose of direct practice evaluation is to evaluate the effectiveness of direct social work interventions at the micro level with individuals, couples and families and to develop evidence-based, culturally competent practice. Direct practice evaluation is broadly defined as the collection and analysis of data for the purposes of 1) problem assessment of the client system, 2) monitoring client progress, 3) understanding the processes of direct practice, and 4) evaluating the client outcomes of interventions. The purpose of program evaluation in social work is to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of social work interventions. In this part of the course, students will learn about the important elements of a social welfare program's logic model derived from the mission, goals, objectives, and activities of the program. Students will also learn how to utilize various research methods to carry out both formative and summative program evaluations with particular consideration of the measurement of program outcomes and the delivery of social services.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

As a result of successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Understand and analyze the variety of ways practitioners evaluate the progress, process, and outcome of their practice at the micro and macro levels (MSW 1.2, 1.9C).
- 2) Understand and analyze the different methodological approaches and research designs used for evaluation in social work practice (MSW 1.9C).

- 3) Understand and apply social work values and ethical principles to the conduct of research, with an emphasis on unique issues pertaining to rural and small communities (MSW 2.4C)
- 4) Apply skills in collecting quantitative and qualitative forms of data (MSW 1.9C, 4.1)
- 5) Apply skills in planning direct practice evaluations through the use of single-system research design (MSW 1.9C)
- 6) Apply skills in planning a comprehensive program evaluation (MSW 1.9C, 4.1)
- 7) Effectively present and utilize evaluation findings (MSW 1.9C, 4.1)
- 8) Utilize research findings to inform practice (MSW 1.9C).
- 9) Understand and differentially analyze research issues impacting populations-at-risk and diverse groups distinguished by age, class, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation with respect to the conduct and interpretation of social work research and evaluation (MSW 1.4, 1.9C).

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Students are required to complete **four** smaller written assignments and **one** larger integrative project that focuses on program evaluation. All assignments must be completed to receive a grade in the course. In addition, students are expected to attend class, complete the assigned reading and participate in class discussions and exercises.

## **SOWK 669 COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **Week 1**

Topic: Introduction to evaluation / review research concepts

### **Week 2**

Topic: Ethics in Research and Evaluation

### **Week 3**

Topic: Needs Assessment

### **Week 4**

Topic: Describing a program / Process evaluation

### **Week 5**

Topic: Single System Research

**Week 6**

Topic: Identifying and selecting a sample for your evaluation

**Week 7**

Topic: Group/program evaluation research designs

**Week 8**

Topic: Measuring efficiency and effectiveness

**Week 9**

Topic: What to measure and how to measure it

**Week 10**

Topic: Analyzing Data / Quantitative Research methods – Part I

**Week 11**

Topic: Qualitative Research Methods

**Week 12**

Topic: Analyzing Data / Quantitative Research methods – Part II

**Week 13**

Topic: Presenting the evaluation report (writing; dissemination) / Preparing an academic research poster

**Week 14**

Topic: Program Evaluation Project Presentations

**Week 15**

Topic: Finals Week