



Course title:	BASIC SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH	
Course #/term:	SW 522, Winter, 2021	
Time and place:	Section 005, Monday, 6 pm to 9 pm, Online	
Credit hours:	3	
Prerequisites:	None	
Instructor:	Roland Zullo	
Pronouns:	He Him His	
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	You may expect a response within 48 hours	
Office:	Online	
Office hours:	Tuesday, 2 pm to 3 pm, and by appointment	

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 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.

c. 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.

d. 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)

e. 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.

f. 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.

g. 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.

2. Class Requirements

a. Readings and software

Readings. There is no required textbook for this class. Required readings and supplements are listed on Canvas.

Software. Students should have Excel (version 2015 or after) installed on your computer. Students of the University of Michigan have free access to [Microsoft Office software](#). After installing a local application of Excel, please install the 'data analysis' add in following [this guide](#). If the link does not work, please google 'excel data analysis add-in' to find help.

b. References for readings

- Batchelor, A. (2019). *Statistics in Social Work: An Introduction to Practical Applications*. Columbia University Press.
- Bjork-James, S. (2020). White sexual politics: the patriarchal family in white nationalism and the religious right. *Transforming Anthropology*, 28 (1): 58–73
- Case, A., & Deaton, A. (2015) Rising morbidity and mortality in midlife among white non- Hispanic Americans in the 21st century, *PNAS* 112 (49): 15078-83.
- Grinnell, R. M., and Unrau, Y. A. (2018) *Social Work Research and Evaluation: Foundations of Evidence-Based Practice*. Oxford University Press
- Lilienfeld, S. O., Lynn, S. J., Ruscio, J. & Beyerstein, B. L. (2009) *50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology: Shattering Widespread Misconceptions about Human Behavior*. Wiley-Blackwell
- López, I. H. (2014). *Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism and Wrecked the Middle Class*. Oxford University Press.
- Luttig, M. D., Federico, C.M & Lavine, H. (2017). Supporters and opponents of Donald Trump respond differently to racial cues: An experimental analysis. *Research and Politics*, October-December: 1–8
- Milgram, S. (1963). Behavioral study of obedience. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 67 (4): 371-78.
- Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. R. (2017). *Research Methods for Social Work*. Belmont, CA : Thomson/Brooks/Cole.
- Sides, J., Tesler, M. & Vavreck, L. (2018) Hunting where the ducks are: activating support for Donald Trump in the 2016 Republican primary. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 28:2, 135-56.

c. Class schedule

Date	Agenda	Readings
Week 1 1/25/2021	Why research?	Lilienfeld, et al. (2009) chapter 11
Week 2 2/1/2021	Epistemology.	Rubin & Babbie (2017) chapter 4
Week 3 2/8/2021	Evaluating research.	Faulkner & Faulkner (2018) chapter 4
Week 4 2/15/2021	Ethics.	Milgram (1963)
Week 5 2/22/2021	Research design.	Luttig et al. (2017)
Week 6 3/1/2021	Sampling and statistical power.	Batchelor (2019), chapter 6
Week 7 3/8/2021	Charts and graphs.	Case & Deaton (2015)
Week 8 3/15/2021	Statistical tests.	Grinnell (2018) chapter 20
Week 9 3/22/2021	Measures and surveys.	Sides et al. (2018)
Week 10 3/29/2021	Regression.	Batchelor (2019), chapter 9
Week 11 4/5/2021	Ethnography.	Bjork-James (2020)
Week 12 4/12/2021	Focus groups.	Plummer-D'Amato (2008)
Week 13 4/19/2021	Historical perspectives.	Lopez (2014)

d. Assignments

Research is a valuable resource for improving practice and understanding our world. However, the usefulness of this resource depends on the ability for a practitioner to locate, digest and synthesize literature relevant to a topic. This class is designed to help students become better consumers of research. Students will learn how to locate peer-reviewed research from library and web sources, evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of research, and synthesize the material.

The main assignment for this class is a literature synthesis that examines the reasons for the present political divisions in the U.S. that led to the storming of the Capitol on January 6, 2021. Students will read and evaluate six articles that investigate factors or explanations for the current political climate. Students will be asked to submit a review of each article prior to class for discussion. Each review is worth up to 10 points. It is important to submit the review prior to class. Reviews that are submitted late are worth up to 5 points. A final synthesis of all the articles is worth 30 points.

Class participation is worth 10 points, taking into consideration attendance, attentiveness and comments. Comments are to be respectful, constructive and mutually supportive.

Finally, an additional 10 bonus points are available for students that complete the PEERS training on research ethics. Complete the module titled "Human Subjects Research Protections" at <http://my.research.umich.edu/peers/>. Submit the certificate on Canvas or by email.

Assignment	Due date	Percent of grade
Milgram (1963)	2/15/2021 - noon	10 percent
Luttig et al. (2017)	2/22/2021 - noon	10 percent
Case & Deaton (2015)	3/8/2021 - noon	10 percent
Sides et al. (2018)	3/22/2021 – noon	10 percent
Bjork-James (2020)	4/5/2021 – noon	10 percent
Lopez (2014)	4/19/2021 – noon	10 percent
Final literature synthesis	4/26/2021 – noon	30 percent
PEERS training	3/29/2021 - noon	10 percent bonus

e. Attendance and class participation

This is an interactive class with no required textbook. It is therefore important for you to attend class to contribute to the conversation. All classes will be remote, and your participation grade will be based on attendance, attentiveness, and contributions to the class discussion. Students should inform the instructor of any absence.

f. Grading

1. Literature reviews and final synthesis: 90 points total. Each review is worth up to 10 points; late reviews are worth up to 5 points. The final synthesis is worth 30 points
2. Class participation: 10 points.
3. Bonus opportunity by completing PEERS training is 10 points.

In all instances, grades are based on the completeness of the assignment, the correct use and interpretation of statistical or data output, grammar, structure, readability, and the comprehensive communication of your findings.

Late submissions will suffer a penalty of 1 point for each part or full day in 24 hour increments that begin with the due date and time. Please contact the instructor if you have exceptional circumstances.

Grades. Your course grades are based on total points scored on all assignments and activities above:

A+	98-above	B+	86-89	C+	76-79	D ≤ 69 (Fail)	
A	94-97	B	83-85	C	73-75		
A-	90-93	B-	80-82	C-	70-72		

g. 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.

h. 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.

i. 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 and plagiarism*