

Course Syllabus

**SW 522 Basic Social Work Research
Winter 2021**

Monday 9am – noon (Zoom:)

Wednesday 2 – 5pm (Zoom:

Professor: Brian Perron, PhD

Office Hours: By appointment

Telephone: 734-763-9272

Email: beperron@umich.edu

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 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.

2. Course Content:

This course will cover qualitative and quantitative 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. Special emphasis will be placed on increasing one's ability to critique theoretical foundations of research, form research questions, apply research methods, conduct statistical analysis, and interpret research reports. The latest statistical, graphical, and display technologies will be used.

3. Course Competencies and Practice Behaviors:

This course addresses the following competencies and practice behaviors:

COMPETENCY 2—Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice. Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law. Social workers:

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.

Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information. Social workers:

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; and

COMPETENCY 4—Engage diversity and difference in practice.

Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers:

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.

Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers:

6.1 use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry and

6.2 use research evidence to inform practice.

COMPETENCY 7—Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.

Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development. Social workers:

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.

Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and technological advances; evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing,

analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

COMPETENCY 10(b)—Assessment

Social workers:

10.b.4 select appropriate intervention strategies.

COMPETENCY 10(d)—Evaluation

Social workers:

10.d.1 critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.

4. Course Objectives:

Upon completion of the 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, 11.4, 13.1)

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, 13.1)

5. Course Design:

Due to COVID-19, this course will be taught completely online. We will use some elements of a flipped classroom model—students learn about the basics of the topic through the assigned materials before the corresponding live-session, and engage in higher cognitive levels of learning with peers and instructor present during the live-sessions. Working on problems with a small group of peers will be a major live-session activity. Other methods will also be used for acquiring knowledge and skills including: brief lectures, class discussion, and group projects. 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.

6. Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:

- *Multiculturalism and 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.
- *Social Justice and Social Change.* 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.
- *Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and 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.

- *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.

7. Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:

The research and evaluation section of the NASW Code of Ethics 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.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

Please refer to the CANVAS site for all details regarding assigned readings, activities and other course policies.

a. Attendance and citizenship

All students are expected to join the live-sessions on time, participate in group and class activities, and make good contributions to their group project. If you are unable to attend a particular class for some reason, please take responsibility to update yourself by: (a) doing the assigned reading, (b) completing the Worksheet, (c) asking other students to fill you in, and (d) making up your contribution to the group project. I strongly encourage you not to miss any class session as the materials covered in each session are connected to each other.

Students in this class are likely to have different levels of experience in research methods. As a member of this class, I ask you to do the followings.

(a) Prepare for each class session by reading the assigned materials, ask questions and share your understanding of issues raised by the instructor or other students during class.

(a) Have a good attitude about learning something that maybe new and challenging. You should expect feeling frustrated at some points. Be prepared to deal with such emotions as a mature adult.

(c) Support your classmates in and out of the classroom. A supportive environment enhances learning effectiveness. Please be generous to offer instrumental and emotional support to your peers.

(d) Seek help from the instructor as early as possible if you experience difficulties in this class.

b. Honor Code

Academic integrity should not be taken lightly. If you have any questions or comments regarding the class or assignments, please feel free to contact the instructor. Please note that representing someone else's words, statements, ideas or works as one's own without proper acknowledgement or citation – is a serious violation of academic integrity and will be grounds for failure on an assignment and other disciplinary action as described under the School's policies on academic and professional conduct:

<http://ssw.umich.edu/msw-student-guide/section/1.12.00>

Another helpful resource can be found at: <http://guides.lib.umich.edu/swintegrity>

c. Grades

The criteria for each grade are as follows:

A+, A, A- Superlative mastery of subject content, demonstration of critical analysis, creativity and/or complexity in completion of assignment. The difference between A and A- is based on the degree to which excellence in these skills are demonstrated.

- B+ Mastery of subject content beyond expected competency, but has not demonstrated additional critical analysis, creativity or complexity in the completion of the assignment.
- B Mastery of subject content at level of expected competency – meets course expectations
- B- Less than adequate competency, but demonstrates student learning and potential for mastery of subject content.
- C or C- Demonstrates a minimal understanding of subject content. Significant areas needing improvement to meet course requirements.
- F Student has failed to demonstrate minimal understanding of subject content.

Grade and Points Conversion:

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
| A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C+ | C | C- | F |
| 94-100 | 90-93 | 87-89 | 83-86 | 80-82 | 77-79 | 73-76 | 70-72 | <70 |

CAMPUS INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Students with Disabilities

The School of Social Work has policies and services to provide equitable educational opportunities for students with documented disabilities in all programs and activities. Students with disabilities who require academic adjustments are encouraged to contact their instructors at the beginning of the semester to discuss their specific needs.

To find out more about services, register for services, or volunteer as a reader, note taker, or tutor, contact the University's Services for Students with Disabilities, G664 Haven Hall, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1045, [734-763-3000](tel:734-763-3000). Hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Students with disabilities may also contact Nyshourn Price, LMSW in the Office of Student Services (ndp@umich.edu) for further information.

Religious Observation

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.

Health and Wellness Services

Health and wellness situations or circumstances may impede student success within the program. Students should feel free to contact the School's Health and Wellness Advocate Nyshourn Price listed above.

Online learning and Tech support

We are using online remote teaching and learning for this class. Please refer to the handout "Online Learning Essentials" [in Canvas] to prepare yourself for online learning. Please call **734-764-HELP** or email 4help@umich.edu for general technical support with Canvas, Kaltura, Zoom or BlueJeans. Additionally, SSW-IT can be reached by emailing ssw.av@umich.edu

Proper Use of Names and Pronouns

All students will be referred to by the names and pronouns they use (e.g. she, they, ze, he). If you have a name that differs from the one that appears on the roster, please inform the instructor before the second class period so that she uses your correct name and pronouns. There are two inclusive restrooms in the SSW building: room 1784 (1st floor, near Registrar's Office) and B833T (Lower Level).

Emergency

In the event of an emergency, dial 9-1-1 from any cell phone or campus phone.

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. In the event of possible building closure (i.e. severe weather conditions, public health notices, etc.) you may contact (734)764-SSWB (7793) for up-to-date School closure information.

Be Prepared. 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) and locate at least two emergency exits nearest the classroom.

If you are concerned about your ability to exit the building in the case of an emergency, contact the Office of Student Services and/or email ssw-ADAcpliance@umich.edu. Office of Student Services School of Social Work | Room 1748 [734-936-0961](tel:734-936-0961).

For more information view the annual Campus Safety Statement at <http://www.dpss.umich.edu/>.

Register for UM Emergency Alerts at <http://www.dpss.umich.edu/emergency-management/alert/>.

COVID-19 Statement

For the safety of all students, faculty, and staff on campus, it is important for each of us to be mindful of safety measures that have been put in place for our protection. By returning to campus, you have acknowledged your responsibility for protecting the collective health of our community. Your participation in this course on an in-person/hybrid basis is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University, including maintaining physical distancing of six feet from others, and properly wearing a face covering in class. Other applicable safety measures may be described in the [Wolverine Culture of Care](#) and the [University's Face Covering Policy for COVID-19](#). Your ability to participate in this course in-person/hybrid may be impacted by failure to comply with campus safety measures. Individuals seeking to request an accommodation related to the face covering requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the [Office for Institutional Equity](#). If you are unable or unwilling to adhere to these safety measures while in a face-to-face class setting, you will be required to participate on a remote basis. I also encourage you to review the [Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) and the [COVID-related Addendum to the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

Health-Related Class Absences

Please evaluate your own health status regularly and refrain from attending class and coming to campus if you are ill. You are encouraged to seek appropriate medical attention for treatment. School of Social Work students who miss class due to illness of any kind will be given opportunities to access course materials online or provided with alternative learning

opportunities. Please notify me by email about your absence as soon as practical, so that I can make accommodations. Please note that documentation (a Doctor's note) for medical excuses is *not* required.

Recording Class

Audio and video recording of in-class lectures and discussions is prohibited without the advance written permission of the instructor. Students with an approved accommodation from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities permitting the recording of class meetings must present documentation to the instructor in advance of any recording being done. The instructor reserves the right to disallow recording for a portion of any class time where privacy is a special concern. If the instructor chooses to record a class, they will decide which classes, if any, are recorded, what portion of each class is recorded, and whether a recording is made available on the course management website. On days when classes are recorded, students will be notified in advance that a recording will occur and be provided with an option to opt-out. Class recordings and course materials may not be reproduced, sold, published or distributed to others, in whole or in part, without the written consent of the instructor.