Course Title: Basic Social Work Research
Course Number: SW522, Section 005, Winter 2018
Time and Place: Tuesday 2-5pm, January 9 – April 17, SSWB 1804
Credit Hours: 3

Instructor: Huiyun Kim (seahunt@umich.edu)
Office Hours: After class or by appointment

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 quantitative and qualitative 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, and to use research to advocate for clients and inform policy. Special emphasis will be placed on increasing one's ability to formulate research questions, apply research methods, conduct statistical analysis, and interpret research reports. The latest statistical, graphical, and display technologies will be used.

Course Competencies and Practice Behaviors

COMPETENCY 2—Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.
Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law. Social workers:

2.1 Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice;
2.4 Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.

COMPETENCY 3—Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.
Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information. Social workers:

3.1 Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom;
3.2 Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation.

COMPETENCY 4—Engage diversity and difference in practice.
Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate
that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers:

4.1 Recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power;
4.3 Recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences

COMPETENCY 6—Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.
Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers:
6.1 Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry;
6.2 Use research evidence to inform practice.

COMPETENCY 7—Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.
Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development. Social workers:
7.1 Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation;
7.2 Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.

COMPETENCY 10—Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and technological advances; evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice. Social workers:

COMPETENCY 10(b)—Assessment
10.b.1 collect, organize, and interpret client data
10.b.2 assess client strengths and limitations
10.b.3 develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives; and
10.b.4 select appropriate intervention strategies.

COMPETENCY 10(d)—Evaluation
10.d.1 critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.

Course Objectives
On completion of this course, students be able to:

1. Critically evaluate 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.
   c. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of selected measures and measurement strategies.
   d. Assess the cultural sensitivity of measures and measurement strategies.
e. Assess the biases and implications of conclusions drawn in the research studies.

2. Apply appropriate research designs and methodologies of the scientific method to social work practice issues that affect the 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.

3. Identify the value and ethical considerations of sound 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.
   c. Examine the processes by which research and evaluation findings can be used to enhance social justice, social change, promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.

Relationship of the Course to Curricular Themes

- **Theme Relation to 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.

- **Theme Relation to 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 its stages.

- **Theme Relation to 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.

- **Theme Relation to 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 and other professional codes 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.

Course Design: Pedagogical Approach & Teaching Philosophy
This course employs an adult learning philosophy to promote and integrate both classroom and community learning experiences. This style of learning relies on the full participation and contributions of everyone to reach our highest potential as a group. Many different methods will be used for acquiring knowledge and skills including: discussion, lectures, projects, and exercises. Class sessions will also include skill building activities and a variety of assignments (oral, written, presentations and meeting participation). This course is designed to increase students' comfort level with research methods and statistical analyses and to increase their appreciation of the relevance of research and evaluation for social work practice.

Required Text

Required Materials
Laptop with Microsoft Excel 2016. Microsoft Office 365 is available to students for free. Please download and install Microsoft Excel 2016 before our second class.

Assignments
All written assignments are to be submitted via Canvas by 11:59 pm on their due date. Hard copies and emailed assignments will not be accepted. The expected format for written assignments is double spaced, 1” margins on all sides, 12pt Calibri, Helvetica, or Times New Roman.

Incomplete grades are assigned only through negotiation with me and that negotiation must occur before the assignment’s (paper’s) due date. Unless an extension contract has been arranged between a student and me, before the due date of the assignment, any assignment that is not completed on the due date will be assigned 0 points. All assignments for this course must be completed and handed in to the instructor to successfully complete the course.

Class Attendance (10% of course grade): 1 point/day for missing classes will be deducted

Mid-term (2/20) and Final Exams (4/17) (40% of course grade)

Individual Research Project (50% of course grade):
• Paper 1 (Introduction, 10% of course grade, Due 2/13/18): Over the course of the semester, you will develop a proposal for a study of a social problem that interests you (e.g., child abuse, mental health, community violence). In the first paper, you are expected to write a short literature review that addresses the importance of the topic, its relevance for social workers, a gap in existing knowledge, and a research question and hypothesis relevant to this gap. Your literature review should cite, at minimum, 5-6 peer-reviewed journal articles. (5-6 pages, double-spaced).
• **Paper 2 (Methods, 10% of course grade, Due 3/13/18):** Describe the research design and plan for data collection for your proposed project, including participants, ethical considerations, research design and procedures, and measures (3-5 pages, double-spaced).

• **Paper 3 (Plan for Analysis & Expected Results, 10% of course grade, Due 4/3/18):** Describe your plan for analysis, independent and dependent variables and any statistical tests you will be using. Describe your predicted results and include a figure that shows your predicted results (2-4, pages double-spaced).

• **Final Grant Proposal (20% of course grade, Due 4/24/18):** The final grant proposal is the culmination of papers 1, 2, and 3. You will be graded based on the overall quality of the proposal as well as on your ability to integrate instructor and peer feedback on the component parts. As with paper 1, this paper must reference at least 6 peer-reviewed journal articles. Draft proposal presentation 4/17/18 in class; Final proposal due 4/24/18.

**Grading: A 100-point system is used**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95-100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>91-94</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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“A” is given for exceptional performance and mastering of the material

“B” is given to students who demonstrate mastery of the material

“C” is awarded when mastery of the material is minimal

“D” indicates deficiency and carries no credit

“E” indicates failure and carries no credit
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Session Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/9/18</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>1/16/18</td>
<td>Scientific Inquiry in Social Work <strong>Lab:</strong> How Values Cluster Together</td>
<td>RB Ch. 2 &amp; 3</td>
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<td>1/23/18</td>
<td>Problem Formulation and Measurement 1 <strong>Lab:</strong> Variability: How Values Disperse</td>
<td>RB Ch. 6 &amp; 7</td>
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<td>Problem Formulation and Measurement 2 <strong>Lab:</strong> Exploring Data with Simple Charts</td>
<td>RB Ch. 8 &amp; 9</td>
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<td>Research Design 1 <strong>Lab:</strong> Seeing Relationships 1</td>
<td>RB Ch. 10 &amp; 11</td>
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<td>2/13/18</td>
<td>Research Design 2 <strong>Lab:</strong> Seeing Relationships 2</td>
<td>RB Ch. 12 &amp; 13</td>
<td><strong>Paper 1</strong></td>
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<td>2/20/18</td>
<td>Mid-term exam</td>
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<td>2/27/18</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>3/6/18</td>
<td>Data-Collection Methods with Large Sources of Data <strong>Lab:</strong> Seeing Relationships 3</td>
<td>RB Ch. 14 &amp; 15</td>
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<td>3/13/18</td>
<td>Qualitative Research Methods 1 <strong>Lab:</strong> Seeing Relationships 4</td>
<td>RB Ch. 17 &amp; 18</td>
<td><strong>Paper 2</strong></td>
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<td>Qualitative Research Methods 2 <strong>Lab:</strong> Mapping Data 1</td>
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<td>Analysis of Quantitative Data 1 <strong>Lab:</strong> Mapping Data 2</td>
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<td><strong>Paper 3</strong></td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td>4/17/18</td>
<td>Draft Final Grant Proposal Presentation</td>
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