



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

School of Social Work
Course Outline – SOWK 554C (003)

School Vision: Building upon a foundation of social justice and an ethic of care, we are a community of learners actively engaged in the development of critical, transformative knowledge for social work practice.

MSW Mission: The MSW program offers an accessible, advanced professional degree focused on social work practice in the fields of child and family welfare, health and social care, and international and social development, using a social justice lens. The purpose of this MSW program is to prepare our graduates to be competent social work professionals, equipped with state-of-the-art knowledge and skills, a critical analytic lens, and a social justice orientation.

Year/Term	Fall and Winter 2017-2018
Course Title	SOWK 554C (003) Qualitative Methods in Social Work Research: Research and Evaluation in Child, Youth and Family Services (6 credits)
Course Schedule	Terms 1 & 2, Friday 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Course Location	SOWK 222, Jack Bell Building for the School of Social Work

Instructor	Office Location	Office Phone	e-mail address
Simon Davis, MSW PhD	Room 342	604-877-0340	Simon.davis@ubc.ca or simondavis74@gmail.com
Office Hours	By appointment		

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

There is a growing demand in the health and human services for professionals to evaluate intervention and program outcomes. This demand is driven in part by the ethical requirements of professions to provide the best services possible. It is also driven by the demands of funders and policymakers for accountability. Increasingly, service providers must describe explicitly how an intervention or program meets the needs of those whom it is intended to serve. Service users also expect and deserve predictable results and identifiable outcomes. Carefully designed and implemented evaluation research can answer critical questions such as: What group of intended service users does a program actually reach? Did the intervention accomplish its short-term and long-term goals? How can interventions or programs be improved to better reach their intended audience and to better meet the needs of those being served?

This course will introduce students to the art and science of intervention and program evaluation research, with attention to the structural and sociocultural contexts within which evaluation research takes place. In most cases, students will be working collaboratively with Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) staff, and will develop skill in assessing the conceptualization, implementation, and effectiveness of human service interventions, programs, and policies. The course will provide meaningful opportunities to engage in real world evaluation activities such as conducting literature and jurisdictional reviews, and evaluating existing interventions and programs. Students will develop an understanding of the role played by evaluation frameworks, formative and summative evaluation, and data collection strategies used to evaluate knowledge and practice at the client, program, community, and provincial levels. Depending on the project, students may use qualitative or survey approaches, or mixed methods.

This course will expand upon introductory, undergraduate research courses, and provide students with a more advanced understanding of research methods and epistemologies, primarily through the hands-on experience of carrying out an evaluation project. Students will be exposed to data collection and analysis techniques currently employed by professional social work researchers.

As noted, most students will be doing projects evaluating MCFD programs, this related to a contractual relationship between UBC and our Ministry partners. However, students may contact the instructor if considering evaluations of other human service organizations.

COURSE OBJECTIVES & LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Understand epistemological, theoretical, methodological and ethical issues associated with evaluation.
2. Study frameworks and processes for evaluation and gain practical experience by conducting portions of intervention and/or program evaluation.
3. Explore and evaluate the use of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods for evaluation.
4. Demonstrate the ability to conceptualize evaluation questions and to develop and /or utilize appropriate indicators and measures to answer evaluation research questions.
5. Understand the processes of evaluation and best practices for engaging stakeholders.
6. Improve the ability to use and critically examine existing research literature.
7. Present evaluation findings using effective techniques for broad uptake.

COURSE STRUCTURE:

This course is structured as a problem-based learning participatory seminar and will include a combination of group discussion, lectures, guest presentations, hands-on examples of data gathering and analysis, site visits (or tele/video conferences), and regular coordination of research project activities with MCFD sponsors as well as feedback from the instructor and other students. Class members will conduct a meaningful evaluation project. At the beginning of the semester, class members will meet with MCFD (or other) sponsors to get a sense of research needs. They will design, carry out, and present a research project or portions of a research project. Projects may be primarily qualitative or may use multiple methods.

Class members are expected to attend class, to complete required readings prior to class, and to arrive in class prepared to participate. There will be class-based feedback about the work-in-progress, that is, design issues concerning individual projects. It is expected that in developing research questions and study designs, students take into account diversity and cultural sensitivity with respect to the client group being studied.

Generally, students will be working on projects in **pairs**, although depending on circumstances other scenarios are possible.

Course texts:

- 1) Grinnell, R. M., Jr & Unrau, Y (2014). *Social Work Research and Evaluation: Foundations of Evidence-Based Practice (10th ed.)*. New York: Oxford.
- 2) Padgett, D. (2017). *Qualitative Methods in Social Work Research (3rd ed.)*. Sage Publications.

Other written resources will be shared by the instructor in-class or on the course website (see UBC e-learning @ <http://lthub.ubc.ca/>).

ASSESSMENT, GRADING, EVALUATION:

1. Literature review and research question(s)-15%

Review up to 10 sources relevant to your project. Use these to outline the conceptual context that provides a rationale for your study. Conclude by identifying your research question(s). Ideally, at least one research question should be qualitative and one should be quantitative. The purpose of this assignment is to help you begin to synthesize the literature and set up your research question and design. Length: Maximum 7 pages double-spaced. APA formatting. **Due Oct. 13, 2017**

2. Scope of Work-10% (Sponsor sign-off required)

Based on conversations/negotiations with MCFD sponsors, write a 2-3 page scope of work in which you describe the work you will undertake throughout the course. Include the following sections: 1) background information (a brief summary of literature); 2) project purpose and research objectives (including research questions); 3) research plan and method; 4) duties of each student working on the project; 5) knowledge mobilization plan; and 6) realistic timeline for activities and outputs. **Due Oct 27, 2017**

3. Ethics Application to sponsors (5%).

Students are expected to submit certificate of successful completion of the UBC Behavioural Ethics Review Board (BREB), online ethics tutorial. In this course students are not responsible for individual project submissions for ethics approval to BREB; rather, there is an expedited class approval process through the instructor. However, students are asked to submit a "mock" ethics proposal, based on the UBC template, to MCFD, **due Nov. 17, 2017.**

3. Evaluation Proposal-25%

Write a full evaluation proposal. Include the following sections: 1) Introduction; 2) Literature review; and 3) Study Design/Methodology (e.g., research question; sample selection; recruitment plan; inclusion/exclusion criteria; data collection strategy/ framework for analysis; measures to ensure validity; measures to ensure reflexivity. Length: 15-20 pages, APA formatting. **Due December 8, 2017**

4. Send data collection tool (survey, interview) to sponsors. Due Jan 19.

5. Final Report-30%

Produce a final report summarizing the study. Include the following sections: (1) Executive Summary; 2) Introduction; 3) Background/need for the study; 4) Research methods; 5) Findings; 6) Discussion; 7) Limitations; and 8) Implications for policy or practice. Not to exceed 30 pages. **Due March 30, 2018**

5. Presentation of Results to MCFD Sponsors-15%

Present results from studies to MCFD sponsors during a research roundtable. Presentations should include: 1) what you studied and why; 2) methodology; 3) what you expected to find and what you found; 4) themes/results; and 5) implications. Tentatively scheduled for **April 6, 2018 (date subject to change)**

COURSE POLICIES [attendance, participation, academic dishonesty]:

Excerpt from the UBC calendar:

Regular attendance is expected of students in all their classes (including lectures, laboratories, tutorials, seminars, etc.). Students who neglect their academic work and assignments may be excluded from the final examinations. Students who are unavoidably absent because of illness or disability should report to their instructors on return to classes.

The University accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Disability Resource Centre.

The University accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please let your instructor know in advance, preferably in the first week of class, if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. Students who plan to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations, or other similar commitments, cannot assume they will be accommodated, and should discuss their commitments with the instructor before the drop date.

It is recommended that students retain a copy of all submitted assignments (in case of loss) and should also retain all their marked assignments in case they wish to apply for a Review of Assigned Standing. Students have the right to view their marked examinations with their instructor, providing they apply to do so within a month of receiving their final grades. This review is for pedagogic purposes. The examination remains the property of the university.

Academic Dishonesty:

Please review the UBC Calendar "Academic regulations" for the university policy on cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty. Also visit www.arts.ubc.ca and go to the students' section for useful information on avoiding plagiarism and on correct documentation.

Students wishing to use any electronic devices including computers and recorders must have the permission of the instructor and must have the wireless capacity of the device turned off.

ASSIGNMENTS

Submitting Assignments-

Assignments will be submitted in class or electronically.

Return of marked student assignments-

Instructors coordinate the return of marked assignments. The options are as follows: a) the instructor returns the paper to students in class; b) if the paper has been submitted electronically, the instructor will mark it on-line (with track changes) and return to the student on-line. Marked papers not returned by any of the options above will be held by the instructor.

GRADING CRITERIA:

Letter Grade	Percent Range	Mid-Poin	
A + A A-	90-100 85-89 80-84	95 87 82	Represents work of exceptional quality. Content, organization and style are all at a high level. Student demonstrates excellent research and reference to literature where appropriate. Also, student uses sound critical thinking, has innovative ideas on the subject and shows personal engagement with the topic.
B + B B-	76-79 72-75 68-71	77.5 83.5 69.5	Represents work of good quality with no major weaknesses. Writing is clear and explicit and topic coverage and comprehension is more than adequate. Shows some degree of critical thinking and personal involvement in the work. Good use of existing knowledge on the subject.
C + C C-	64-67 60-63 55-59	65.5 62.5 57	Adequate and average work. Shows fair comprehension of the subject, but has some weaknesses in content, style and/or organization of the paper. Minimal critical awareness or personal involvement in the work. Adequate use of literature.
D	50-54	52	Minimally adequate work, barely at a passing level. Serious flaws in content, organization and/or style. Poor comprehension of the subject, and minimal involvement in the paper. Poor use of research and existing literature.
F	0-49		Failing work. Inadequate for successful completion of the course or submitted beyond final date of acceptance for paper.

COURSE OUTLINE

Please note that there may need to be some flexibility in the scheduling of topics – especially in term 2 – depending on student needs, progress with respect to individual projects, and timetables of visitors and guest speakers, including 554C students from the previous year. Students will be updated regularly. Generally, the course sequence will move from a discussion of research concepts and philosophies, to a consideration of data collection methods, to a consideration of methods of data analysis and synthesis. Term 2 will provide time in class for hands-on examples of analyzing qualitative and survey data, and for student project work.

	Date	Topic	Readings	Activity/ Assignment*
1.	Sept. 8, 2017	Introduction to course; Evaluation research; Core research concepts.	Chs. 1, 2 and 33 Grinnell & Unrau (2014); Ch. 3 Padgett.	
2.	Sept 15, 2017	Continuation from week 1. Discussion of projects with MCFD sponsors.	As above; Ch. 4 Padgett	Rebecca Middleton, MCFD, presents projects
3.	Sept 22, 2017	Finding & evaluating research evidence; library tutorial.	Chs 8, 9 & 10 Grinnell & Unrau (2014)	Library tutorial UBC Library Sept. 22.
4.	Sept. 29 2017	Finding & evaluating research evidence cont'd	Chs 8, 9 & 10 Grinnell & Unrau (2014)	
5.	Oct 6, 2017	Qualitative, quantitative & mixed methods; Developing research & evaluation questions.	Chs 2, 3, 4 & 5, Grinnell & Unrau (2014); Ch. 1 Padgett.	
6.	Oct 13, 2017	Research ethics Evaluation ethics	Chs 6 & 7, Grinnell & Unrau (2014); ch. 4 Padgett.	Assignment: Literature review + Research Question (Oct 13, 2017)
7.	Oct 20, 2017	Sampling	Ch 15, Grinnell & Unrau (2014)	
8.	Oct 21, 2017	Measurement; standardized instruments; surveys.	Chs 12, 13, 14 & 20 Grinnell & Unrau (2014)	Assignment: Scope of Work (Oct 27, 2017)
9.	Nov 3, 2017	Making causal inferences; trustworthiness of data.	Ch 16, Grinnell & Unrau (2014) Ch 8, Padgett.	
10	Nov 10, 2017	Interviewing; interviews vs. surveys	Chs 19 & 24, Grinnell & Unrau (2014); Ch. 5, pp. 108-133 Padgett.	
11	Nov 17, 2017	Design and administration of in-house MSW survey		Assignment: Ethics Application (Nov. 17, 2017)
12	Nov 24, 2017	Writing the Research Proposal	Ch. 30, Grinnell & Unrau (2014); Appendix in Padgett.	
13	Dec. 1, 2017	Wrap-up of first term.		Assignment: Draft Evaluation Proposal (Dec 8, 2017)

13	Jan 5, 2018	Regrouping, Revising Proposal	<i>Readings in this semester are assigned depending on project needs</i>	Review evaluation plan, schedule, resources with sponsor
14	Jan 12, 2018	Beginning data collection; recruitment		Data collection and data analysis in class. Plan is also to have demo of computer-based qualitative analysis software programs such as NVivo.
15	Jan 19, 2018	Data collection: focus groups & interviews.	Ch 19, Grinnell & Unrau (2014); Ch. 5 Padgett.	Send data collection tool to sponsors.
16	Jan 26, 2018	Data Collection: surveys	Ch 20, Grinnell & Unrau (2014)	
17	Feb 2, 2018	Data Analysis: coding qualitative	Chs 26 & 27, Grinnell & Unrau (2014); Ch. 6, pp. 163 – 177 Padgett.	
18	Feb 9, 2018	Data Analysis: coding quantitative	Chs 19 & 24, Grinnell & Unrau (2014)	
19	Feb. 16, 2018	Data Analysis, class examples.		Mid-term progress reports
20	Feb. 23, 2018	Mid-term break – no class		
21	Mar 2, 2018	Reporting		Class time for student work on projects.
22	Mar 9, 2018	Reporting, charts in Excel		Consultation on final report
23	Mar 16 2018	Politics and issues in evaluation		Consultation on final presentations
24	Mar 23, 2018	Reporting		Class time for student work on projects.
25	March 30, 2018	Prepare presentations		Final Report due March 30th; MSW student research event.
26	Apr 6, 2018	Present final reports to MCFD sponsors.		Presentations April 6th at MCFD office, locations TBA.