

School of Social Work

Winter 2021

SW 522 Research Methods in Social Work: Section 07 & Section 08

Tues. 9:00-12:00 Online &

Tues. 2:00-5:00 Online

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The course provides you with an introduction to basic research methods within the context of social work practice. Major concepts and the steps of empirical research are examined, including problem identification and formulation, literature review, research design, sampling, definitions and measurement of variables, and instrument construction. Emphasis is placed on the use of empirical research to inform practice as well as on the development of knowledge from practice. The major goal is to enhance the student's capacity to identify problems, interventions and reach valid and reliable conclusions about their practice through research. Quantitative and qualitative research approaches are given equal emphasis as strategies for evaluating one's practice. Readings and discussion of issues concerning ethnicity, race, gender and concerns of special populations are essential features of this course. The political context for conducting research on historically oppressed or hidden groups is explored. The concern with special populations is integrated throughout all stages of the research process, including problem identification; research design; sampling; measurement; data analysis and interpretation of findings. Ethical issues regarding human subjects as well as federally mandated procedures for protection of human subjects including the institutional review board are also discussed.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course covers quantitative and qualitative research methods, commonly used statistical procedures, and approaches to the evaluation of practice. Special emphasis will be placed on increasing students' abilities to apply research methods, conduct basic statistical analysis, and interpret research findings. This course is designed to prepare students to be consumers of research and to increase their appreciation of the relevance of research and evaluation at all levels of their practice.

During winter semester, each student will complete:

1. Take Home Midterm Exam—40% of course grade (3/9 Take Home)
2. Take Home Final Exam—60% of course grade. (4/20 Take Home)

Course Objectives:

The course will provide information and experiences for students to:

1. Appreciate the contribution of social work research to knowledge, theory building, and the development of an empirical base for practice in the various methods and fields of practice.
2. Understand basic concepts of the scientific method as it relates to social work practice.
3. Acquire basic skills in research methodology relevant to problem identification; formulation of research questions through review of the literature; hypothesis formulation; research design; sampling procedures, measurement; data collection; data analysis; and interpretation of findings.
4. Develop the skills and knowledge necessary to critically evaluate published research and utilize research findings in social work practice as it pertains to their own practice.
5. Understand the ethical dilemmas inherent in the process of conducting social work research and have knowledge of the current practices and standards for protecting the rights of human subjects.
6. Understand the potential biases inherent in research including operationalization of variables such as ethnicity, race, gender, and cultural diversity, and bias towards desired outcomes at all stages of the research process.
7. Develop an appreciation of the role of the social worker in using available information to inform practice as well as develop practice knowledge from their practice

COURSE COMPETENCY OUTCOMES:

At the end of this course, students are to demonstrate that they have mastered the basic knowledge and skills in research methodology through completion of the midterm and final examinations. Students will be able to:

2.1.1	PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY
A.	Advocate for client access to the services of social work through the development of a problem area and literature review
B.	Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development through the review of the literature
C.	Attend to professional roles and boundaries through class discussion on study design, instrument selection, participant recruitment and data collection
D.	Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication during role-play in class on data collection—face-to-face interviews, focus groups, group interventions and surveys
E.	Engage in life long learning through review of the literature and empirical studies
F.	Use supervision and consultation through discussion with professor and classmates
2.1.2	ETHICS
A.	Recognize and manage personal values in research in a way that allows professional values to guide practice through class discussion
B.	Make ethical decisions in research by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics
D.	Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions in research
2.1.3	CRITICAL THINKING
A.	Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom
B.	Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation in research
C.	Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in researching individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
2.1.4	DIVERSITY
A.	Recognize in research the extent to which a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power
B.	Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in research
C.	Recognize and communicate understanding in research of the importance of difference in shaping life experience

2.1.5	HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
A.	Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination in research
B.	Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice through developing a problem area focus for study that addresses these issues
C.	Engage in research that advance social and economic justice
2.1.6	RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT
A.	Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry
B.	Use research evidence to inform practice
2.1.7	HUMAN BEHAVIOR
A.	Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation
B.	Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment in research
2.1.8.	POLICY/ADVOCACY
A.	Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being through research
B.	Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action through research
2.1.9	WIDER CONTEXTUAL VIEW
A.	Continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant research
B.	Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services through research
2.1.10	PRACTICE AND EVALUATION
2.1.10 (a)	Engagement
A.	Substantively and effectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities through research
B.	Use empathy and other interpersonal skills in research
C.	Develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes through in-class discussion of participatory research, study design, measurement and data collection
2.1.10 (b)	Assessment
A.	Understand data collection, management, and interpretation
B.	Assess client strengths and limitations in research
C.	Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives using research
D.	Select appropriate intervention strategies using research
2.1.10 (c)	Intervention
A.	Initiate action to achieve organizational goals using research
B.	Implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities through research
C.	Help clients resolve problems using research

D.	Negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients using research
2.1.10 (d)	Evaluation
A.	Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions

Course Expectations

Attendance & Lateness

Students are expected to attend all class sessions and please plan to arrive on time.

Student Rights Concerning Religious Observances:

Education Law Section 224-a, stating the rights and privileges of students unable to attend classes on certain days because of religious beliefs, appears below, as mandated by State law:

- No person shall be expelled from or refused admission as a student for the reason that he/she is unable, because of religious beliefs, to attend classes or participate in any examination, study or work requirements on a particular day or days.*
- Any student who is unable, because of his/her religious beliefs, to attend classes on a particular day or days shall, because of such absence, be excused from any examination or any study or work requirements.*
- It shall be the responsibility of the faculty and the administrative officials to make available to each student who is absent from school, because of his./her religious beliefs, an equivalent opportunity to make up any examination, study or work requirement which may have been missed because of such absence on any particular day or days. No fees of any kind shall be charged for making available to the said student such equivalent opportunity.*

In effectuating the provisions of this section, it shall be the duty of the faculty and of the administrative officials to exercise the fullest measure of good faith. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student who avails himself/herself of the provisions of this section.

- Students who are aggrieved by the alleged failure of any faculty or administration officials to comply in good faith with the provisions of this section shall be entitled to maintain an action or proceeding in the supreme court of the county in which the institution is located for the enforcement of their rights under this sec.*

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND BASIS FOR GRADING

Midterm Exam (40%) ([Take Home](#))

Final Exam (60%) ([Take Home](#))

REQUIRED TEXTS & SOFTWARE:

Rubin, Allen & Babbie, Earl (4th Ed.) (2017) *Research Methods for Social Work*. Brooks/Cole: Belmont, CA. **ANY EDITION IS OKAY.**

Consequences of Plagiarism—using material without citing it can result in failing the course and expulsion from the School of Social Work.

Grading: Scores that reflect an “A” are reserved for student work that shows excellent individual performance—good mastery of content, application of critical thinking, and clear and concise writing. “A” and “A-” distinguish the degree of superiority. A grade of “B+” denotes performance just above the mastery level. A grade of “B” is given to students who meet the basic requirement of the assignments. A grade of “B-” is used for the student work that is less than adequate, reflecting only moderate grasp of material. Variations of the “C” grade are given to work that reflects a minimum grasp of the material and poor organization. Final grades will be determined by adding the scores from all assignments.

Accommodations: If you have a condition that may interfere with your participation in this course, please schedule an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations for your specific needs. This information will be kept strictly confidential. For more information and resources, contact the Services for Student Disabilities Office at G664 Haven Hall (734) 763-3000.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

Jan 19th

Introduction and Orientation to Social Work Research

Introductions

Course overview, format, and expectations

Misconceptions and misinformation about what research is and what is isn't

What is research and does it apply to social work?

Jan 26th

Reading: Chapter 1: Why Study Research

Chapter 2: Evidence-Based Practice

Chapter 3: Quantitative, Qualitative, & Mixed Methods of Inquiry

FEB 2nd

Readings: Chapter 4: Factors Influencing the Research Process

Chapter 5: Ethical and Cultural Issue in Social Work

******Bacallao, M.L. & Smokowski, P.R. (2007). The cost of getting ahead: Mexican family system changes after immigration. Family Relations, 56, 52-66.**

Feb. 9th

Readings: Chapter 6: Culturally Competent Research

Chapter 7: Reviewing Literature and Developing Research Questions

Feb. 16th

Readings: Chapter 8: Measurement in Quantitative and Qualitative Inquiry
Chapter 9: Quantitative and Qualitative Measurement Instruments

**** Alpert, L. T. & Britner, P.A. (2009). Measuring parent engagement. *Social Work Research*, 33(3), 135-145.

Feb. 23rd

Readings: Chapter 10: Surveys
Chapter 11: Sampling: Quantitative & Qualitative Approaches

Mar. 2nd

Readings: **Chapter 12: Experiments and Quasi-Experiments**
Chapter 13: Single-Case Evaluation Designs

Mar. 9th

TAKE HOME MIDTERM EXAM

Mar. 16th

Readings: Chapter 14: Program Evaluation
Chapter 15: Additional Methods in Qualitative Inquiry

****Zhang, W., Chen, J. Feng, Y., Li, J. Liu, C. & Zhao, X. (2014).
Evaluation of a sexual abuse prevention education for Chinese preschoolers.
Research of Social Work Practice, 24(4), 428-436.

Mar. 30th

**Readings: Chapter 17: Quantitative Data Analysis
Chapter 18: Qualitative Data Analysis**

April 6th

Check for Data Integrity & Entering Data into SPSS

April 13th

Univariate & Bivariate Analyses

******Baffour, T D. & Chonody, J.M. (2012) Do empowerment strategies facilitate knowledge & behavioral change? The impact of health advocacy on health outcomes. Social Work & Public Health, 27, 507-519.**

******Ostrom, R.A., Serovich, J.M., Lim, J.Y. & Mason, T.L. (2006) The role of stigma in reasons for HIV disclosure and non-disclosure to children. AIDS Care, 18(1), 60-65.**

April 20th

TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM DUE