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
A copy of this text has been placed on reserve in the Shapiro Undergraduate library. Additional readings and other materials listed in the syllabus are posted on Canvas under Modules → Week # → Required Readings. Other required readings/materials will be posted over the course of the semester. Please let me know if any materials are inaccessible (e.g., articles are not compatible with a screen reader or videos do not include closed captions).

You are encouraged to bring a laptop or tablet to class to review articles and other materials during class exercises. These will be uploaded to Canvas and hard copies will not be distributed. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about this practice.

b. Class schedule

PLEASE NOTE: This syllabus is a working document. Changes to the schedule, materials, or course will be announced via Canvas. Be sure that you have Canvas Announcements enabled (Account → Notifications → Announcement).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1: 1/14/20</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topics:</strong></td>
<td>Introductions to the course and each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is research? What is social work research?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 2: 1/21/20</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topics:</strong></td>
<td>Research questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theory in research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hypotheses, variables, inductive/deductive research, validity &amp; generalizability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
<td>Engel &amp; Schutt – Chapter 1: Science, Society, and Social Work Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engel &amp; Schutt – Chapter 2: The Process of Social Work Research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 3: 1/28/20</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topics:</strong></td>
<td>Ethics in social work research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human subjects protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community-based participatory research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
<td>Engel &amp; Schutt – Chapter 3: Ethical and Scientific Guidelines for Social Work Research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 4: 2/04/20</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topics:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


---

**Week 4: 2/4/20**

**Topics:** Measurement & Sampling  
**Readings:**  
Engel & Schutt – Chapter 4: Measurement  
Engel & Schutt – Chapter 5: Sampling

---

**Week 5: 2/11/20**

**Topics:** Finding, reviewing, and summarizing the literature  
What is peer review?  
Systematic reviews  
Guest Speaker: Darlene Nichols – [Faculty Profile](#)  
**Readings:**  
Anatomy of a Scholarly Article: [Link to Video](#)

---

**Week 6: 2/18/20**

**Topics:** Causation  
Research designs  
**Readings:**  
Engel & Schutt – Chapter 6: Causation and Research Design  
Engel & Schutt – Chapter 7: Group Experimental Design  
Engel & Schutt – Chapter 8: Single-Subject Design

---

**Week 7: 2/25/20**

**Topics:** Designing and writing questions  
Survey designs  
**Readings:**  
Engel & Schutt – Chapter 9: Survey Research

---

**Week 8: 3/3/20 – Spring Break**

**Topics:** Fun and rest!
**Week 9: 3/10/20**

**Topics:** Quantitative Data Analysis

Guest Speaker: Dr. Anao Zhang – [Faculty Profile](#)

**Readings:**
- Engel & Schutt – Chapter 14: Quantitative Data Analysis

---

**Week 10: 3/17/20**

**Topics:** Overview of qualitative methods and design

Qualitative research questions

Qualitative data collection

**Readings:**

---

**Week 11: 3/24/20**

**Topics:** Qualitative analysis

Assessing quality in qualitative methods

**Readings:**

---

**Week 12: 3/31/20**

**Topics:** Secondary data analysis

Mixed methods research

**Readings:**
- Engel & Schutt – Chapter 12: Secondary Data Analysis and Mixed Methods

Week 13: 4/7/20

Topics:
- Research in the news
- Reporting research

Readings:
- Engel & Schutt – Chapter 15: Reporting Research

Week 14: 4/14/20

Topics:
- Indigenous knowledges and methodologies
- Research with Indigenous communities

Readings:

Week 15: 4/21/20 – No Class

c. Assignments

A detailed description of assignments with grading rubrics will be posted on Canvas. Assignments should be submitted via Canvas before the start of class on their due date unless otherwise specified.

Class Participation (20%): Active, purposeful engagement in class discussion and activities and demonstration of professionalism are paramount for successful completion of this course. In addition to attending class, students are expected to arrive having reviewed assigned materials and be prepared to actively participate in their learning process.

Reflexivity Statement (5%): Write a reflexivity statement examining how your social positions affect how you view research.
**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/](http://my.research.umich.edu/peerrs/)).

**Journal Assignments (30%)**: You will be asked to respond to prompts related to course readings in an ongoing journal. Prompts will be focused on review of readings and course materials and may include defining terms, brief quizzes, or reflections on course materials and application to practice. Journals will be assessed at three time points throughout the semester.

**Final Assignment (40%), choose one option:**

- **Annotated Bibliography**: Develop a research question related to your field placement or an area in which you intend to practice and review the literature to identify sources, describe and critique research methods, and summarize the state of the field and gaps in the literature.
- **Research Proposal**: Develop a brief research proposal based on a research question related to your practicum placement or an area in which you intend to practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflexivity Statement</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Week 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEERS Certification</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Week 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journals</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Weeks 7 &amp; 11 &amp; 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Assignment</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>April 10th before 9am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Week 14 (self-assessment)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d. **Attendance and class participation**

If you need to miss class, please contact me in advance *at least 24 hours before an expected absence, or within 24 hours of an unexpected absence/emergency*. 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. 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.

Grading Scale:

| 99-100 = A+ | 87-89 = B+ | 77-79 = C+ |
| 93-99 = A  | 83-86 = B  | 73-76 = C  |
| 90-92 = A- | 80-82 = B- | 70-72 = C- |

Late Assignment Policy: Please communicate with me as soon as possible if you anticipate problems with a due date. Unless this is due to an unexpected event/emergency, requests for an extension on an assignment must be made at least 48 hours in advance. Without advance arrangements, assignments turned in after the due date/time will receive a 5% deduction from your overall grade for each day past due and not accepted after one week.

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.

---

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 in need of support, services are available.

- **Counseling and Psychological Services** (CAPS) located at the Tappan Street Auxiliary Building on 609 Tappan Street across from the Ross Business School; (734) 764-8312
- We have an embedded CAPS Counselor at SSW, Alejandro Rojas, LMSW, who is dedicated to supporting the well-being of social work students and the SSW community. All services are free and confidential. Email aroja@umich.edu to set up a consultation.
- **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

**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. 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

**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 housed within the Career Services Office. This office also offers workshops, resources and individual assistance to help improve skills and confidence in written communication. Students may schedule an appointment and bring a draft of their paper (at any stage) along with the text of the assignment and any questions or concerns they may have. Email ssw-cso@umich.edu or call 734-763-6259. Another resource is the English Language Institute: [http://www.lsa.umich.edu/eli](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/eli)

The Sweetland Writing Center (SWC) is located at 1310 North Quad (corner of W. Washington and State St.). Graduate students are eligible for seven sessions per semester. They can help you develop your argument, improve your paper organization, correct grammar mistakes, and craft effective prose. You can register with them on line and schedule an appointment: [https://lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/](https://lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/)

Unless noted, all assignments should utilize APA formatting. I 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](https://sites.google.com/a/umich.edu/ssw-writing-help/academic-integrity-avoiding-plagiarism)
Proper use of names and pronouns

It is expected that we all commit to using the correct name and pronouns of each other and our guests. Names and pronouns may change over time. 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.”

Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources and include, among others:

- Safety and emergency preparedness
- Religious/spiritual observances
- Military deployment
- Teaching evaluations
- Proper use of names and pronouns, how to change those in Wolverine Access, and a map of gender inclusive bathrooms