Course title: Basic Social Work Research
Course #/term: SW 522, Section 8 | Winter 2020
Time and place: Tuesday 6:00pm – 9:00pm | School of Social Work Building B780
Credit hours: 3
Instructor: Matthew Bakko, MSW, MA
Contact info: mbakko@umich.edu
Office: Suite B660, Room B648
Office hours: Tuesdays 2:30pm – 4:00pm, or by appointment

Course Description
Welcome to Social Work 522. 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 Objectives and Competencies
On completion of this 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)

**Competencies and Practice Behaviors:**

**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

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.

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.

**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.

**Attendance Policy**
School of Social Work policy is that students attend all of their classes. Excessive absences may result in a reduction in grade and will be brought to the attention of the student and the faculty advisor by the course instructor. If a student has more than 2 unexcused absences, it will result in an automatic reduction in the participation grade. Given the nature of in-class activities and discussion, if a student fails to attend most class sessions, the student may not be able to successfully complete assignments and may be asked to withdraw from the course. In general, please inform me as soon as possible if you expect to miss class or if you have extenuating circumstances that may affect your attendance.

*Note on religious observation:* Please notify me if religious observances conflict with class attendance or due dates for assignments so we can make appropriate arrangements.

**Accommodations for Learning**
If you have a disability, accessibility concern, or condition that may affect your participation in this course, please send an email or schedule a private appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations for your specific needs. This information will be kept strictly confidential. Please also contact the Services for Students with Disabilities office at G-664 Haven Hall, 734-763-3000 to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Please reach out to me if you have a food, fragrance, or any type of allergy that may be affect your learning in the classroom. This will allow me to ensure that people not bring certain foods or items into our classroom.
Email Policy
Please allow 24 hours for email responses. Emails may not be returned over the weekend. In the subject line please put “SW522.” I will do my best to get back to you as soon as possible. Please send a follow-up if I haven’t replied within 48 hours during weekdays.

Cell Phones and Laptops
In general, students should not use their phones during class and phones should be silenced. Students may not text message during class. If you need to take an emergency phone call, please step outside to do so. It is fine to use laptops in order to take notes during section. Using your laptop for any other non-course-related activities (e.g., social media, email, etc.) is unacceptable and will result in the reduction of your participation grade.

Writing Assistance
Quality writing can take several drafts. Two especially useful resources at UM to improve writing are the SSW Writing Assistance office (Betsy Williams betsywil@umich.edu, SSWB 1696, https://sites.google.com/a/umich.edu/ssw-writing-help/) and the Sweetland Writing Center (1139 Angell Hall, 764-0429, www.lsa.umich.edu/swc). I highly encourage using these resources.

Academic Integrity
Academic integrity is taken extremely seriously in the School of Social Work, as well as the academic community and the University of Michigan at large. Plagiarism is representing someone else's ideas, words, statements or works as one's own without proper acknowledgment or citation. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the information and other resources regarding expected academic conduct presented at: http://www.lib.umich.edu/academic-integrity/resources-students.

Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources. They include:
- Safety and emergency preparedness
- Mental health and well-being
- Teaching evaluations
- Proper use of names and pronouns
- Accommodations for students with disabilities
- Religious/spiritual observances
- Military deployment
- Writing skills and expectations
- Academic integrity and plagiarism

Note on the Course Syllabus:
I may amend the syllabus as needed. These changes are not likely to alter any due dates, but if changes are necessary due to the timing of lectures or unforeseen circumstances, the online syllabus
will be updated, and an announcement will be made in class and over email to keep students informed. The on-line syllabus will be kept current throughout the term.

Course Materials
There is one required book for the course: 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. The 8th edition is allowable for use in this class as well. Some supplementary readings will be made available on the course Canvas site.

It is expected that students will complete all assigned readings prior to each class.
Class Schedule

Note: Please complete all readings prior to their respective assigned class periods. All readings are found in the textbook or on the course canvas page unless otherwise indicated.

1. January 14: Introductions
   - No readings

2. January 21: Introduction to Social Work Research and Evidence-Based/Informed Practice
   - Social work research
   - The relationship between research and practice
   - Research-Informed Practitioner
     - Rubin & Babbie – Chapter 1: Why Study Research?
     - Rubin & Babbie – Chapter 2: Evidence-based Practice

3. January 28: Ethics, History, and Participatory Approaches to Research
   - Ethics in social work research
   - Human Subjects Protection
   - Community-based Participatory Research
     - Rubin & Babbie – Chapter 5: The Ethics and Politics of Social Work

4. February 4: Research Questions, Paradigms, and Reflexivity
   - Research Questions
   - Paradigms and Epistemology
   - Objectivity and Subjectivity
   - Reflexivity in Research
     - Rubin & Babbie – Chapter 3: Factors Influencing the Research Process
     - Rubin & Babbie – Chapter 7: Problem Formulation

5. February 11: Literature and Approaches to Inquiry
- Literature reviews, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses
- Methodological Approaches to Inquiry: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods
  - Rubin & Babbie – Chapter 4: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods of Inquiry

6. February 18: Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement
- Concepts and variables
- Measurement
  - Rubin & Babbie – Chapter 8: Conceptualization in Quantitative and Qualitative Inquiry
  - Rubin & Babbie – Chapter 9: Measurement
  - SKIM: Rubin & Babbie – Chapter 10: Constructing Measurement Instruments

7. February 25: Sampling and Design
- Sampling strategies
- Introduction to research design
  - Rubin & Babbie – Chapter 15: Sampling

March 3: SPRING BREAK—No Class

8. March 10: Qualitative Methods Part I
- Qualitative methods purpose and design
- Overview of qualitative methods
  - Rubin & Babbie – Chapter 18: Qualitative Research: General Principles
  - Rubin & Babbie – Chapter 19: Qualitative Research: Specific Methods

9. March 17: Qualitative Methods Part II
- Qualitative analysis
- Evaluating quality of qualitative research
  - Rubin & Babbie – Chapter 20: Qualitative Data Analysis
- Quantitative methods purpose and design
- Overview of quantitative methods
- Causality
  - Rubin & Babbie – Chapter 11: Causal Inference and Experimental Design
  - Rubin & Babbie – Chapter 15: Quasi-Experimental Design
  - SKIM: Rubin & Babbie – Chapter 16: Survey Research

11. March 31: Consultations on Annotated Bibliographies
- No in-person class

12. April 7: Quantitative Research Part II
- Correlation and causation
- Statistical analysis
- Significance and interpretation
- Evaluating quality of quantitative research
  - Rubin & Babbie – Chapter 21: Descriptive Data Analysis
  - Rubin & Babbie – Chapter 22: Inferential Data Analysis

13. April 14: Mixed Methods and Critical Approaches
- Mixed methods designs
- Critical approaches to research
  - Video: “What is Mixed Methods Research?” by John Creswell
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1OaNiTlpyX8
  - Other reading TBD

- Research-informed Practice
- Practice-informed Research
## Assignments

All written assignments should be typed, Times New Roman 12pt font, 1-inch margins, double-spaced, and submitted on Canvas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Percent of overall grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEERS Certification (mostly completed in class)</td>
<td>Week 3 (January 28\textsuperscript{th})</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Discussion Board</td>
<td>Ongoing (beginning Week 4)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research-Practice Brief Reflection</td>
<td>January 28\textsuperscript{th} at 6pm</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>February 11\textsuperscript{th} at 6pm</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence-Based/Informed Practice Project Part I: Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>Proposed Research Question: February 14\textsuperscript{th} by 12pm (noon)</td>
<td>Proposed Research Question: 5%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Draft of Annotated Bibliography: March 27\textsuperscript{th} by 12pm (noon)</td>
<td>Draft Submission: 5%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annotated Bibliography: April 14\textsuperscript{th} by 6pm</td>
<td>Annotated Bibliography: 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence-Based/Informed Practice Project Part II: Critical Reflection</td>
<td>April 24\textsuperscript{th} at 12pm (noon)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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### 1. Participation and Attendance

Regular attendance (i.e., following the Attendance Policy) will be tracked. But class participation is more than mere attendance. It includes things like arriving on time, being actively present in the classroom, reading and discussing assigned material, preparing for class with questions and
comments, participating in class activities, and being active, contributing “community” members during discussion.

2. PEERS Certification
Complete the online Program for Education and Evaluation in Responsible Research and Scholarship (PEERRS) certification (http://my.research.umich.edu/peerrs/) – mostly completed in class together.

3. Weekly Discussion Board
Every week (beginning with Week 4), you will post at least two questions using the Discussion Board on the course Canvas site. These questions should be inspired and informed by that week’s readings. Your questions should be posted no later than 6pm the Monday before each class (for example, posts for week 4 should be made Monday at 6pm just prior to the Week 4 class held on Tuesday).

Questions should be related to issues for further exploration, concepts that need clarification, and/or connections with other readings, other courses, or practice experiences. Questions must be written in a way that demonstrates depth of reading (i.e., writing a couple sentences that include some summary of what was read before posing a question is helpful in demonstrating this). Questions are encouraged that connect to recurring themes and issues that run across the course sessions. They will help facilitate class discussion.

4. Research-Practice Brief Reflection
Write a brief one-page reflection on how your foresee research being applied to your future career as a social worker. Please feel free to reflect on your previous research training and experiences, as well as what you hope to learn in this class to assist you in your future career.

5. Interview
Interview a social work practitioner or field instructor about the interventions they employ in their practice. Be sure to ask questions about how research and evidence informs their practice. Write a one-page summary of the interview, and relate what you learned to themes from the course.

6. Evidence-Based/Informed Practice Project Part I: Annotated Bibliography
Gaining the knowledge and skills to engage in Evidence-Informed (or Evidence-Based) Practice is a core goal of social work education. For this assignment, you will read and review scholarly research related to your own area of practice interest and develop an annotated bibliography. For this course, an annotated bibliography is a collection of descriptive and evaluative summaries of individual
You are asked to develop a research question related to either your practicum placement or an area in which you intend to practice. This question must be focused on both a population and problem/issue. You will submit this question for review early in the semester. You may be asked to revise it.

After the question is approved, you will review scholarship to understand the current state of the literature related to your research question. You will find and read at least nine peer-reviewed scholarly articles. The articles should help you understand your research question in terms of: 1) your population of interest; 2) a problem/issue related to that population; and 3) an action or intervention that could be used to address the identified problem/issue. Three articles should be devoted to each of these three areas, though articles may overlap across the areas. The annotated bibliography should include a mix of qualitative- and quantitative-focused research.

Readings will be used to develop an annotated bibliography table. For each reading, this table should include the following information: 1) Title and authors; 2) Overall aim and goals of the study; 3) Research question(s) of the study; 4) Data/Evidence used; 5) Specific method(s) used; 6) Main results of the study; 7) Major limitations of note; and 8) Relevant findings and lessons for your overall research question, including but not limited to implications for practice. You may include other areas of information as well. Tables should be completed with full sentences and written in a way that fully informs a reader about the most important content of the article.

Earlier in the semester, you will submit a draft that includes at least three references with related table information filled out. I will provide feedback on this draft to assist you in completing the rest of the Bibliography table. The table is the final product for this assignment and should be submitted on Canvas as one Word or Excel document.

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7. Evidence-Based/Informed Practice Project Part II: Critical Reflection
Using the annotated bibliography you developed in Part I, you will write a reflection on what you learned. Please address the following: 1) What are the major lessons and takeaways from across the research you reviewed?; 2) How does what you learned compare and/or contrast to your prior knowledge regarding your area of practice interest?; 3) How might you apply the research you reviewed as a research-informed practitioner (this could be now in your practicum and/or in the future); 4) What other areas of research might you need to investigate in the future (i.e., what are some gaps in your knowledge left unaddressed, and how will you do so)?

This reflection should be between 4-5 pages. Literature from the annotated bibliography should be heavily cited throughout.
Grading
Grades are earned by successfully completing the work on the assignments. At the end of the term, the numerical grades earned for each assignment will be translated into letter grades according to the following formula:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Range</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>
</tr>
<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>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<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>&lt;69 (no credit)</td>
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PLEASE NOTE:

- Incompletes are not granted unless it can be demonstrated that it would be unfair to hold the student to the normal limits of the course. The student must formally request in writing an incomplete with the instructor prior to the final week of class.
- All assignments are to be completed by the date due. Exceptions will be granted with the permission of the instructor in advance of the due date for the assignment. Assignments submitted late without such permission will be downgraded 5% points each day the assignment is turned in past the due date, including weekends. Late weekly discussion question submissions will be granted no credit.
- Students are to use APA “citation format” for each of the assignments. Each assignment needs to include appropriate attribution of authorship for paraphrases or ideas acquired from another source or appropriate citations, including page numbers, for direct quotes.
- Please review the Student Guide section on “Ethical Conduct in the University Environment.” This section specifically addresses plagiarism and the possible consequences for engaging in this behavior. The University of Michigan Library system has an online resource that can assist you in preparing proper citations for assignments using APA format. Go to: (http://www.lib.mich.edu/ug/research/citation guide/AP5thed/pdf)
- Students are expected to prepare all assignments in APA-style. Please make sure submissions are double-spaced, use plenty of white space, with generous use of headings/sub-headings, underlining, italics, bolding, etc. to increase readability.