



Course title:	Basic Social Work Research
Course #/term:	522-001, Winter 2021
Time and place:	Monday 9am-12pm, virtual
Credit hours:	3
Prerequisites:	None
Instructor:	Marquan Jackson, MSW
Pronouns:	He/Him/His
Contact info:	Email: marquanj@umich.edu You may expect a response within 48 hours
Office:	3738 SSW Mail Box:177 (Virtual)
Office hours:	Via Zoom By Appointment

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the University of Michigan, named for Michigami, the world's largest freshwater system and located in the Huron River watershed, was formed and has grown through connections with the land stewarded by Niswi Ishkodewan Anishinaabeg: The Three Fires People who are Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi along with their neighbours the Seneca, Delaware, Shawnee and Wyandot nations.

Legacies

As we live and learn on these territories, we must keep in mind the community struggles for self-determination and colonial legacies of scholarly practices. I use community struggles broadly to include indigenous peoples, enslaved peoples, and those peoples of the Mexico-Republic of Texas territories. I use colonial legacies to reflect our existing social structures, institutions, systems, and policies built from colonial domination.

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. Course materials

The course is organized by weekly **modules**. Each module is composed of two components: **pre-reading materials and live-session**. The format for each module is almost the same.

b. Course format

The class format is based on research regarding effective online pedagogy. Each week beginning after week one, you will be expected to complete several tasks prior to our synchronous meeting. Canvas will be used for all communication and information dissemination. Each week, you will see a list of asynchronous activities to complete *prior* to our Monday class period.

I take it as a given that there will be times when you are unable to attend our class period synchronously due to constraints related to COVID-19. This is acceptable and understood. All synchronous meetings will be recorded, and you will be expected to view the recording at a later date.

Synchronous time together will be primarily spent in activities and discussion, with some lectures and guest lectures. The bulk of the lecture content will be available to you to view prior to class. This will ensure that our time together is as meaningful and engaging as possible:

Pre-session (asynchronous) consists of activities to be conducted by students before the corresponding live-session, including:

- **Read.** Weekly reading assignments.
- **Watch and/or Listen.** Video and podcast, including recorded lectures.
- **Discussion Post.** Worksheet, activities, and/or discussion threads requesting your response to be followed-up in live-sessions.
- **Supplement.** These materials are extra for further reading/viewing/listening and are not required.

Live-session (synchronous) is held at the specified class time. During our live-sessions, please plan to meet as a class for approximately 2 hours (9am-11am) via zoom.

There is no required book for this course.

All readings, video clips, and/or other assigned materials will be posted on Canvas.

While access to computer equipment is required to conduct the necessary literature searches and reviews for course assignments, you are also highly encouraged to bring your own laptop/tablet to class for two reasons: 1) We will be reviewing peer-reviewed research articles regularly during in-class exercises. Hard copies of articles will not be printed and distributed in class. All articles that will be included as part of in-class exercises will be uploaded to Canvas on the day of class. 2) This class includes four designated times to “workshop” your three required assignments. You will use this workshop time to work on your assignments, which will require a computer and internet access to conduct literature searches, identify peer-reviewed articles, write, create an infographic, etc.

All other scheduled class sessions will occur via Zoom at the following link:

Join URL: <https://umich.zoom.us/j/97818782620>

Meeting ID: 978 1878 2620

Passcode: No Passcode

- You must ***sign in to zoom meetings using umich.edu email account or else you will not be able to enter.*** Please turn on and leave your camera on if you can so we can remain engaged as a class. Please mute your microphone when you are not talking or participating in activities.
- Live-session activities will include mini-lectures, small and large group discussions, guest lectures, self-reflection/discussion prompts, and other interactive activities. All live sessions will be recorded and accessible via Canvas. Recordings of class activities cannot be shared with members outside of the class without prior consent from all students in the class.

****Important notes about assigned readings and media****

1. Students are required to complete the readings prior to each week’s class. Any readings filed under a “supplemental” folder in Canvas are completely optional and are for students who wish to learn more about a particular topic.
2. Please always consult the syllabus to make sure you have completed all the readings and viewings; chapters from the book will not be in the Canvas folder.
3. The readings reflect a diverse array of perspectives, including historical perspectives. Due to the age of some documents, language used may not be current. You may find some ideas expressed in certain readings to be controversial and not reflective of social work values. However, these ideas are part of the current political discourse in the

United States, and as social workers, you need to be aware of these positions so that you are able to be a better advocate.

4. We may not always discuss each reading in class; however, each student is responsible for the material covered by the readings. Students will need to draw upon the readings in order to complete the final exam.

a. Class schedule

PLEASE NOTE: This syllabus is a working document. Changes to the class schedule, readings, and/or other changes to the course will be announced in class or via Canvas. Be sure that you have Canvas Announcements enabled (Account → Notifications → Announcement). Weeks to follow will be shared on 1/25/21.

Week 1: 1/25/21 – Introduction to Social Work Research

Topics: Review of syllabus and assignments
What is social work research?
Promoting social justice through research

Readings: None

Week 2: TBA

b. Assignments

A brief description of each assignment with due dates is provided below. A more detailed description of assignments with instructions will be uploaded to Canvas. Assignments are due at 11:59pm on the due date listed.

Class Participation (10%): Participation in class will be assessed via engagement in class discussions/activities, in-class exercises and brief writing assignments.

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

Reflexivity Statement (10%): Complete a Reflexivity Statement.

Assignment #1 (20%): “Using Research to Understanding a Problem (Quantitative).” See assignment guidelines on Canvas.

Assignment #2 (20%): “Using Research to Understand a Population (Qualitative).” See assignment guidelines on Canvas.

Research Presentation and Infographic (15%): These presentations will take place in class during the last 2 weeks of class. See assignment guidelines on Canvas.

Final Exam(20%): A take home final exam will be distributed on April 12th and be due April 26th.

Assignment	Weight	Due Date
Class Participation	10%	Ongoing
PEERS Certification	5%	2/15/21
Reflexivity Statement	10%	2/1/21
Assignment #1	20%	3/8/21
Assignment #2	20%	3/29/21
Research Presentation and Infographic	15%	4/12/21
Final Exam	20%	4/26/21

c. 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](#).

d. 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:

97-100+ = A+	87-89 = B+	77-79 = C+
93-96 = A	83-86 = B	73-76 = C
90-92 = A-	80-82 = B-	70-72 = C-

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. 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 be considered incomplete 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.

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*