



<b>Course title:</b>	<b>Basic Social Work Research (online course due to COVID)</b>
<b>Course #/term:</b>	SW 522 Winter 2021
<b>Time and place:</b>	Monday 2pm – 5pm
<b>Credit hours:</b>	3
<b>Instructor:</b>	Sue Ann Savas, MSW
<b>Pronouns:</b>	She/her/hers
<b>Contact info:</b>	ssavas@umich.edu <i>When you email me, please include SW522 in the subject line.</i>
<b>Cell:</b>	734-649-6776
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Immediately after class and by appointment

## **COURSE STATEMENT**

**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.

**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, 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)

**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.

## 2. Class Requirements

### a. Required Textbook & Other Readings

The required textbook for the course is Research Methods for Social Work, by Allen Rubin and Earl Babbie. *Any edition will suffice.* Used and late edition textbooks can be purchased online. All textbook readings and other course readings are listed in the syllabus and available in the required canvas module. The class session module will be open/available one week before class. In order to fully engage in the course, students are expected to complete all required readings. Additional resources in the class session module will include examples of work products and small group activities. *The research articles selected as readings for this course were drawn from the work of our UM SSW faculty and research scientists.*

## b. Class Schedule

An overview of each class session is presented next including topics, readings, videos, and assignment due dates. In order to be more responsive to student learning needs, some reading and small group exercise expectations will be revised. These changes in the schedule will be posted on canvas at least one week in advance. To support student learning and interests, additional on-line videos and podcasts will be posted within modules one week prior to the class session.

**Course Aims:** The course content and assignments:

- align with the course objectives
- prepare students for the required program evaluation course and field placement
- provide students with content knowledge and skills needed to demonstrate CSWE competencies
- prepare students for the MSW license examination

Date	Agenda	Required Readings to be completed before each class
L1. Jan 25	Introduction to the course and research for social workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the course syllabus, canvas site</li> <li>• Textbook: Chapter 1, Why Study Research?</li> </ul>
L2. Feb 1	Logic of inquiry, ways of knowing, evidence-based practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Textbook: Chapter 2, Evidence-based Practice</li> <li>• Nicholas, G. (2018, February 14). It's taken thousands of years, but Western science is finally catching up to Traditional Knowledge. Retrieved from <a href="https://theconversation.com/its-taken-thousands-of-years-but-westernscience-is-finally-catching-up-to-traditional-knowledge-90291">https://theconversation.com/its-taken-thousands-of-years-but-westernscience-is-finally-catching-up-to-traditional-knowledge-90291</a></li> </ul>
L3. Feb 8	How to search for and synthesize literature to inform practice decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UM Librarian, Darlene Nichols video on literature search</li> <li>• Raff, J. (2017). "How to read a scientific paper: A step-by-step guide for nonscientists" <i>London School of Economics and Political Science</i>. <a href="https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2016/05/09/how-to-read-and-understand-a-scientific-paper-a-guide-for-non-scientists/">https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2016/05/09/how-to-read-and-understand-a-scientific-paper-a-guide-for-non-scientists/</a></li> <li>• Free Online Journal and Research Databases. <a href="https://www.scribendi.com/academy/articles/free_online_journal_and_research_databases.en.html">https://www.scribendi.com/academy/articles/free_online_journal_and_research_databases.en.html</a></li> <li>• Anatomy of a Scholarly Article: <a href="#">Link to Video</a> North Carolina State.</li> </ul>
L4. Feb 15	Ethics and politics of social work research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Textbook Chapter 4: Ethics and Politics of Social Work Research</li> <li>• Harmon, A. (2010, April 21). Indian Tribe wins fight to limit research of its DNA. <i>The New York Times</i>. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.nytimes.com">http://www.nytimes.com</a></li> <li>• Pickles, J. (2020) Including and involving young people (under 18's) in hate research without the consent of parents. <i>Qualitative Research Journal</i>, Sage, Vol. 20(1) 22-38.</li> </ul>
L5. Feb 22	Culturally Competent Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Textbook Chapter 5: Culturally Competent Research</li> <li>• Branom, C. (2012). Community-based participatory research as a social work research and intervention approach. <i>Journal of Community Practice</i>, 20(3), 260-273.</li> </ul>

Date	Agenda	Required Readings to be completed before each class
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smith, L. T. (2012). <i>Research through imperial eyes</i>. Chapter 2. <i>Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples</i> (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 44-60). New York, NY: Zed Books Ltd.</li> </ul>
<b>L6. March 1</b>	Problem formation, conceptualize, operationalize research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Textbook Chapter 6: Problem Formation</li> <li>Textbook Chapter 7: Conceptualization and Operationalization</li> <li>Baffour, T D. &amp; Chonody, J.M. (2012), Do empowerment strategies facilitate knowledge &amp; behavioral change? The impact of health advocacy on health outcomes. <i>Social Work &amp; Public Health, 27</i>, 507-519.</li> </ul>
<b>L7. March 8</b>	Measurement, Constructing measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Textbook Chapter 8: Measurement</li> <li>Textbook Chapter 9: Constructing Measurement Instruments</li> <li>Fisher, C., Woodford, M., Gartner, R., Sterzing, P., and Victor, B. (2018). Advancing Research on LGBTQ Microaggressions: A Psychometric Scoping Review of Measures, <i>Journal of Homosexuality, Pages 1345-1379</i></li> </ul>
<b>L8. March 15</b>	Research Designs: causal inference, correlation designs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Textbook Chapter 10: Causal Inference and Correlational Designs</li> <li>Fraser, M., Lombardi B., Wu S., de Saxe Zerden, L., Richman, E., and Fraher, E. (2018). Integrated Primary Care and Social Work: A Systematic Review, <i>Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research, Volume 9, Number 2</i></li> </ul>
<b>L9. March 22</b>	Experimental and Single case designs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Textbook Chapter 11: Experimental Designs</li> <li>Textbook Chapter 12: Single-Case Evaluation Designs</li> <li>Zhang, A., Ji, Q., Currin-McCulloch, J., Solomon, P., Chen, Y., Li, Y., Nowicki, J. (2018). The effectiveness of solution-focused brief therapy for psychological distress among Chinese parents of children with a cancer diagnosis: A pilot randomized controlled trial. <i>Supportive Care in Cancer, 96</i>, 2901-2910.</li> </ul>
<b>L10. March 29</b>	Sampling, data management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Textbook Chapter 14: Sampling</li> <li>Schultz, K., Walters, K., Beltran, R., Stroud, S., and Johnson-Jennings, M. (2016). "I'm stronger than I thought": Native women reconnecting to body, health, and place. <i>Health &amp; Place, Volume 40, Pages 21-28</i>. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2016.05.001">https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2016.05.001</a></li> </ul>
<b>L11. April 5</b>	Quantitative Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Textbook Chapter 20: Quantitative Data Analysis</li> <li>Textbook Chapter 21: Inferential Data Analysis: Part 1</li> <li>Walsh, T., Seabrook, R., Tolman, R., Lee, S., and Singh, V. (2020) Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence and Beliefs About Partner Violence Screening Among Young Men, <i>The Annals of Family Medicine July 2020, 18 (4) 303-308</i>; DOI: <a href="https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.2536">https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.2536</a></li> </ul>
<b>L12. April 12</b>	Qualitative Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Textbook Chapter 17: Qualitative Research General Principles</li> <li>Trout, L., Wexler, L., and Moses J. (2018) Beyond two worlds: Identity narratives and the aspirational futures of Alaska Native youth. <i>Transcultural Psychology, Vol. 55(6) 800–820</i></li> </ul>
<b>L13. April 19</b>	Course wrap-up, Code of Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NASW Ethical Practice Standards</li> </ul>

### c. Assignments

Assignment	Due date, submit to canvas	Percent of overall
Responsible Conduct of Research, PEERRS Certificate	Feb 15	10%
Review and Synthesize Research to Inform Practice	March 8	20%
Interpretation of Data Analysis Output	April 12	20%
Research Study Critique Final	April 23	30%
Course Engagement (4 class exercises)	Instructor rating	20%

Students will work on assignments and class exercises in small group breakouts after zoom class to receive input from peers and the instructor. Students will have an opportunity to share their products and gather feedback on their deliverables from their group members and/or the instructor. Individual student work products/assignments will be uploaded to canvas for grading. Full description of assignments and rubrics are available in canvas Assignment tab.

UM PEERRS Responsible Conduct of Research and Scholarship (RCRS) Training. Students will complete this 2.5 to 3 hour training on human subject protections and ethical research practices. Students will submit the certificate of course completion to the canvas assignment folder.

Review and Synthesize Research to Inform Practice. This assignment will demonstrate the student's ability to act as a critical consumer of the design, methodology, and conclusions of social work and social and behavioral science research publications (course objective). The student will demonstrate their understanding of the relevance and applicability of research in working with disadvantaged, disenfranchised, and diverse populations at risk. The student will formulate a series of practice questions to inform a practice decision at the micro, mezzo or macro level. Practice questions could include finding a new program model, a more effective intervention, or a better understanding of a diverse population at risk. The student will find and synthesize 3 to 4 online research publications with findings relevant to the driving practice questions. The written report will include the following components: impetus for the research activity, the programmatic context, the results, and the article references. Student will submit a 3-4 page professional report to the canvas assignment folder.

Interpretation of Data Analysis Output. Students will interpret quantitative data output to demonstrate their ability to interpret and draw conclusions from selected analytic and statistical procedures.

Research Study Critique Final. Students will demonstrate their understanding of research concepts and principles to permit a critical analysis of one research or evaluation study with respect to quality, bias, ethics, and potential applications (course objective), including research design, sampling, culturally

relevant measures, reliability and validity of measures, analysis techniques, and the implications of conclusions drawn.

**d. Course Engagement: Attendance, class participation, completion of exercises**

Class attendance is imperative for both your own learning and the learning of your peers, and certainly for my learning. I expect students to attend class and small group sessions. Excessive absences (more than 2) will result in lower course engagement points. Routine tardiness will also reduce your course engagement points. If personal or professional circumstances require your absence from more than one class, please contact me as soon as possible. Note that, even if you are absent from a class, you are still responsible for the content and the required assignments due that day. Please review the [Policy on Class Attendance](#) found in the MSW Student Guide. Course engagement is more than attending the sessions. Engagement includes asking and answering questions in class. Engagement includes contributing fully to your group evaluation project. Course engagement includes coming to class prepared (doing the readings, watching the video, completing the exercises). Four exercises will be completed during the course (complete/incomplete rating), contributing to your course engagement points.

**e. Grading**

Final grades are based on 100 percentage points. Letter grades are assigned to point totals according to the point to grade chart below. Assignments are due on or before the dates listed on the syllabus and on Canvas, except where noted. Please submit all work on time. Late assignments will be penalized 20% of the points earned. I am not inclined to waive this policy, though I do understand there may be exceptional circumstances. Note: assignments are due by 5pm. Additional MSW policies are available in the Student Guide: [Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction](#), [Student Grievance procedures](#), [policy for grading in special circumstances](#).

100	A+	88-90	B+	78-80	C+	68-70	D+
94-99	A	84-87	B	74-77	C	64-67	D
91-93	A-	81-83	B-	71-73	C-	<64	E

Responsible Conduct of Research, UM PEERRS Certificate	10 points
Review and Synthesize Research to Inform Practice	20 points
Interpretation of Data Analysis Output	20 points
Research Study Critique	30 points
Course Engagement (4 class exercises)	20 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 points</b>

#### **f. Class Recording and Course Materials**

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 a recording is occurring. 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.] Additional information on class recordings can be found the [Recording and Privacy Concerns FAQ](#)

#### **g. 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](#).

#### **h. 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.

**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*

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### **Instructor Teaching Philosophy**

Adapted from Rosenshine, B. *Research-based Strategies that All Teachers Should Know*, American Educator (Spring 2012).

I will begin each session with a review of what was covered the previous lecture. Students will be asked to provide the review of key concepts and “take-aways.” I will present material in small steps and provide class time for students to practice after each step. I will give clear instructions. I will provide models, templates and numerous examples of problem-solving, including rehearsal time. I will think aloud as I demonstrate. I will provide scaffolds for difficult tasks and notify students of possible errors. I will guide student practice through additional explanations, live review of drafts, and small group consultations. I will monitor students for understanding by asking specific questions and checking student responses. I will reteach material when necessary. I will teach material needed by students even when the students were expected to have mastered the material prior to the course. I will note student successes and give students ample opportunity to practice independently. I will provide feedback as students begin to practice independently. I use transparent and inclusive teaching approaches.

I use an engaged active learning approach and partner with the community to address real challenges. In addition to the course objectives and the CSWE competencies, we work to develop the following University of Michigan engaged learning student outcomes: (1) self-agency and innovation, (2) collaboration, communication, and teamwork, (3) social/civic responsibility and ethical reasoning, (4) intercultural engagement, (5) creativity.