Doctoral Program in Social Work and Social Science

SW 800: Proseminar in Social Work and Social Science (Part 2)
Winter 2015
Wednesdays, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

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This seminar is designed to support doctoral students as they integrate the technical and theoretical knowledge gained in coursework to develop clear and compelling proposals for their preliminary examinations and dissertations. We will cover the process for formulating research questions, organizing and developing literature reviews, identifying and developing research methods, and organizing proposals. The requirements and procedures for the social work preliminary examination will be reviewed and clarified. The focus will be on developing proposals that integrate social science and social work knowledge.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
By the end of this seminar, students will be able to:

1. Understand the basic requirements and expectations for social work preliminary examinations in the joint doctoral program in social work and social science;
2. Develop research questions that address significant social welfare and social work problems and concerns;
3. Use library databases and abstracts, and web resources to acquire relevant research literature;
4. Demonstrate critical evaluation skills in the reading of published research;
5. Integrate ethical and legal principles protecting human participants in social work and social science research, and procedures for obtaining informed consent;
6. Identify core design decisions that support and produce credible research;
7. Develop clear, and clearly justified, proposals for research projects that advance social work and social science knowledge;
8. Use technology resources to conduct, interpret, and/or present research proposals.
PURPOSE
The format for this course will be a series of writing seminars for which seminar participants will divide into two groups. Each class will be devoted to discussing readings that emphasize different steps in the proposal-writing process as well as providing feedback on prelim proposal writing projects that participants have submitted prior to the class meeting. The focus of the writing project will be determined by each student in collaboration with the seminar participants. Taken together, these writing projects are intended to help students make progress toward the goal of developing their social work prelim proposal or a substantial draft of the proposal by the end of the term. The two groups will meet on a bi-weekly basis to review the class readings and provide feedback on each others’ writing projects. All participants are responsible for: 1) distributing written drafts of their writing product in advance of each subgroup meeting (due at 9:00am on the Monday before the sub-group meets); and 2) providing written and oral feedback to the other members of their subgroup during class.

The seminar structure is designed to provide detailed constructive feedback from peers and to provide opportunities to raise issues about the process by which proposals are conceptualized and written. The student writing product distributed prior to each subgroup meeting should spell out the student’s own goals for the product and point to areas for which feedback is especially desired.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Participation. Each week we will engage in discussion of topics and readings relevant to proposal/dissertation writing, provide feedback on assignments, and discuss ongoing progress; therefore attendance is essential. All students are expected to attend class sessions and participate in discussions.
Submission of writing products. All participants will submit via CTools their writing products prior to the meetings of each of the subgroup meetings.
Comments and critiques. Participants should read the writing products of their peers and prepare written feedback for them before the class session. We will then provide oral feedback during the subgroup meeting.

GRADING
The overall grade for the course will be based on class participation and feedback on each others’ writing products (10%) and the completion and timely submission of the six writing products (15% for each assignment) that meet the students’ individualized progress goals for completing their social work prelim proposal or a substantial draft of the proposal by the end of the term. Each of the writing products will be assessed as to whether: 1) it was submitted on time and 2) whether progress was made toward the student’s goals.
TEXTS AND MATERIALS
There are three books for the course available for purchase at Ulrich’s. All additional readings will be available electronically.

Required:

Suggested:

*Online Resource for Proposal Writing:*
http://www.learnerassociates.net/dissthes/

COURSE POLICIES

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
If you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know as soon as possible. Many aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and teaching methods can be modified to facilitate your participation and progress throughout the semester. I will make every effort to use the resources available to us, such as the services for Students with Disabilities, the Adaptive Technology Computing Site, and the like. If you disclose your disability, I will (to the extent permitted by law) treat that information as private and confidential.

Religious Observances
Please notify me of religious observances, conflict with class attendance, or due dates for assignments so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

Electronic Devices
In consideration of your classmates and your own learning, please turn off all telephones and pagers during class. I prefer that you receive no text messages during class time; if you must be on call for an emergency; please let others know that you are only available for emergencies that no one else can handle. If you must carry a pager, please set it to vibrate only.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Introductions, Overview of Class, Developing Personal Goals  (Jan 7: All)

Personal Review of Research Interests in Preparation for Development of Prelim Proposal
(January 14: No Class)
   Review the Joint Program Guidelines for Prelims/Dissertations (on C-tools)

Getting Started  (Jan 21: Group 1/Jan 28: Group 2)
   Bolker: Chapters 1, 3, 7
   Foss & Waters: Chapters 1 & 2
   First Writing Product Due

Conceptualizing Questions and Organizing your Literature Review (Feb 4: Group 1/Feb 11:
Group 2)
   Bolker: Chapter 4
   Foss & Waters: Chapters 3, 4, 5
   Galvan: Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
   Second Writing Product Due

Working with Your Committee (Feb 18: Group 1 /Feb 25: Group 2)
   Bolker: Chapter 2
   Foss & Waters: Chapter 11
   Galvan: Chapter 12
   Third Writing Product Due

Winter Break (March 4: No class)

Dealing with Common Writing Blocks (March 11: All)
   Bolker: Chapters 5, 6, 8
   Foss & Waters: Chapter 12
   Fourth Writing Product Due

Writing Tips (March 18: Group 1 /March 25: Group 2)
   Foss & Waters: Chapters 5, 6, 7
   Galvan: Chapters 9, 10, 11
   Fifth Writing Product Due

Finishing Steps (April 1: Group 1/April 8: Group 2)
   Bolker: Chapters 9, 10
   Foss & Waters: Chapters 8, 9, 10
   Galvan: Chapters 13, 14
   Sixth Writing Product Due

Sharing Accomplishments (April 15: All)