
**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

Course Number: SW 391R4 **Instructor:** David W. Springer, Ph.D., ACSW
Unique Number: 57310 **E-mail:** dwspringer@mail.utexas.edu
Semester: Spring 1998 **Phone:** 471-0512
Meeting Time: Monday **Office Room:** 3.122D
5:30 - 8:30pm
Meeting Place: SWB 2.112 **Office Hours:** Mon. or Wed. 4pm to 5pm
Or by appointment

PROFESSIONAL COLLOQUIUM: PRACTICE EVALUATION

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This final course draws upon all previous courses and the opportunity presented by a concurrent field practicum to test and develop the skill, knowledge, and commitment necessary for ongoing critical evaluation of professional practice with diverse populations in the area of children and families. This course will prepare students to integrate research methods into assessment, planning, intervention, and the evaluation of practice effectiveness. Students must have completed all other courses in their program of work before enrolling in this Colloquium and/or be in their final field practicum.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

1. Demonstrate skill in giving and using collegial consultation through the presentation and analysis of complex and vulnerable client population situations and those of related systems, with particular attention to diversity and empowerment.
2. Complete scholarly reviews of literature on assessment and intervention methods related to client/problem situations in their area of practice.
3. Critically evaluate research data supporting assessment tools and intervention strategies related to client/problem strategies.
4. Critically evaluate the appropriateness of assessment and intervention strategies related to characteristics of special population groups.

5. Demonstrate an individualized and integrated understanding of social work practice through the development of a paper presenting the student's personal practice model, with particular attention to conflicting values, ethical dilemmas, empowerment and social justice.

III. TEACHING METHODS

The teaching methods for this course include lectures, discussions, informal student case presentations, and collegial consultation. Each class will be divided into two learning components. The first half of the class session will be devoted to lecture and discussion on research on practice interventions. The second half of the class will provide students with an opportunity to engage in case consultations on case studies from the field experience.

IV. REQUIRED TEXTS

Bloom, M., Fischer, J., & Orme, J. G. (1995). Evaluating practice: Guidelines for the accountable professional (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Required Course Packet is available from Speedway in Dobie Mall.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Fischer, J., & Corcoran, K. (1994). Measures for clinical practice: A sourcebook. Volumes I & II (2nd ed.). New York, NY: The Free Press.

OPTIONAL TEXTS (ON RESERVE IN LRC)

Alter, C., & Evens, W. (1990). Evaluating your practice: A guide to self-assessment. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company.

Smith, M. J. (1990). Program evaluation in the human services. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to attend class sessions regularly and to participate in an interactive framework between collegiate students and professor. Students are expected to complete the readings prior to class, and should be well prepared to participate in discussions. Failure to regularly attend the class and demonstrate through discussions that one has comprehended the readings will be strongly considered in assigning the final grade.

No late assignments will be accepted, except in the case of extreme emergencies and then only with the permission of the professor. Students are expected to turn in all required assignments on the agreed upon due date **at the beginning of class**.

Assignments turned in after class starts will be considered late. All late assignments will be assessed point penalties at the rate of 3 points each day late. If the due date is a problem, then the student should see the professor and negotiate another due date.

Special Accommodations for Students with a Disability

In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act, I will make myself available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that you may require as a student with a disability. Before course accommodations will be made, students may be required to provide documentation to the Office of the Dean of Students, Services for Students with Disabilities. Please notify the professor of any special accommodations that you may need prior to the end of the first week of class.

Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (<http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs>).

VI. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

I. Personal Practice Model Paper

This paper is a cohesive statement of your current personal practice theory and model. Integrate past and recent theory and knowledge gained over the course of the MSSW program, as well as other relevant educational work and life experiences that have contributed to your preparation for professional social work practice. The paper should be 10-13 pages, and will be worth a possible 40% of the final grade. Be sure to proofread your paper; 5 points of the total (40) points will be allocated for use of APA (4th ed.) format and any errors (punctuation, typographical, spelling). This assignment is an opportunity for you to synthesize your knowledge and experiences in social work as it relates to your current philosophical views and belief systems. It is a personal statement about your theoretical orientation, assumptions, and views about human behavior and the best strategies for working with clients toward change. A well thought-out practice framework will be a valuable part of your preparation for professional practice.

Outline for Personal Practice Model Paper

- I. A self-reflective personal statement about yourself (1–2 pages). Include a discussion about how your values, culture, and personal characteristics relate to your theoretical orientation for social work practice.
- II. Discussion of your theoretical model (4-5 pages).
 - A. Major assumptions about the human behavior and change
 - B. Values inherent in the model
 - C. Strengths and weaknesses inherent in the model
 - D. Your personal attraction to the model
- III. A statement about your personal philosophy for practice (2-3 pages). In your opinion, what really makes the difference between a competent practitioner and a less competent one? Address issues around culture, ethnicity, and gender.
- IV. Critical learning incidents (2-3 pages). What has been most effective in helping you learn to become an effective practitioner?
- V. Summary and critical analysis of your preparation for practice (1-2 pages)

II. Evaluation Paper

Students must conduct a practice evaluation study on a client-system in their field practicum. The purpose of this paper is to facilitate each student's development as a **practitioner-researcher**. The ability to integrate practice theory and skills with applied research is the key to becoming an effective and competent social work practitioner. Students have the option to either implement a single-system design on a client-system that they are working with in their practicum, or to conduct a program evaluation of a component of their practicum agency. Students need to get individual approval from the professor for their topic and design for this paper. The paper should be 15-20 pages, and will be worth 60% of the final grade. Be sure to proofread your paper; 5 points of the total (60) points will be allocated for use of APA (4th ed.) format and any errors (punctuation, typographical, spelling). A search of the literature should include journal articles as well as pertinent book chapters or monographs. Emphasis should be given to the most recent (within the past 10 years) literature and studies. Of course, seminal pieces that fall outside of this time parameter should still be included. While no specific number of articles are suggested for writing the paper, it is assumed that most papers will have a lengthy reference list to demonstrate one's mastery of the relevant literature. Although students are encouraged to utilize the Internet to search for material, they may not rely on the Internet at the expense of using referred journal articles for the literature review. It is recommended that students set up the paper, using both headings and subheadings in their presentation, following the proposed outline below.

Outline for Evaluation Paper

- I. Abstract (200 to 250 words)
- II. Scholarly literature review (4-5 pages). A review of the literature related to the problem area being studied. If conducting a single-system design with a client-system, this review should focus on outcome studies of specific interventions with the problem area(s) that you are targeting with your client-system. In other words, summarize the literature so that the reader knows which interventions are effective (or not effective) with this particular problem. If conducting a program evaluation of a component of your practicum agency, then this review should focus on similar programs (or components), any studies that have been done on these programs, and what the findings were. So, for example, if you decide to evaluate a therapy group in your agency to determine its effectiveness, you would be wise to start with a search in the group work literature.
- III. Methods section (5-7 pages).
 - A. A description of the client-system (case) or program.
 - B. A description of your research design and why you chose it (e.g., A-B, A-B-A, case study, program evaluation, etc.)
 - C. A thorough explanation of your methods of measurement. If conducting a single-system design, this would entail a description of any measurement instruments that you are using (i.e., validity, reliability, clinical utility) or analytical approach (i.e., analytic induction) if you are using narrative data in lieu of or in addition to quantitative data. If conducting a program evaluation, this would entail a description of how you will implement the evaluation and of the methods of measurement (i.e., staff interviews, measurement instruments, etc.) that you will use.
 - D. If conducting a single-system design, provide a detailed description of the intervention being studied (including what treatment was provided to the client-system), the number of sessions conducted, and the theoretical framework guiding the intervention(s). Also, describe what provisions you have made for follow-up. If conducting a program evaluation, provide a detailed description of the program under study, the theoretical framework guiding the program, the players involved in running the program, which component of the program is being studied, and so on.
- IV. Results (3-5 pages). Provide a description of your findings. This should include a description of what happened in the study across time in the process of applying the intervention. Display graphs of data from measurement instruments at baseline and during the course of data collection. Describe in narrative the changes (or lack thereof) that you observed. In other words, what happened in the process of the case and what do you think this means in terms of the progress of the case (or the effectiveness of the program if you did a program evaluation).
- V. Discussion (3-4 pages). Revisit the results and the case process (or program evaluation) and discuss in more detail the implications of what you have learned and how it may apply to other clinicians who are working with similar problems, applying similar interventions, or working in similar programs. Have your findings changed anything about how you will practice when in the field?

VII. COURSE GRADING CRITERIA

Personal Practice Model Paper	40%
<u>Evaluation Paper</u>	<u>60%</u>
TOTAL	100%

GRADING SCALE

100 – 90 points = A
89 – 80 points = B
79 – 70 points = C
69 – 60 points = D
59 and below = F

Grading of all written assignments will take into account the quality of the writing as well as the content. The American Psychological Association (APA) – 4th edition format should be used. Written material should be carefully proof-read and errors (punctuation, typographical, spelling) corrected. Good writing requires a reiterative process that must be followed if quality is to improve. I strongly encourage you to read your paper several times and, if possible, have someone else proof it.

IMPORTANT DATES

January 19	Martin Luther King Jr. Day Holiday
March 2	No Class – Library Day
March 9	Personal Practice Model Papers Due
March 16-21	SPRING BREAK!!
May 4	Evaluation Papers Due

IX. COURSE OUTLINE (TENTATIVE)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics, Readings and Assignments</u>
January 26	<p><u>Topics</u> Introductions and Class Overview Review Syllabus Integrating research and practice</p> <p><u>Readings</u> Bloom et al. – Chapter 1; Syllabus</p>
February 2	<p><u>Topics</u> Use of Theories in Practice Conceptualization and Measurement: Basic Principles Specifying Problems and Goals Selecting a Design</p> <p><u>Readings</u> Bloom et al. – Chapters 2, 3 & 18 Course Packet: Thyer (1989) – First principles of practice research; Witkin (1991) – Empirical clinical practice: A critical analysis</p>
February 9	<p><u>Topics</u> Guest Lecturer–Dr. Mike Doughty-social work licensing in Texas Developing a Measurement and Recording Plan Behavioral Observation Individualized Rating Scales Standardized Questionnaires</p> <p><u>Readings</u> Bloom et al. – Chapters 4 (pp. 94-116), 5, 6 & 7 Course Packet: Hudson (1978) – First axioms of treatment</p>
February 16	<p><u>Topics</u> Measures; Validity and Reliability</p> <p><u>Readings</u> Bloom et al. – Chapters 9 & 10 Course Packet: Klein, Beltran, & Sowers-Hoag (1990) – Validating an assessment of peer relationship problems</p>
February 23	<p><u>Topics</u> Former Student Discussion Panel Basic Principles of Single-System (A-B) Designs Collecting Baseline Data</p> <p><u>Readings</u> Bloom et al. – Chapters 11, 12 & 13 Course Packet: Taber (1981) – Cognitive-behavior modification treatment of an aggressive 11-year-old boy</p>

- March 2** **No Class – Library Day**
Catch up on readings and work on papers
- March 9** **PERSONAL PRACTICE MODEL PAPERS DUE**
- Topics**
Experimental Single-System Designs: A-B-A, A-B-A-B, B-A-B
Multiple, Changing Intensity and Successive Intervention Designs
- Readings**
Bloom et al. – Chapters 14, 15 & 16
- March 16** **NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK**
- March 23** **Topics**
Procedures for Analyzing Data
- Readings**
Bloom et al. – Chapter 19 & 20
- March 30** **Topics**
Procedures for Analyzing Data
- Readings**
Bloom et al. – Chapters 21, 22 & 23
- April 6** **Topics**
Therapist Variables
- April 13** **Topics**
Challenges of Single-System Designs
- Readings**
Bloom et al. – Chapter 24
- April 20** **Topics**
Data Analysis and Report Writing
- April 27** **Topics**
Data Analysis and Report Writing
- May 4** **EVALUATION PAPERS DUE**
Last Day: Course Evaluation and Wrap Up