Course Description

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.

Course 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.

Course Design: The first hour of class will consist of a presentation or lecture on topics related to understanding how to develop important research questions to move the students’ area of interest forward. The second hour of class will consist of each student having read 5 research articles from peer reviewed journals. One week, the student can replace the 5 journal articles with 1 book. The articles are to be read prior to class and students will analyze these articles, and pertinent information will be captured in research tables designed to help the student identify the main empirical findings, methods, and unanswered research questions in their area of interest. The student will then prepare a 2 page or longer writeup of the information from their research table and lead a 10 minute in class discussion each of the 6 weeks. By the end of class, the student will have read 25 to 30 articles, depending on if they replace one week’s articles with a book, and have chronicled all pertinent information in their research tables. These articles and the write-ups will be used to produce a research proposal as the final paper. Taken together, these writing assignments are intended to help students make
progress toward the goal of developing their social work prelim proposal/dissertation or a substantial draft of the proposal by the end of the term.

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.

**Class Requirements**

1. **Participation.** Each week we will discuss 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.

2. **Timely submission of writing products.** All students will submit via Mbox their writing products on the Monday (no later than 11:59pm) prior to the Tuesday class session.

**Grading**

The grade for the course will be based on the completion and timely submission of the 9 writing assignments (10 points each for first 6 assignments and 20 points each for last 3 assignments) that meet the students’ individual progress goals for completing 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. The final assignment will be the submission of a final draft of the paper which will be worth 40 points. The final paper will be a proposal for research based off the review of research conducted during the semester.

**Readings and Course Materials**

There is no required book for this course. Readings will be selected by students as part of their weekly assignments. *Please note: My philosophy regarding course readings emphasizes quality over quantity and reading material related to your area of interest. Due to the limited reading and reading focused on your own research area for this course, you should stay up-to-date with the readings and critically interpret them from week to week.]*

**Required:**

- Articles and books selected by student (see table below)
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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/22/19</td>
<td>Creating a Strong Online/Public Profile for Your Work</td>
<td>No Reading</td>
<td>None</td>
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| 3 | 1/29/19 | Writing a Problem Statement/Giving an Elevator Speech (1st hour)      | Read the 5 articles you are preparing for class (You can replace the 5 articles with one book). These can be articles or books you have already read.  
|    |         |                                                                      |                                                                         | NOTE. Can only replace articles with book one time.                         |
| 4 | 2/5/19  | Writing 2 to 5 page Proposal for Funders (1st hour)                  | Read the 5 articles you are preparing for class (You can replace the 5 articles with one book). These can be articles or books you have already read.  
|    |         |                                                                      |                                                                         | NOTE. Can only replace articles with book one time.                         |
| 5 | 2/12/19 | Conducting a Systematic Research Review (Dr. Anao Zhang) (Hours 1 & 2) | Read the 5 articles you are preparing for class (You can replace the 5 articles with one book). These can be articles or books you have already read.  
|    |         |                                                                      |                                                                         | NOTE. Can only replace articles with book one time.                         |
| 6 | 2/19/19 | Conducting a Meta-Analysis (Dr. Anao Zhang) (Hours 1 & 2)            | Read the 5 articles you are preparing for class (You can replace the 5 articles with one book). These can be articles or books you have already read.  
<p>|    |         |                                                                      |                                                                         | NOTE. Can only replace articles with book one time.                         |</p>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7/26/19</td>
<td>Publishing (1st hour)</td>
<td>Read the 5 articles you are preparing for class (You can replace the 5 articles with one book). These can be articles or books you have already read.</td>
<td>Prepare 5 articles for class (two-page writeup and updated tables); 10-minute student led discussion on article writeup</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/5/19</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td>No Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/12/19</td>
<td>Preparing for the Job Market (1st hour)</td>
<td>Read the 5 articles you are preparing for class (You can replace the 5 articles with one book). These can be articles or books you have already read.</td>
<td>Prepare 5 articles for class (No writeup of articles) 1 to 2-page write-up of Problem Statement 10-minute student led discussion on problem statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/19/19</td>
<td>Discussion of Main Empirical Findings</td>
<td>No Readings</td>
<td>Present on: What the main empirical findings are in your area (two-page or more writeup); 20-minute student lead discussion</td>
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<td>20-minute student lead discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/26/19</td>
<td>Discussion of Methods</td>
<td>No Readings</td>
<td>Present on: What methods are being used to study your area (two-page or more writeup); 20-minute student lead discussion</td>
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<td>20-minute student lead discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/2/19</td>
<td>Discussion of Unanswered Questions</td>
<td>No Readings</td>
<td>Present on: What key questions are left unanswered in your area (two-page or more writeup); 20-minute student lead discussion</td>
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<td>20-minute student lead discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/16/19</td>
<td>Review</td>
<td>No Readings</td>
<td>Research Proposal (2 to 5 pages max)</td>
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Writing Assignments

All writing assignments should be completed in your designated Mbox folder. A folder with your name on it is here:

- Briana Starks at https://umich.app.box.com/folder/62631409944
- Yun Hen at https://umich.app.box.com/folder/62631315076
- Change Kwesle at https://umich.app.box.com/folder/62631840616
- Lolita Moss at https://umich.app.box.com/folder/62631913311
- Analidis Ochoa at https://umich.app.box.com/folder/62631099876
- Garret Pace at https://umich.app.box.com/folder/62630965603

Assignment #1-5: Prepare 5 articles for class (two-page writeup and updated tables); 10-minute student led discussion on article writeup. (10 points per assignment)

Updated tables must be turned in with each writeup. The tables will serve as the structure of the writeup. More specifically, you will write up each of the five articles in some detail talking about: (1) purpose of study, (2) research questions (only need to cover those relevant to your area of interest), (3) population studied, (4) sample size, (5) data used, (6) type of study (e.g., qualitative, RCT, longitudinal, etc.), (7) analysis (e.g., regression, etc.), (8) variables controlled for, (9) outcome variable(s) of interest to you, (10) relevant findings for your topic. So, articles will be review very systematically to understand the rigor of the study as well as the findings and to draw lessons for what a study looks like, requires in your area of interest. This is different than what you might see in a journal article. (NOTE. You may want to tailor this some, you don’t have to have these specific 10 items but need to establish a set of criteria for reviewing and discussing the articles. For example, I might want to add a column on limitations)

As you writeup more articles, you will want to think about how to organize the studies. They might fall under different major headings and they might help build an argument. You might only want to discuss certain findings relevant to building the argument you are trying to make.

Be sure to review articles that counter your perspective. In time you will want to understand and discuss why different studies find different findings.

For the student lead discussion, you want to talk about what you have learned from the five articles reviewed not simply read your writeup. For example, you might want to talk about major findings, implications for the field, limitations, unanswered questions, patterns, etc.

Assignment #6: Present on: Present on problem statement (1 to 2-page writeup); 10 minute student lead discussion. (10 points)

A research problem is a definite or clear expression [statement] about an area of concern, a condition to be improved upon, a difficulty to be eliminated, or a troubling question that exists in scholarly literature, in theory, or within existing practice that points to a need for meaningful understanding and deliberate investigation. A research problem does not state how to do something, offer a vague or broad proposition, or present a value question.

- What the problem is? (use data to paint picture)
- Provide a declaration of originality; that is, the problem has not been answered, a gap.
- Why the problem is important; what benefits would be derived from investigating the research problem?
- Why it is significant within my area of research?

Assignment #7: Present on: What the main empirical findings are in your area (5-page or more writeup);
20-minute student lead discussion. (20 points)

Look at Example 1_Area Statement in your mbox folder. The writeup should resemble (does not have to be as long) pages 72-90. You should have much of the material you need for this writeup in your weekly writeups. Pay particular attention to some of the tables created in this example section as ways to summarize some of your learnings and focus less on writing out every detail.

Assignment #8: Present on: What methods are being used to study your area (1 to 2-page or more writeup); 20-minute student lead discussion. (20 points)

Assignment #9: Present on: What key questions are left unanswered in your area (1 to 2-page or more writeup); 20-minute student lead discussion. (20 points)

Assignment #10: A research proposal based off the review of research (2 to 5 pages in length max). (40 points)

The goal of a research proposal is to present and justify the need to study a research problem and to present the practical ways in which the proposed study should be conducted. The design elements and procedures for conducting the research are governed by standards within the predominant discipline in which the problem resides, so guidelines for research proposals are more exacting and less formal than a general project proposal. Research proposals contain extensive literature reviews. They must provide persuasive evidence that a need exists for the proposed study. In addition to providing a rationale, a proposal describes detailed methodology for conducting the research consistent with requirements of the professional or academic field and a statement on anticipated outcomes and/or benefits derived from the study's completion.

1. **What do you plan to accomplish?** Be clear and succinct in defining the research problem and what it is you are proposing to research.
2. **Why do you want to do it?** In addition to detailing your research design, you also must conduct a thorough review of the literature and provide convincing evidence that it is a topic worthy of study. Be sure to answer the "So What?" question.
3. **How are you going to do it?** Be sure that what you propose is doable.

**Common Mistakes to Avoid**
- Failure to be concise; being "all over the map" without a clear sense of purpose.
- Failure to cite landmark works in your literature review.
- Failure to delimit the contextual boundaries of your research [e.g., time, place, people, etc.].
- Failure to develop a coherent and persuasive argument for the proposed research.
- Failure to stay focused on the research problem; going off on unrelated tangents.
- Sloppy or imprecise writing, or poor grammar.
- Too much detail on minor issues, but not enough detail on major issues.

**Course Policies**

*Cell phones/pagers/laptops:*
I expect that students will turn off (or mute) cell phones, and only respond to calls during the break or after class. Laptops are permitted during class but should not serve as a distraction.

*Students with Disabilities:*
If you have a disability or a condition that may interfere with your participation in this course, please schedule a private appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations for your specific needs. This meeting and your information will be kept strictly confidential. If you disclose your disability, I will (to the extent permitted by law) treat that information as private and confidential. For more
information and resources, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities office at G664 Haven Hall, (734) 763-3000.

Scholarly Writing, APA Style:
Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are to be submitted as a Google Doc in the class Google Drive Folder. When appropriate, use appropriate referencing and bibliographic formats. You will be asked to demonstrate proper grammar, spelling, and the rules of the American Psychological Association Publication Manual (6th edition) in this seminar. You are not required to purchase the manual; however, I do encourage you to access it and other writing resources online (e.g., http://apastyle.apa.org/ and/or http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/).

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