**Course title:** Basic Social Work Research  
**Course #/term:** 522-003, Winter 2019  
**Time and place:** Tuesday, 6-9pm, SSWB 2629  
**Credit hours:** 3  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Instructor:** Katie Schultz  
**Pronouns:** She/Her/Hers  
**Contact info:**  
- **Email:** katieasc@umich.edu  
- **Phone:** 734-647-6376  
- **Office:** SSWB 3710  
- **Office hours:** Mondays 12-2pm and Wednesdays 5-6pm – Please schedule meetings through Google Calendar: [522 Appointment Calendar](#)  

I hope you leave this class with a solid foundation of sound research practices, including how to access, evaluate, and use research in your practice. I hope you gain perspectives on the historical and contemporary role of research in social work practice and skills to both question and respect research methodologies within a social justice framework. And finally, I hope you leave this class as critical consumers of research who appreciate the potential benefits of research to your communities and practice.

In the spirit of healing and health, I acknowledge and honor that the University of Michigan resides on the traditional Territories of the Three Fire Peoples - the Ojibwe, Odawa and Bodewadmi, and that the Great Lakes region remains home to multiple tribal nations.

### 1. Course Statement

#### a. 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.
b. 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.

c. Course Competencies and Objectives
Competency 2: Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.
   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.
   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.
   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.
   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.
   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.
   10b.4 Assessment – Select appropriate intervention strategies.
   10d.1 Evaluation – Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:
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)
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 and 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)
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)

d. Course Design
Many different methods will be used for acquiring knowledge and skills including: discussion, lectures, projects, exercises, and lab work. 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.

e. Curricular Themes
Theme Relation to Multiculturalism & 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
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.

Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & 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.

f. Relationship 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.

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials
There is one required book for the course, previous editions are allowable: Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. R. (2017). Research methods for social work (9th ed.). Boston, MA: Cengage Learning. A copy of this text has been placed on reserve in the Shapiro Undergraduate library.

Additional readings are posted on Canvas under Files → Week # → Readings.
b. Class schedule

PLEASE NOTE: This syllabus is a working document. Readings “TBD” will be posted on Canvas at least two weeks prior to the relevant class and changes to the schedule will be announced via Canvas. Be sure that you have canvas announcements enabled (in Canvas under Account → Notifications → Announcement).

Week 1: 1/15/19 – Introduction to Social Work Research

Topics: What is social work research? 
Relationships between practice and research

Readings: Ruben & Babbie – Chapter 1: Why Study Research? 
Ruben & Babbie – Chapter 2: Evidence-based Practice

Week 2: 1/22/19 – Research Questions, Paradigms, and Reflexivity

Topics: Research paradigms 
Objectivity vs. subjectivity 
Reflexivity in research 
Research questions

Readings: Ruben & Babbie – Chapter 3: Factors Influencing the Research Process
Ruben & Babbie – Chapter 7: Problem Formulation

Recommended

Week 3: 1/29/19 – Ethics, History, and Community-Engaged Research

Topics: Ethics in social work research 
Human subjects protection 
Community-based participatory research

Readings: Ruben & Babbie – Chapter 5: The Ethics and Politics of Social Work Research


DUE: Interviews

Week 4: 2/5/19 – Synthesizing Literature, Approaches to Inquiry, and Mixed Methods

Topics: Literature reviews, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses (Darlene Nichols)
Quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods
Mixed vs multi-method design

Readings: Ruben & Babbie – Ch. 4: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods of Inquiry

DUE: Literature Review: Questions and Sources

Week 5: 2/12/19 – Qualitative Methods

Topics: Qualitative research questions
Overview of qualitative methods
Qualitative data collection

Readings: Ruben & Babbie – Chapter 18: Qualitative Research: General Principles
Ruben & Babbie – Chapter 19: Qualitative Research: Specific Methods

Week 6: 2/19/19 – Qualitative Methods

Topics: Qualitative analysis
Assessing quality in qualitative methods

Readings: Ruben & Babbie – Chapter 20: Qualitative Data Analysis
Other: TBD
Week 7: 2/26/19 – Conceptualization and Operationalization

Topics: Hypotheses and research questions
Operational definitions
Variables: Levels, operationalization, reliability, validity
Measurement: construction, reliability and validity

Readings: Ruben & Babbie – Chapter 8: Conceptualization in Quantitative and Qualitative Inquiry
Ruben & Babbie – Chapter 9: Measurement
Ruben & Babbie – Chapter 10: Constructing Measurement Instruments
Other: TBD

DUE: Literature Review: Annotated Bibliography

Week 8: 3/5/19 – Spring Break Vacation

Topics: Fun and rest!

Week 9: 3/12/19 – Quantitative Research Designs

Topics: Causality
Experimental and quasi-experimental designs

Readings: Ruben & Babbie – Chapter 11: Causal Inference and Experimental Design
Ruben & Babbie – Chapter 12: Quasi-Experimental Design
Other: TBD

Week 10: 3/19/19 – Quantitative Data Analysis

Topics: Correlation and causation
Statistical significance
Interpreting relationships

Readings: Ruben & Babbie – Chapter 21: Descriptive Data Analysis
Ruben & Babbie – Chapter 22: Inferential Data Analysis
Other: TBD

Week 11: 3/26/19 – Sampling and Survey Research

Topics: Sampling strategies
Types of survey designs

Readings: Ruben & Babbie – Chapter 15: Sampling
Ruben & Babbie – Chapter 16: Survey Research
Other: TBD

DUE: Article Critiques – Group 1

Week 12: 4/2/19 – Intervention and Dissemination & Implementation Research

Topics: Interventions and RCTs
Dissemination and implementation – fidelity and adaptation


Other: TBD

**DUE:** Article Critiques – Group 2

### Week 13: 4/9/19 – Critical and Indigenous Methodologies and Evaluation Research

**Topics:** Indigenous knowledges and methodologies
Evaluation research

**Readings:**
- Ruben & Babbie – Chapter 14: Program Evaluation

Other TBD
Recommended

**DUE:** Article Critiques – Group 3

### Week 14: 4/16/19 – No Class (Literature Reviews are Due)

**DUE:** Literature Reviews DUE April 18th by 9am

### Week 15: 4/23/19 – Revisiting Social Work Research

**Topics:** Practitioners’ roles in research
Practice-based evidence

**Readings:**

Other: TBD

### c. Assignments

A brief description of each assignment with due dates is provided here. A more detailed description of assignments with grading rubrics will be posted on Canvas prior to the due date. Assignments should be submitted via Canvas before the start of class unless otherwise specified.
Class Participation (15%): Participation in class will be assessed via engagement in class discussions/activities, and in-class exercises and brief writing assignments.

Discussion Board (10%) In addition to in-class participation, you will be asked to post questions or comments at least three times and respond to other students’ questions or comments at least twice over the course of the semester using the Discussion Board in Canvas.

Responsible Conduct of Research Training (5%): Complete the online Program for Education and Evaluation in Responsible Research and Scholarship (PEERRS) certification (http://my.research.umich.edu/peerrs/) – in class.

Interview (5%): Interview a social work practitioner or field instructor about the interventions or techniques they employ in their practice. You will be asked to turn in a one page paper summarizing the interview and come to class prepared to discuss your findings.

Article Critique (20%): Working together in groups, you will be asked to guide an in-class discussion of an article critique that assesses the methodologies, ethics, and rigor of a research project presented in a peer-reviewed journal article.

Literature Review (45%): You will be asked to develop a research question related to your practicum placement or an area in which you intend to practice and review the literature to identify sources, understand the current state of the field, and identify gaps in the literature. You will be expected to develop an annotated bibliography and write a brief literature review based on your findings. This assignment will be split into three submissions: a) research question and literature sources; b) annotated bibliography; and c) final literature review.

Extra Credit: Any options for extra credit will be listed in Canvas under Assignments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Board</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ongoing through 4/20/19</td>
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<tr>
<td>PEERS Certification (in class)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Week 3: 1/29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Week 3: 1/29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Review: Question and Sources</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Week 4: 2/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review: Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Week 7: 2/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article Critiques</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Weeks 11-13: 3/26-4/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review: Final</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Week 14: April 18th by 9am</td>
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d. Attendance and class participation

I encourage you to attend courses to earn points for class participation. That grade will be assessed through class engagement and completion of in-class activities and exercises. If you need to miss class, please contact me in advance. Routine tardiness that disrupts the class will also be considered in your class participation grade. Note: If you are absent from class, you are
still responsible for any assignments due that day. Please review the Policy on Class Attendance found in the MSW Student Guide.

Please be considerate to me, guest speakers, and your colleagues by limiting the use of laptops, phones and other forms of technology for classroom purposes only, such as taking notes or looking up readings on Canvas. Misuse of these devices during class time will be reflected in your participation score. Relatedly, an interesting read on research concerning the personal use of technology in the classroom.

e. Grading

From MSW Student Guide policies on Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction:
Letter grades from A through E are given for class performance. Grades of A are given for exceptional individual performance and mastery of the material. The use of A+, A, and A– distinguishes degrees of superior mastery. B grades are given to students who demonstrate mastery of the material: B+ is used for students who perform just above the mastery level but not in an exceptional manner; B– is used for students just below the mastery level. C grades are given when mastery of the material is minimal. A C– is the lowest grade which carries credit. D grades indicate deficiency and carry no credit. E grades indicate failure and carry no credit.

Grading Scale:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>98-100+</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-97</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>69 or below</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>0-68</td>
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Key grading criteria include: a) thoroughness and completeness of content; b) clarity and logic of presentation; c) evidence of critical thought and self-reflection; and d) writing and editing quality.

Late Assignment Policy: Please communicate with me as soon as possible if you anticipate problems with a due date. Assignments turned in after the due date/time will receive a 2-point deduction for each day past due and be considered incomplete after one week without advance arrangements.

I will do my very best to assess and provide feedback on your work. If you believe you have been graded inaccurately or unfairly on an assignment, please submit in writing the mistake you believe has been made and the alternate grade you suggest. Challenges to a grade must be in writing, specific, and based on substantive arguments (or mathematical errors). I reserve the right to re-read and re-grade the work in its entirety in the case of a challenge. This may result in a higher or lower grade and that grade will be final.

Please review the Student Grievance procedures and policy for grading in special circumstances in the MSW Student Guide.
Please review Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources.

Safety and emergency preparedness:
All University of Michigan students, faculty and staff are required to familiarize themselves with emergency procedures and protocols for both inside and outside of the classroom. Click here to read more about the School of Social Work's emergency policies and procedures.

In the event of possible building closure (i.e. severe weather conditions, public health notices, etc.) you may contact (734)764-7793 for up-to-date school closure information. Familiarize yourself with the emergency card posted next to the phone in every classroom/meeting room. Review the information on the emergency evacuation sign (located nearest the door). Each SSW classroom is equipped with door locks. Pressing the Lock button (the only button located on inside of the door handle) to lock the door from within the room. If you are concerned about your ability to exit the building in the case of an emergency, contact the Office of Student Services (Room 1748) at (734) 936-0961 or via email at ssw-adacompliance@umich.edu.

Mental health and well-being
The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of all 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
  - The SSW embedded CAPS Counselor is Meghan Shaughnessy-Mogill, LLMSW. She is dedicated to supporting the wellbeing of social work students and the SSW community and offers short-term, solution-focused individual therapy. All services are free and confidential. Contact her at (734) 763-7894 or via email at mshaughm@umich.edu.
- University Health Service (UHS) at (734) 764-8320
- Additional campus health and wellness resources

The Office of Student Services' Health and Wellness Program provides supportive services to MSW students which promote wellness, self care and maintenance of a healthy academic and mental health balance, as well as to increase disability awareness. Contact the Health and Wellness Program at ssw.wellness@umich.edu

Teaching evaluations
Teaching evaluations are administered via Canvas and will be emailed to students during the last week of classes. Student identity is completely anonymous, and instructors cannot view evaluation reports until after grades are submitted.
Proper use of names and pronouns

All students will be asked to share the name and pronouns they would like to use in our classroom space. Names and pronouns may change overtime, or even week to week. It is expected that we all commit to using the correct name and pronouns of each other and any guests throughout the semester. Should someone accidentally use the wrong name or pronoun, acknowledge the mistake, apologize, and move on with the correct version. Example: “As he was saying. I’m sorry; I meant to say, as they were saying, that was a very interesting article.”

Accommodations for students with disabilities

If you are in need of any accommodations, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such. Additional information about accommodations for students with disabilities, as well as a list of appropriate accommodation forms, is available here. Please present the appropriate paperwork at least two weeks prior to the need for the accommodation (test, project, etc.).

For more information or to schedule an appointment, contact:
Services for Students with Disabilities
G-664 Haven Hall
505 South State St.
Phone: (734) 763-3000
Email: ssdoffice@umich.edu

Religious/spiritual observances

The University of Michigan, as an institution, does not observe religious holidays, however it has long been the University’s policy that every reasonable effort should be made to help students avoid negative academic consequences when their religious obligations conflict with academic requirements. Please click here to find out more about student expectations around conflicts between the academic and religious calendars, as well as a non-exhaustive list of religious holidays.

Military deployment

Please click here for more information and resources for students called to Active Duty status while enrolled at the University of Michigan.

Writing skills and expectations

Strong writing and communication skills are essential to your academic success and professional career. The Writing Coordinator for the School of Social Work is open to meeting with students during any phase of the writing process. Their office is housed within the Career Services Office. The Career Services Office also offers workshops, resources and individual assistance to help improve skills and confidence in written communication.
For more information or to schedule an appointment, contact:
SSW Writing Assistance
Career Services (Room 1696)
1080 S University Ave.
Phone: (734) 763-6259
Email: ssw-cso@umich.edu

Any social work assignments presented as professional papers or presentations should utilize APA formatting. I will assign points to your assignments based on proper use of APA formatting. Review the MLibrary APA Citation Guide as needed. The Purdue Owl website is very helpful resource for assistance with APA formatting.

Academic integrity and plagiarism

Do not plagiarize - plagiarism is prohibited in any academic writing at the University of Michigan. More information on academic integrity policies can be found in the MSW Student Guide. Test your knowledge on plagiarism here: https://sites.google.com/a/umich.edu/ssw-writing-help/academic-integrity-avoiding-plagiarism