Contact Information
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Course Description
This course will provide content on the logic of inquiry and the necessity for an empirical approach to practice. The process of formulating appropriate research questions and hypotheses, techniques for testing relationships and patterns among variables, methods of data collection, methods to assess and improve the validity and reliability of data and measures, and the ethics of scientific inquiry will be addressed. This course will help students understand practice through the critical examination of methods associated with decision-making, critical thinking, and ethical judgment. The course content will integrate the core themes related to multiculturalism and diversity; social justice and social change; promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation; and behavioral and social science research.

Course Content
This course will cover qualitative and quantitative research methods, commonly used statistical procedures, and approaches to the evaluation of practice. Students will learn how to understand and appreciate a scientific approach to building practice knowledge and for evaluating practice. Special emphasis will be placed on increasing one's ability to critique theoretical foundations of research, form research questions, apply research methods, conduct statistical analysis, and interpret research reports. The latest statistical, graphical, and display technologies will be used.

Course Objectives
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Act as a critical consumer and contributor of the design, methodology, and conclusions of social work and social and behavioral science research publications.
   a. Understand research concepts to permit a critical analysis of research and evaluation studies with respect to quality, bias, ethics, and potential applications.
   b. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of selected research designs and methodology, and of selected measures and measurement strategies.
   c. Assess the cultural sensitivity of measures and measurement strategies.
   d. Assess the biases and implications of conclusions drawn in the research studies. (Practice Behaviors 3.1, 3.2, 6.1)

2. Locate, assess and critique research studies so as to draw appropriate inference, particularly as it affects diverse populations at risk (dimension: ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender [including gender identity and gender expression], marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation).
   a. Frame research questions and develop problem statements that reflect the issues under consideration.
   b. Apply research concepts and principles in the development and use of selected qualitative and quantitative methodologies and analytical approaches.
   c. Choose appropriate research designs and methodology given a particular research question
d. Demonstrate the ability to select culturally appropriate measures and measurement strategies given specific populations.
e. Construct simple indices, questionnaires, and measures relevant to the evaluation of practice.
f. Conduct selected analytic and statistical procedures.
g. Demonstrate the ability to interpret and draw conclusions from selected analytic and statistical procedures. (Practice Behaviors 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.3, 6.1, 6.2, 7.2, 10.b.4, 10.d.1)

3. Know the NASW Code of Ethics and appropriately apply it in the conduct of social work research.
   a. Understand ethical issues in the conduct of research and evaluation.
   b. Understand the relevance and applicability of research in working with disadvantaged, disenfranchised, and diverse populations at risk: (dimension: ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender [including gender identity and gender expression]) marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation).
   c. Examine the processes by which research and evaluation findings can be used to enhance social justice, social change, promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation. (Practice Behaviors 2.1, 2.4, 7.2, 10.d.1)

The full list of core competencies and practice behaviors can be found at:

Why is research important?
As a professional in the social work field you will be expected to make decisions that promote quality for individuals, families and communities. As new knowledge emerges, there is often media coverage of these advances. This creates formal and informal discussion on the merit of new advances. From policy makers to grassroots community providers, you need to (a) separate misinformation or media “hype” from genuine knowledge and (b) distinguish scientific research from poorly supported claims. Social work professionals use scientific thinking all the time. For example, you may assess and evaluate the health status for a client, develop plans for optimal outcomes, reflect on your practice, and engage in action research to improve the client’s health outcomes. Or perhaps you are interested in evaluating a client’s previous knowledge on help-seeking. You would first construct hypotheses about the best methods for educating the client, develop an educational curriculum plan based on those hypotheses, observe the results, and base further instruction on the evidence that you collect. These are all important steps in scientific inquiry and what makes research so essential to knowledge acquisition.

Course Design
Many different methods will be used for acquiring knowledge and skills in this course, including: discussion, lectures, projects, exercises, and in-class lab work. This course is designed to increase students’ comfort level with research methods and analyses and to increase their appreciation of the relevance of research and evaluation for social work practice. The exercises complement the lecture and provide an opportunity to gain practice with using the tools of the scientific method.

Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes

Multiculturalism and Diversity. This course will include material on methods to improve the cultural inclusiveness and cultural sensitivity of research methods. This content will cover culturally sensitive measures, inclusion of diverse groups of adequate size in sampling, culturally aware interpretations of data, and culturally responsible dissemination of results. The basic purpose of research and practice evaluation will also be analyzed from culturally bound perspectives.

Social Justice and Social Change. Students will gain an understanding of the ways in which research and evaluation have sometimes been used against oppressed groups, for example through unethical practices, distortion of results, or fabrication of data. Examples will be given of ways in which research can be used to empower socially disadvantaged individuals, groups, and communities. These examples will include studies in which the research participants were involved in the study during all of its stages.
Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation. Studies reviewed in the course will include examination of projects aimed at enhancing well-being and preventing problems. The methodological and ethical problems unique to studies of promotion and prevention efforts will be described. The social work values consistent with promotion/prevention research will be analyzed.

Behavioral and Social Science Research. The unique challenges in applying social science knowledge and methods to social work settings will be covered. These challenges include the practical and ethical dilemmas of applied research. Emphasis will be placed on the way established theories and methods influence the selection of research questions and methods. Studies will be critiqued for their ability to advance social science theory and knowledge and to improve social work practice.

Relationship of the course to Social Work Ethics and Values
The research and evaluation section of the NASW Code of Ethics will be applied throughout this course. Examples of common ethical dilemmas will be presented. Among the areas of ethics to be covered will be informed consent procedures, protection of research participants from harm, confidentiality, and accurate reporting of results. Emphasis will also be placed on the social workers’ ethical obligation to use scientifically sound practice and to continually evaluate practice and programs.

RELEVANT POLICIES

Religious Holidays: Students who observe a religious holiday on the same day as class will have access to the class materials covered that day. Students are expected to notify the instructor if they plan to miss class. The official UM policy on religious holidays and a list of possible conflicts with classes can be found at: [http://www.provost.umich.edu/calendar/religious_holidays.html](http://www.provost.umich.edu/calendar/religious_holidays.html)

Learning Needs and Disabilities: Students with specialized learning needs are encouraged to make an appointment with the instructor to discuss the necessary arrangements. If you have a disability or condition that may interfere with your participation in this course, please submit the disability certificate prior to the Drop/Add date. This information will be kept strictly confidential. For more information and resources, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities office at G664 Haven Hall, (734) 763-3000.

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing: University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (734) 764-8312 and [https://caps.umich.edu/](https://caps.umich.edu/) during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselors physically located in schools on both North and Central Campus. You may also consult University Health Service (UHS) at (734) 764-8320 and [https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs](https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs), or for alcohol or drug concerns, see [www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources](http://www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources). For a listing of other mental health resources available on and off campus, visit: [http://umich.edu/~mhealth/](http://umich.edu/~mhealth/).

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: We adhere to the LS&A statement on academic integrity: “The LSA undergraduate academic community, like all communities, functions best when its members treat one another with honesty, fairness, respect, and trust. The College holds all members of its community to high standards of scholarship and integrity. To accomplish its mission of providing an optimal educational environment and developing leaders of society, the College promotes the assumption of personal responsibility and integrity and prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty and misconduct. Academic dishonesty may be understood as any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for oneself or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member or members of the academic community. Conduct, without regard to motive, that violates the academic integrity and ethical standards of the College community cannot be tolerated. The College seeks vigorously to achieve compliance with its community standards of academic integrity. Violations of the standards will not be tolerated and will result in serious consequences and disciplinary action.”
**Plagiarism is cheating.** Any student caught plagiarizing or cheating in any way will earn a failing grade in this course and may be expelled from The University of Michigan. There are no exceptions. Please make sure that you understand what constitutes plagiarism or cheating.

**Grading System**

- **A** 95-100
- **B+** 86-89
- **C+** 76-79
- **D** <69 (no credit)
- **A-** 90-94
- **B** 83-85
- **C** 73-75
- **B-** 80-82
- **C-** 70-72

**One last note about the class:** As social workers, we should be prepared to reflect on and explore our own family history, social systems, experiences, identity, cultural background, and assumptions regarding all forms of diversity. Be prepared to share your opinions and feedback with others in discussions and exercises, and to do so in a respectful and constructive manner. Also prepare yourself to hear varying opinions and feedback non-defensively, and to use those data or challenge them constructively. Please practice tolerance, not expecting yourself or your classmates to be polished in discussions about issues that can be challenging and confusing. We can expect to blunder and make mistakes in the classroom so that we are better prepared when we are in the field. Lastly, if you are triggered by a topic or comment in class, please feel free to excuse yourself, discuss it with me after class, and/or seek out resources.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**


*All article readings will be made available on the course site.*
SW 522 Assignments and due dates

Attendance and participation (15 pts) Weekly
Attendance in class is expected. Missing a class in part or in total can result in a deduction of points. Your attendance and participation reflects the basic elements of any social work relationship – to show up and remain present. For this reason, I ask you not to open computers and/or utilize your phones in class unless we are using them for a class exercise or lab work. Non-adherence to this policy will result in a lower grade. All students are expected to have read the weekly readings and contribute to the class discussion.

Plagiarism and PEERRS (5 points) January 19
https://www.indiana.edu/~academy/firstPrinciples/index.html (1) Go to the website and follow the directions to proceed through the tutorial (2) Take the certification TEST (for master’s or doctoral students in graduate school) (3) Print out the plagiarism certificate, sign it, and give me the hard copy in class.

Complete the Human Subjects—Behavioral Science module from the Program for Education and Evaluation in Responsible Research and Scholarship (PEERRS) located at http://my.research.umich.edu/peerrs/. If you have already completed this module, take the one on Research Practice Foundations. Add my email (lizzyb@umich.edu) to be sent the results, or print out a hard copy and bring to class.

Article critique (10 pts) February 16
Find and read a study that has been presented in the popular media (NPR, New York Times, The Atlantic, are good sources) on a topic that is related to social work. You will then find and read the original study and submit a 2-page critique of the popular vs. research article. More details will be handed out in class.

Quizzes (30 pts) February 2; March 8; April 5
There will be 3 quizzes (10 points each) that will be based on research concepts from the book and lectures. The quizzes may be a combination of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer.

Research proposal (40 pts) April 15
Full draft of the literature review and methods due in class on March 22. The proposal will consist of: abstract, literature review, methodology (sampling, design, data collection), data analysis plan, and limitations. Details will be handed out in class.
## SW 522 Class schedule and topic outline (DRAFT—additional readings TBD)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1, January 12</td>
<td>Introductions, course expectations, Intro to Research, Ethics</td>
<td>Chapters 1 &amp; 2 in Research Methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2, January 19</td>
<td>Literature reviews, <strong>PEERS and Plagiarism due</strong></td>
<td>Chapter 3 in Research Methods</td>
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<td>Week 3, January 26</td>
<td>Variables and measures</td>
<td>Chapter 4 in Research Methods</td>
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<td>Week 4, February 2</td>
<td>Sampling, <strong>QUIZ 1</strong></td>
<td>Chapter 5 in Research Methods</td>
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<td>Week 5, February 9</td>
<td>Qualitative and quantitative research designs</td>
<td>Chapters 6 &amp; 7 in Research Methods</td>
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<td>Week 6, February 16</td>
<td>Individual research consultations, <strong>Article critique due</strong></td>
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<td>Week 7, February 23</td>
<td>Survey Research</td>
<td>Chapter 8 in Research Methods</td>
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<td>Week 8, March 1</td>
<td>Spring Break, no class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9, March 8</td>
<td>Evaluative research designs, community-based participatory research, <strong>QUIZ 2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10, March 15</td>
<td>Single-subject designs</td>
<td>Chapter 10 in Research Methods</td>
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Week 11, March 22  Descriptive statistics, Full draft of literature review and methods due

Readings:
Chapter 11 in Research Methods

Week 12, March 29  Inferential statistics

Readings:
Chapter 12 in Research Methods

Week 13, April 5  QUIZ 3, Statistics lab

Readings: TBD

Week 14, April 12  Research Proposals and wrap-up

Readings: Chapter 13 in Research Methods

**Final Research Proposal due: Friday, April 15 at noon**