Course Description:
This course is designed to present basic issues and practical information relevant to research and evaluation used in the social sciences, education, and mental health programs. It will cover the major content areas regarding applied research methods, qualitative and quantitative evaluation needs assessment, implementation procedures, outcome measures, and accountability concerns. The focus will be on using research and evaluation to inform clinical assessment and improve the capacity of community programs.

Course Outcomes:
By the end of this course, students will be able to:
1. Understand and communicate the utility of research and evaluation on diverse populations.
2. Identify various research and evaluation methods relevant to counseling and social sciences.
3. Conduct basic level research and evaluation plans with community systems.
4. Understand ethical and multicultural issues in research.
5. Utilize professional resources and research to inform practice and effectiveness

Required Textbooks:

Course Requirements:
There are four major course requirements for this course:
1. **Class Participation:** Students are expected to attend class regularly. Please communicate with the professor if you cannot attend a class. Students are expected to complete all the readings, assignments, and participate in discussions and course projects. (15% of your grade)
2. **Class Project:** A major class research or evaluation project and a written report is required. Students have an option of completing a group community based research/evaluation project or an independent project. (45% of your grade)
3. **Presentation of Course Project:** Students will be required do a 30-45 minute presentation of their course project. (25% of your grade)
4. **Journal:** Students will also be asked to keep a journal throughout the course used to reflect on course readings, discussion questions, site visits with community partners, etc. Instructor will use journals to assess progress and provide feedback only. **This will count for 15% of the grade.**
Suggested Learning Activities:

Class Project (Option 1):

1a. Community-Based Research or Evaluation Project Paper

Students (max of three) may collaboratively conduct a community-based research or evaluation project. Students will work with other students and a program or organization in Denver on a project that meets a need identified by the respective program or agency. Students must have their projects approved by the instructor prior to collecting any data. Each individual or group will be responsible for submitting a final report summarizing findings and making appropriate recommendations to the agency. The final product will be a 10 to 15-page report, plus appendices, describing the research methods and evaluation procedures employed in their efforts. The paper should include a description of the research or evaluation system and should address the following issues:

A. Description of the agency and evaluation or research project.
   - Include mission, goals, and objectives of the organization as well as the goals and objectives of your evaluation or research project.
   - Describe whether the purpose of the project was to conduct a needs-assessment, grant-writing project, conduct research to strengthen the theoretical framework of the program, etc. Include rationale for selection of approach.

B. Methodology/Outcomes assessment
   - Include outcome methodology and designs used (qualitative, quantitative evaluation, process evaluation, experimental design if any).

C. Summary of Research or Evaluation Conducted/Implemented.

D. Implementation and Maintenance strategy:
   - How will the research or evaluation be implemented and integrated into the organization?
   - How will administrators and staff use the information in the decision making process?
   - How will the system be maintained?

E. Program/Project Recommendations
   - May include funding implications. (Optional: include if project is related to funding concerns)
     - How will program fund and sustain itself over time?
     - Identify possible funding sources

F. Attachments: Include any information and raw data collected including field notes, transcripts of interviews and focus groups, instruments used.

Other sections may be added or deleted if they enhance the cohesiveness of the paper. It is permissible to write the paper in sections and put them together in the final version. However, if different people write different sections, the group should serve as a review committee, making sure that the sections are integrated thematically, factually, and do not contradict each other. You will all need to meet with the community-based organization and with members of your team to collaboratively conduct and complete your group research/evaluation project. Because much of your work for this course may be collaborative, the instructor may end up with a somewhat limited knowledge of each student’s contribution to the group’s evaluation project. For that reason, I will ask you to share your assessment of the quality and quantity of both your own and others’
contributions to your group’s work. The community organization you will work with will also provide feedback about the group’s process and contribution.

The length of the average paper should be about 15-20 pages plus appendices. Papers are graded on quality not quantity. Shorter papers are acceptable as long as you can cover all relevant material. Papers longer than 20 pages rarely add significant relevant content.

Class Project (Option 2):
1b. Treatment Outcome Research, Case Study Paper, or Independent Project
An individual or group (max. three students) may also conduct a research project or treatment outcome evaluation project on a client or diagnostic issue of interest. You may also highlight programs that exemplify “best practices” in the treatment of specific issues or populations. This paper should include a review of the treatment outcome research on the client’s presenting problem or diagnosis, theoretical framework in treatment, interventions used and how these are supported by the literature/research. A brief proposal of the case study of what you plan on conducting must be submitted to the instructor.

A 10-15 page report, plus appendices, describing the research methods and evaluation procedures employed in your efforts will be required. The paper should include a description of the research project and should address the following issues:

A. Description of treatment outcome/ case study research project.
   • Describe the purpose of the project.
   • Include methods used such as: literature review, strengthening theoretical framework of case, case study, interviews with other treatment programs administrators, personnel, document analysis.
   • Assessment instruments used or identified.

B. Theoretical Approach.
   • If combined approaches used, justify and explain support by the research.

C. Brief Conceptualization and Diagnosis (1-2 pages)
   • Include treatment goals and objectives. How each goal will be assessed, how treatment progress will be assessed
   • Include treatment outcome instruments used or identify methodology helpful to assess treatment progress and improvement: (GAF, CCAR, pre-post, measures specific to diagnostic issues, client-satisfaction, etc) and benefits of using.
   • Discuss designs used (case study, qualitative, quantitative evaluation, process evaluation, experimental design if any).

D. Research and Lit Review of “best practices” in treatment (review treatment approaches, successful interventions, treatment outcome research and programs which provide effective services to your target population).
   • Summary of Research or evaluation conducted/implemented.
   • Review data collected (document analysis on given program, interviews with program directors of agency, literature reviews, etc.)

E. Analyze and Synthesize Information
• How will research inform treatment/ future treatment of clients with similar presenting issues or how it changed your understanding of the client/ diagnostic issue.
• If collected information on program(s), analyze why these programs are highlighted: benefits, gaps, etc.

F. Programmatic Implications:
• Research/ Case Study Recommendations
• May also highlight a program (local or national) that exemplifies “best practice” treatment for individuals with presenting concerns (ex. Use of “cuento therapy” and narrative approaches with first generation Latino adolescents. For treatment of DID patients may investigate residential treatment facilities which combine alternative treatment approaches, etc.)
• May include program implications. What do you feel is the best program, intervention, treatment for these types of clients? Can you identify treatment programs, community programs that would benefit these clients? Do you have any recommendations for the development of programs to effectively treat and improve the lives of clients with similar concerns.
• Optional: may include if project is related to funding concerns
  a. If you proposed a program, how can it fund and sustain itself over time?
  b. May identify possible funding sources

The above present general guidelines. Depending on the project proposed, these are examples of what can be included in the paper if applicable.

Class Project (Option 3):
1c. Traditional Research Project
Students may also conduct a traditional research project. An individual or group (max. three students) may identify a research question relevant to the counseling field. This type of study will require an operationalized question, the appropriate design, quantitative research tools, and data analysis.

A. An abstract of no more than 75 words should precede the main body of the paper. The abstract should describe the purpose for the study and the main findings.

B. The introduction should consist of a literature review and a rationale for your study. The introduction should answer the question, “why” you are studying your topic and how it is related to current theory and research. At the end of this section you should clearly state your hypothesis.

C. The method section should include the following subsections:
  a. There should be a section describing the participants. Include all the important demographic information like age, gender, etc.
  b. The materials section includes the instruments used to measure the variables in question. Discuss how the instruments were constructed and their reliability and validity.
  c. The procedure section includes the exact protocol that you used when implementing the study.

D. The results sections includes just the data analysis that your have conducted. It should not include interpretation of the findings.
E. The discussion section is the area to write your interpretation of your findings. What does the data that you collected mean? How does it relate to current theory in the area of study? Was your hypothesis supported?

F. The reference section should be in APA format. It should include all of the work cited in your paper. Please cross check your paper and reference list for completeness.

G. The appendices should include your informed consent form and any research instruments that were used.

2. Presentation
Students or work groups will conduct a 35-40 minute presentation of their service-learning research or evaluation project. Presentations will also include a reflections component where each person will share some of their reflections on the process.

3. Journal: Keep a journal for the class in a notebook that you can carry with you. Things you should record are:

- Any work that you do on the research project outside of class;
- Process/field notes on your project;
- Recount experiences that occurred during your service-learning experience;
- Integrate theoretical course concepts with your project;
- Reflections to selected discussion questions, readings, and questions, concerns, on or your project;
- Record any changes in your perspective on research and evaluation throughout the course.

Additional areas of reflection to include in your journals include the following:

- Reflect on your collaboration experience with your community partner. How do your views differ? What can you learn from each other? How can this be most effectively communicated?
- Reflect on how issues of inequality may play a role in the lives of the target population of your community partners.
- Examine cross-group differences between your own experience in relation to broader society and the concerns of the target population in your service-learning experience.
- Reflect on the root causes of problems of the population served by the community agency you are working with. Challenge your views of community issues, needs, problems, and etiology.
- What long-term actions can be taken to improve the welfare of marginalized groups (relate to your community site)? What changes need to occur and where do changes need to take place?
- Reflect on social, cultural, political, and economic issues as they relate to your experience of the target population of the community agency that you are partnering with.

A supplemental Faculty syllabus will be distributed on the first night of class; the supplemental syllabus will address specific grading, attendance, and assignment criteria as well as provide additional pertinent course information.
Course Calendar:

Pre-class assignment: Read Leedy Chap 1-3; Review Fetterman’s Empowerment Evaluation.

Week 1: Introduction to Research & Evaluation

Review course requirements and rationale for the use of research and evaluation strategies. Present framework for conceptualizing research and evaluation in counseling and social sciences professions. Describe differences between research and program evaluation and review different methodologies. Review ethics in research and program evaluation. Discuss research and evaluation project opportunities.

Assignment:
Select a research partner or partners. Generate several ideas for research projects. Work on identifying the research project that you group will complete.
Read: Leedy Chapter 3-5; Skim: Quinn-Patton, chapter 1-3.

Week 2: Quantitative Research

Discuss foundation and initial phases of quantitative research. Review issues related to operationalizing concepts. Discuss research design. Review levels of measurement. Identify appropriate sampling procedures. Review types of variables and statistical analysis. Explain significance level and types of errors made in research.

Assignment:
Review: Mental health: Culture, Race, & Ethnicity executive summary on racial disparities and OSAP Cultural Competence for Evaluators on reserve.
Read: Leedy, chapter 7-8; Quinn-Patton, chapter 5-6
Initiate project planning. Contact key person from community based organization. Schedule meeting with contact person to formulate research plan and start to gather background information you need for your particular project. Establish goals and objectives of research/evaluation project.

Week 3: Intro to Qualitative Methods

Discuss foundations and initial phases of research and evaluation including formative evaluation and needs assessment. Review theories behind evaluation including empowerment evaluation, social constructivism, and methodological pluralism. Discuss mission, goals, and objectives. Review different types of needs assessments in mental health agencies, community, and academic settings. Discuss community based research, internal and external evaluation.

Assignment:
Meet with evaluation team & agency and begin preliminary data collection.
Continue data collection, work on service project and provide direct service on project within the week.
Read: Leedy chapters 9-11.
Week 4: *Outcome Assessment Methods: Introduction to Quantitative Research & Evaluation*

Review research, program evaluation and treatment outcome methodology. Common designs used in research and program evaluation will be reviewed including Descriptive Research Designs, Experimental and Causal-Comparative Designs. Basic statistical techniques and concepts in the analysis of quantitative data will be discussed.

**Read:** Quinn-Patton chapter 8; Barrett & Ruddy on reserve

Week 5: *Appraisal Issues: Quantitative and Qualitative*

Review different methods of data collection and analysis including, focus groups, survey development, case-study analysis, and treatment outcome research. Review various methods of implementation including: objective, expert, participatory, empowerment, etc. Discuss the process of utilizing data for treatment/program development and improvement. An overview of logic models, and program improvement strategies involved in the development and evaluation of interventions and programs will be provided. Review implementation process of research and evaluation projects.

**Assignment:**

**Read:** Leedy chapter 6 & 12.

**Submit** initial write-up/report to agency or instructor for feedback. Be prepared to discuss ways to use and integrate research and program evaluation into your future practice. Continue course research/evaluation project and meet with work groups, if needed, and get feedback on progress. Finish direct project work with community based agency within next week.

Week 6: *Continue working on Paper*

**Assignment:**

Meet with work groups and get feedback on paper and agency report. Finish any remaining revisions needed.

Week 7: *Opportunities in Research & Evaluation and how to incorporate it into your practice*

Discuss ways to use and integrate research and program evaluation into your practice. Evaluation and research in different fields will be described including opportunities in educational, mental health, social services and public health research and evaluation.

**Due:** *FINAL PRESENTATIONS*

Week 8:

**FINAL PRESENTATIONS**

Finish individual and group project presentations. Final papers due.

**Due:** Presentations

**Turn in Final Project Papers**
**Recommended Readings:**

**Recommended Academic Journals:**
New Directions for Program Evaluation
Evaluation Practice
Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis
The Community Psychologist
Journal of Educational Psychology

**Related Internet Sites:**
American Evaluation Association (AEA): [www.eval.org](http://www.eval.org) (links to evaluation organizations, training programs, and internet resources)
American Evaluation Association Discussion List: EVALTALK@bama.ua.edu
Qualitative Research for the Human Sciences Discussion List: QUALRS-L@listserv.uga.edu
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS): [http://www.samhsa.gov/centers/cmhs/cmhs.html](http://www.samhsa.gov/centers/cmhs/cmhs.html)
Evaluation Center at HSRI: [http://tecathsri.org/](http://tecathsri.org/)
Western Interstate for Commission for Higher Education (WICHE): [http://www.wiche.edu/](http://www.wiche.edu/)