



Course title:	Proseminar in Social Work and Social Science (Part 2)
Course #/term:	SW800, Part 2 Winter, 2023
Time and place:	Tuesday, 9:00 – 11:00, SSW Room 1794 (Online)
	Join Zoom Meeting
	Pass Code 021882
	https://umich.zoom.us/j/98183242816
Credit hours:	2
Prerequisites:	Permission of instructor
Instructor:	William Elliott
Pronouns:	He, His, Him
Contact info:	Email: willelli@umich.edu You may expect a response within 24 hours
Office:	B640
Office hours:	By appointment

1. Course Statement

a. Course description

This seminar is designed to support doctoral students as they integrate the technical and theoretical knowledge gained in coursework to develop clear and compelling proposals for their preliminary examinations and dissertations. We will cover the process for formulating research questions, organizing and developing literature reviews, identifying and developing research methods, and organizing proposals. The requirements and procedures for the social work preliminary examination will be reviewed and clarified. The focus will be on developing proposals that integrate social science and social work knowledge.

More specifically, the preliminary exam consists of the student's answers to three questions that are relevant to his/her interests and approved by the faculty committee:

1. A question concerning the major theory of theories in their area
2. A question focusing on the empirical research available in their area
3. A question addressing social work practice; that is, research that has been conducted in the area of practice and/or policy in their area

Answers for the prelim should not be descriptive alone, but rather should involve analysis, synthesis, conceptualization, and integration of major viewpoints, alternate considerations, and research evidence from the available literature, and should identify critical issues for future development in the student's area.

b. Course design

This course is designed as a seminar that emphasizes discussion and exchange of ideas and information. Most classes will require reading from assigned articles. Throughout this term, we will examine topics pertinent to making explicit the requirements and practices of scholarship needed for the development of a prelim proposal in Social Work. Students who have completed the prelim already and faculty from the Joint Doctoral Program who have participated on prelim committees will describe their experiences, how their proposal and prelim were conceived and executed. This will give students a direct sense of different styles with which they may wish to write their prelim proposal and ultimate complete their prelim. In addition, students will learn about conducting systematic reviews. Experts will come to class and instruct students on the technology that can assist them in conducting a systematic review and on how to conduct a systematic review. Students will take an active role in framing our discussions.

<p>Theme Relation to Multiculturalism & Diversity:</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Theme Relation to Social Justice:</p>	<p>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.</p>

<p>Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation:</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Theme Relation to Behavioral and Social Science Research:</p>	<p>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.</p>

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. Objectives

- Outline of prelim proposal
 - Theory question

- Description of major relevant theory or theories
 - Empirical research that supports or refutes theories
 - Critique of theories
 - Suggestions for enhancing theories (e.g., additional conceptual linkages; syntheses of two or more theories)
- Empirical Research question
 - Analysis and synthesis of empirical research
 - Critique of research
 - Identification of gaps in research and suggestions for future research
- Social work practice question
 - Synthesis of research conducted on social work practice and/or policy
 - Critique of this research
 - Identification of gaps in research on practice and/or policy. Suggestions for addressing these gaps.
- Identify how themes of privilege, oppression, diversity, or social justice will be addressed in the prelim proposal (PODS exercise)
 - Understand ethical issues in the conduct of research and evaluation.
 - Understand the relevance and applicability of research in working with disadvantaged, disenfranchised, and diverse populations.
 - Examine the processes by which research and evaluation findings can be used to enhance social justice, social change, promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.
- Critically evaluate the design, methodology, and conclusions of social work and social and behavioral science research publications.
 - Understand research concepts to permit a critical analysis of research and evaluation studies with respect to quality, bias, ethics, and potential applications.
 - Assess the strengths and weaknesses of selected research designs and methodology.
 - Assess the cultural sensitivity of measures and measurement strategies.
 - Assess the biases and implications of conclusions drawn in the research studies.
- Become familiar with different styles for writing a prelim proposal from other doctoral students who have completed their prelim and their prelim Committee members.
- Write a social work prelim proposal

e. Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values

This course will emphasize the relationship of the NASW Code of Ethics, specifically those sections pertaining to the core values and ethical principles of social work as well as the standards of research and evaluation that under gird ethical behavior in the conduct of scientific evaluations. Additionally, this course will emphasize the relationship between the NASW Code of Ethics and other ethical codes governing evaluation research such as the Nuremberg Code, Declaration of Helsinki, and 1974 National Research Act (PL93-348) and the 1996 Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

f. Intensive Focus Statement on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity, and Social Justice (PODS)

This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work towards social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self-knowledge and self-awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials

All readings will be available electronically via Canvas. A primary resource will be our 2020 Joint Program Guidelines, found here:

<https://ssw.umich.edu/sites/default/files/documents/phd/fall-2020-guidelines.pdf>

b. Class schedule (*Grades due no later than April 21, 2023)

Join Zoom Meeting

Pass Code 021882

<https://umich.zoom.us/j/98183242816>

Date/Time	Agenda	Required Readings & Assignments
Week 1 1/10/23	Schedule Individual Meeting with Instructor	N/A
Week 2 1/17/23	Introduction to Class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Go over syllabus - Discuss assignments 	N/A
Week 3 1/24/23	Overview of Prelim <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Goals 2. Guiding Principles 3. Preliminary Examination Content and Timeline 4. The Preliminary Examination Proposal 5. The Examination Committee 6. Evaluation of Performance Student Discussion	Read Appendix 9 of student handbook

<p>Week 4 1/31/23</p>	<p>Overview of Prelim Proposal</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction, including the three key questions related to theory, empirical research, and social work practice 2. Significance of the topic to social work and social science 3. Relevance to student's anticipated dissertation topic 4. Independence from other written products 5. How themes of privilege, oppression, diversity, or social justice will be addressed in the preliminary exam 6. Outline preliminary exam with a brief narrative overview of the literatures in each of the subsections (theory, empirical, and practice) 7. Timeline for exam 8. References 	<p>Read Sara Stein Prelim Proposal Example</p>
<p>Week 5 2/7/23</p>	<p>Conceptualizing your research questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) A question concerning the major theory or theories in your area (b) A question focusing on the empirical research available in your area (c) A question addressing social work practice; that is, research that has been conducted in the area of practice and/or policy in your area <p>Student Discussion</p>	<p>No readings</p> <p>Draft questions and bring to class. These do not have to be final questions. They also may not yet take the form of a question but represent your thoughts on where you are thinking you will go</p>
<p>Week 6 2/14/23</p>	<p>Organizing your literature</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Go over table assignment <p>Student Discussions</p>	<p>Look over examples on Canvas for Table Assignment</p> <p>Write out the headings for your table similar to the example. You might want to add column headings from the examples, eliminate headings, make it fit your research</p> <p>You might also have empirical tables, qualitative tables, theory tables. I would think you would have a set of tables for each section of the prelim (theory, empirical, and practice)</p>
<p>Week 7 2/21/23</p>	<p>Theory Section of Prelim</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Description of major relevant theory or theories 	<p>Read theory section of example prelims on Canvas and reread Appendix 9 of the student</p>

	<p>(b) Empirical research that supports or refutes theories</p> <p>(c) Critique of theories</p> <p>(d) Suggestions for enhancing theories (e.g., additional conceptual linkages; synthesis of two or more theories)</p> <p>Empirical Section of Prelim</p> <p>(a) Analysis and synthesis of empirical research</p> <p>(b) Critique of research</p> <p>(c) Identification of gaps in research on practice and/or policy. Suggestions for addressing these gaps</p> <p>Student Discussion</p>	<p>handbook, section on Theory</p> <p>Read empirical section of example prelims on Canvas and reread Appendix 9 of the student handbook, section on Empirical</p>
Week 8 2/28/23	Spring Break	
Week 9 3/7/23	<p>Practice Section of Prelim</p> <p>(a) Synthesis of research conducted on social work practice and/or policy</p> <p>(b) Critique of this research</p> <p>(c) Identification of gaps in research on practice and/or policy. Suggestions for addressing these gaps</p> <p>Student Discussion</p>	<p>Read practice section of example prelims on Canvas and reread Appendix 9 of the student handbook, section on Practice</p>
Week 10 3/14/23	Professional Development	N/A
Week 11 3/21/23	Professional Development	N/A
Week 12 3/28/23	Optional 30-minute meetings with Dr. Elliott (via Zoom). If not use time to write prelim proposal	N/A
Week 13 4/4/23	Course Wrap-Up	N/A
Week 14 4/11/23	Examine Week	<p>Review Tables are Due</p> <p>Proposal & PODS Due</p>

c. Assignments

1. Draft Prelim Proposal (Due 4/11/23)

- a. Full draft of prelim proposal. Should contain the elements contained in the picture of the table of contents below. There is not a set page length for this assignment a full

proposal might be around 5-40 pages. But again, not a specific page length so might be slightly shorter or longer. It might be shorter if you are not as far along. I understand that some of you will be further than others on this and not all sections might be fully completed, and it might be more of an outline with notes. The exception is the PODS section of the proposal discussed below.

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2. PODS Exercise: This would be the **POWER, OPPRESSION, DIVERSITY, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE** section of the prelim proposal above (Due 4/11/23). *You need to complete at least a draft of this section to complete the PODS requirement.*

3. Review Tables (Due 4/11/23)

- a. Students will be provided with a template for a table (the template can also be found on Blackboard) to use to summarize at a “minimum” 20 peer reviewed research articles. The articles can be related to theory, empirical, or practice. However, theory articles should go in a theory table, empirical articles in a empirical table and so forth.

d. Deadline Expectations

All assignments are due by email (willelli@umich.edu) prior to the beginning of class on the date listed in the course outline. Late assignments will be graded down 5% per day. Exceptions will need prior permission of the instructor. Any assignment can be turned in early.

e. Attendance and class participation

Given that we only meet once a week; attendance is very important. More than attending, though, it's important to be present, by which I mean actively engaging in class discussion, and sharing your own experiences. This is a seminar class so much of the class content is gained through discussion.

f. Grading

The overall grade for the course will be based on the completion of Student Lead Discussion (30 points), PODS (10 points), Draft Prelim Proposal (40), and completion of Review Tables (20 points). An A grade is given for exceptional individual performance. Grades in the B range reflect satisfactory completion of course requirements (competent performance). C grades reflect less than satisfactory work and D grades indicate deficient performance; neither is acceptable at the graduate level.

Grade Summary

Title	Percentage of Grade	Points Allocated
Student In Class Discussion	30%	30
PODS	10%	10
Draft Prelim Proposal	40%	40
Review Tables	20%	20
Totals	100%	100

*The PODS exercise is embedded in the prelim proposal.

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*