Course Statement

a. Course Description

This course will provide students with an orientation to research, scientific inquiry, and the contribution of research in social work practice. The course will help students define research terminology, the social work ethical standards pertaining to research and evaluation, and the role of the researcher in social work practice. Students will understand the ethical, political, and cultural context of research to inform micro, mezzo, and macro social work. This course is not required for Advanced Standing students.

b. Course objectives and competencies

1. Demonstrate how to search for and retrieve social work research studies to inform practice and navigate gaps in the evidence base (Essential 7; EPAS 4, 7, 9).

2. Demonstrate how to use social work practice experience and theories to inform the plan and implementation of a research data project (Essential 7; EPAS 4, 7, 9).

3. Develop a culturally appropriate quantitative or qualitative data collection protocol (Essential 44; EPAS 1, 5).

4. Demonstrate how to translate and report data results and other research-based insights
to inform the improvement of social work practice on multiple levels (Essential 25, 27, 44, 45; EPAS, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8).

5. Describe how research can be used to combat racist, oppressive, and unjust practices and structures (Essential 25, 27, 44, 45; EPAS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8).

List of Social Work Competencies and Essential Items Defined

c. Course Design

This minicourse will make use of different methods to facilitate knowledge development: lectures, discussions, and practice exercises. This course is designed to increase students' comfort level with research methods and terminology to increase their appreciation for the relevance of research in social work practice.

d. Intensive focus on 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 toward social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self-knowledge and self-awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

2. Class Requirements

Text and class materials

There is no required book to purchase for the course. In-person lectures will be guided by:


Asynchronous materials for this course will consist of modules from Coursera's Master Track online program developed for the UM_SSW by Professor Daphne Watkins. These modules will be adapted to fit the goals and objectives for this course.

Assigned readings and other materials will be posted on Canvas under Modules → Week #. Please let me know if any materials are inaccessible. These materials can include articles that are compatible with a screen reader or videos that do not include closed captions.
To fully engage in the content and become a competent and skilled social work practitioner, I expect students will review the asynchronous content prior to each in-person class session. There will be a lot of asynchronous content for you to complete prior to each class. Asynchronous content for this course will consist of readings (e.g., academic journals, short essays, etc.), and videos. During class, I will lecture on some of the content you’re learning on asynchronously, the content presented in Faulkner’s book, and additional information/tips that can help you complete your final assignment. There may be times where we will engage the content more deeply through activities, small group discussions, or guest lecturers. I will post these lecture slides, additional readings, and other relevant course materials on Canvas.

Class schedule

The syllabus is a living document and as such, may be revised according to the needs of the course. Changes to the schedule and any additional/changes to the assignments or modules will be announced via Canvas. Be sure that you have Canvas announcements enabled. Modules will be open at least one week prior to class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Asynchronous Material</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Week 1: \nAugust 28, 2023 | - Introduction to the course 
- Why Research in Social Work 
- Research Ethics | Module 1               |
| Week 2 \nSeptember 4, 2023 | Labor Day: *No Lecture | Module 2               |
| Week 3 \nSeptember 11, 2023 | - Locating Peer-Reviewed Research 
- Key Concepts in Social Work Research | Module 3               |
| Week 4 \nSeptember 18, 2023 | - Quantitative Methods | Module 4               |
| Week 5 \nSeptember 25, 2023 | - Qualitative Methods 
- Mixed Methods | Module 5               |
| Week 6 \nOctober 2, 2023 | Using Research to Inform Decisions | Module 6               |
Assignments

Turn in all assignments on time. Information about course assignments can be found on Canvas. Assignments should be submitted via Canvas by 11:59 PM on their due date unless otherwise specified. If you are going to be absent the day the assignment is due, the assignment should be submitted prior to its due date. Extenuating circumstances may be discussed with me and will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

All late work is subject to a reduction in grade, except in the cases of acute emergencies. Late assignments will be graded as usual and then 10% deduction (a full grade level) will be assessed to all late assignments with additional deductions every additional 24 hours until the assignment is received. For example, assignments uploaded after 11:59 PM on the date it is due will receive an additional 10% deduction. Assignments uploaded after 11:59 PM two days after it is due will receive an additional 10% per day deduction (20% total deduction), etc. Late assignments may receive little or no written feedback and will receive a lower grade unless you have made other arrangements with me at least 72 hours prior to the due date.

The table below displays the assignments schedule and grade allocation for each assignment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Percent of overall grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PEERS Certification</td>
<td>9/4</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Topic, Problem Statement, Research Questions</td>
<td>9/11</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference List</td>
<td>9/18</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>9/25</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection Paper</td>
<td>10/2 @ 5PM</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Responsible Conduct of Research Training (15%)**:

Complete the online Program for Education and Evaluation in Responsible Research and Scholarship (PEERRS) certification ([http://my.research.umich.edu/peerrs/](http://my.research.umich.edu/peerrs/)).
Report of a Review and Synthesis of the Evidence Base to Inform a Practice Decision (85%):

This collection of assignments asks you to demonstrate your 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 conclusions you make from research publications and its application to social work practice at the micro, mezzo, or macro level will also be evaluated in this assignment. Application of research knowledge to social work practice can include finding a new program model, a more effective intervention, or a better understanding of how a diverse population responds to a new intervention.

You will use peer-reviewed journals to find and synthesize 3 research publications with findings relevant to a research question that further your understanding of a social work practice area/issue of interest to you. Before beginning the brief review of research studies, each one of you will identify a population, an intervention, and expected outcomes to limit the scope of the research review.

When all individual assignments are completed, the full written report will include the following components:

1) Impetus for the research activity including the practice decision (Research Question),
2) The programmatic context,
3) Searching for peer-reviewed research studies, 4) The synthesis or learning across the studies,
4) Limitations of the studies,
5) Next steps, and
6) The article references.

**You will not collect data for this project.**

Your report will be divided into manageable sections throughout the course that will result in a viable report by the end of the semester. Each section builds upon each other. Throughout the semester, I will be available for you to meet with me to share your progress and answer any questions or concerns you may have.

The report should be **6 pages maximum not including the title page, references, and abstracts.** The final report is double spaced, with one-inch margins and 12 point font. The report should utilize APA formatting (7th edition). Review the MLibrary APA Citation Guide as needed. The Purdue Owl website is a very helpful resource for
providing you with assistance with APA formatting. Examples of the assignments below are located in Canvas.

- **Practice Topic, Problem Statement & Research Impetus/Question (10%).**
  Identify a social work practice topic of interest. Describe a program/intervention that informs your selected social practice topic of interest. Discuss the problem or issue you would like to address for your chosen topic (i.e., the problem statement). At the end of the problem statement, propose a research question that you would like to learn more about and can inform your social work practice area. Below is an example of a question you can pose:

  *Sample Practice Question: What are the most effective evidence-based practices to reduce teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections with teens who are Hispanic and living in rural communities?*

  This assignment should be no longer than a paragraph with the problem statement bolded. Examples for what I am looking for are located on the Canvas site. Feel free to talk to the instructor or faculty/supervisors if you have trouble choosing a subject. You will be provided with feedback and your idea must be approved by the instructor.

- **Reference List (25%).** Based on your problem statement and research/practice question, you are to find four (4) peer reviewed research articles that you think are relevant to your topic. The articles you select in this assignment will be used to construct an annotated bibliography. In preparation for annotated bibliography, you are to submit a reference list (in APA format) of the articles you selected from your literature search. You can create your reference list manually or using bibliographic software such as Zotero or Endnote.

- **Annotated Bibliography (25%).** Based on your problem statement and research question, you will develop a 4 page annotated bibliography on your approved topic. It must include four (4) resources from research articles from professional journals in Social Work (e.g., Journal for the Society of Social Work Research, Children and Youth Services Review, Child development, etc.). You can find annotated bibliographies that I consider exemplary on our Canvas site. Each of your annotations should include the following components:
  
  - Summarize: Overview of article
    - What are the main arguments or points presented in the article?
    - What were the key findings of the articles?
    - What were some key implications?
Assess: Critique of the article substantiated with examples.

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the article as it pertains to:
  - The study rationale?
  - The methodology (design, sampling, methodological approach)?
  - Study findings and its implications for practice?

- What is your assessment of the article's usefulness and reliability?
- What is your overall evaluation of the article?
- Does the article adequately address issues or the lived-experiences of persons from historically disadvantaged, disenfranchised, and diverse populations in society?

Reflect: Utility of article

- How does this inform your topic?
- How does it fit with other information you have found?
- How well does the article describe the relevance and applicability of the study in working with historically disadvantaged, disenfranchised, and diverse populations in society?
- Was the article helpful? Why or why not?
- What was your biggest takeaway from the article?

Reflection Paper (25%). Using the knowledge you have learned from your annotated bibliography assignment and your problem statement, you will prepare a one (1) page single-spaced reflection paper. In this paper, I am asking you to reflect on the following questions:

- What are your overall impressions about engaging in the research process covered in this course?
- What did you learn about the current research in your social practice area?
- How will this knowledge be useful for your current or intended area of social work practice?
- Do you think that the research findings from the studies you reviewed can be applied in your social work practice area? If so, why? If not, why not?
- How do the findings you learned from each study from your annotated bibliography can potentially inform the development of a program/intervention in your social work practice area?

Please note: APA format is important, and you will be graded on the accuracy of your citation format as well as on the quality of your references and of your annotations. Specially, I will be evaluating you based on the following questions:

- Does the writing adhere accurately to APA guidelines?
- Does the writing reflect a firm grasp of academic writing conventions, i.e. voice, tense, style?
- Were a minimum of three (3) resources from research articles utilized for the content?
- Is the writing free of grammatical, spelling, and mechanical errors?
- Does the writing demonstrate having been proofread and revised prior to submission?
- Does each annotation demonstrate overall clarity and flow?

**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

Please make sure that your work is indeed your own and that you give credit where credit is due. Typographical and grammatical errors weaken your credibility as a scholar and make your arguments more difficult to understand. Your effectiveness as a presenter also affects your ability to convey concepts. Skillful use of language, proofreading, and presentation skills will be rewarded in your grade, whereas weaknesses will be noted and taken into consideration when grading.

You are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of academic integrity in every phase of your academic careers consistent with the policies set by the University of Michigan and the School of Social Work. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and ignorance is not an acceptable defense. Academic integrity means performing all academic work without plagiarism, cheating, lying, tampering, stealing, receiving unauthorized or illegitimate assistance from any other person, or using any source of information that is not common knowledge. Information on academic integrity policies can be found in the MSW Student Guide. Test your knowledge on plagiarism here.

**The use of ChatGPT**

It is essential to keep in mind the following guidelines while using ChatGPT in this class:

1. Complement Learning: ChatGPT can offer different perspectives, explanations, and examples that may enrich your understanding of the subject matter.

2. Encouraging Critical thinking: While ChatGPT provides useful information, it is essential to engage it critically with its responses. We encourage you to question and validate the information received, comparing it with reliable sources and academic literature.

3. Original Work: Utilizing ChatGPT should never replace independent thinking or original work. Assignments and projects should reflect your ideas, research, and insights while Chat GPT can serve as a supplementary tool for inspiration and guidance.
Attendance and class participation

In keeping with the SSW Policy on Class Attendance, students are expected to attend class. Regular class attendance is strongly encouraged. Missing class is a missed opportunity to engage in content discussions and the benefit of making deeper meaning of the material within a learning community. Thus, lack of attendance will affect your ability to participate in and contribute to class discussions and activities. Moreover, all classes have been sequenced in such a way as to contribute to your success in this course; thus, class absences may jeopardize your understanding of the course content. Below are my expectations for this course:

- Be on time for all scheduled classes.
- Class begins promptly at the designated time.
- Excessive tardiness may be reflected in your final class grade.
- Attend and participate actively in class.
- Be respectful of the classroom, students and the instructor.
- Please make certain that all cell phones, tablets, IPods, etc. are turned off or on a silent ring.
- You should also refrain from tweeting, using social media, or Internet browsing on nonacademic related topics during class time.
- Complete assigned modules. Each module is designed to provide you with background knowledge, so that you enter into the class discussion with substantive questions and comments informed by the literature.

If you need to miss a class, you should notify the instructor by email PRIOR to class, preferably 24 hours before the start of class with SW507 in the Subject Line. You may not miss more than one (1) class. Excessive absences may result in a failing grade. Here is a link to the Policy on Class Attendance found in the MSW Student Guide. Routine tardiness that disrupts the class will be considered in your final grade for this course.

Religious holidays are not observed at the University of Michigan, however if you need to miss class for religious reasons, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor ahead of time the dates of religious holidays on which you will be absent. Absence from class for religious reasons does not relieve you from any course work responsibility, however you will be provided a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete course work, if necessary.
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. Please submit all work on time. Late assignments will be deducted 5 points per day past the due date. Note: assignments are due by 11:59pm on the date due in Canvas.

Additional MSW policies are available in the Student Guide: Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction, Student Grievance Procedures, and the policy for grading in special circumstances.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>100</th>
<th>A+</th>
<th>88-90</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>78-80</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>68-70</th>
<th>D+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-99</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>84-87</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>74-77</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>64-67</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91-93</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>81-83</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>71-73</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>&lt;64</td>
<td>E</td>
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Your grade will be a reflection of your effort, the quality of your engagement, and your assignments. Key grading criteria include: a) thoroughness and completeness of content; b) clarity and logic of presentation; c) evidence of critical thought and self-reflection; and d) writing and editing quality.

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.

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.
participation in this course is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University, including properly wearing a face covering in class and compliance with the University COVID-19 Vaccination Policy. Other applicable and additional safety measures may be described in the Campus Maize & Blueprint. Your ability to participate in this course may be impacted by failure to comply with campus safety measures. Individuals seeking an exemption related to the vaccination requirement should submit an exemption request through WolverineAccess. I also encourage you to review 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.

Mental Health and Well-being
If you or someone you know is in need of support, services are available.

- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) located at the Tappan Street Auxiliary Building on 609 Tappan Street across from the Ross Business School; (734) 764-8312
- University Health Service (UHS) at (734) 764-8320
- Additional campus health and wellness resources

The Office of Student Services' Health and Wellness Program provides supportive services to MSW students which promote wellness, self-care and maintenance of a healthy academic and mental health balance, as well as to increase disability awareness. Contact the Health and Wellness Program at ssw.wellness@umich.edu

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
The University of Michigan recognizes disability as an integral part of diversity and is committed to creating an inclusive and equitable educational environment for students with disabilities. Students who are experiencing a disability-related barrier should contact Services for Students with Disabilities https://ssd.umich.edu/, 734-763-3000 or ssdoffice@umich.edu. For students who are connected with SSD, accommodation requests can be made in Accommodate. If you have any questions or concerns please...
contact your SSD Coordinator or visit SSD’s Current Student webpage. SSD considers aspects of the course design, course learning objects and the individual academic and course barriers experienced by the student. Further conversation with SSD, instructors, and the student may be warranted to ensure an accessible course experience.

**Writing Skills and Expectations**

Strong writing and communication skills are essential to your academic success and professional career. The School has a Writing/Study Skills Coordinator, Betsy Williams, who can help with writing, presentations, and other tasks. For resources on writing, references (including APA style), study tips, or to set up an appointment with Betsy, visit [ssw.umich.edu/writing-help](http://ssw.umich.edu/writing-help). Other UM resources include the English Language Institute and the Sweetland Writing Center. Sweetland offers one-to-one, online writing assistance at any stage of writing. You can get help with understanding assignments, generating ideas, developing arguments, organizing and structuring, using evidence and sources, and clarifying your expression.

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**Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here:** [https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources](https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources).

They include:

- **Safety and emergency preparedness**
- **Teaching evaluations**
- **Proper use of names and pronouns**
- **Religious/spiritual observances**
- **Military deployment**

**Electronics Policy:**

Using social media, online shopping, surfing the Internet, playing games, and completing work for other class and personal obligations during class time are not considered legitimate classroom purposes. Such use is distracting to your classmates and instructor and it negatively impacts your participation. Cell phones should be silent and out of sight. Please be respectful of your classmates and the instructor.

**Inclusivity Policy and Language:**

Social and economic justice is one of the key themes of social work practice, research, and education. As a social work community, we must encourage each other to critically
examine issues related to power, privilege, and oppression. As a result, there will be class discussions, activities, or assignments that may be difficult or challenging. In order to have the most supportive environment possible, we must all commit ourselves to fostering an inclusive, anti-oppressive space in which each person takes responsibility for their own language, actions and interactions. It is important that we actively listen to each other about how our words and actions are affecting one another and the learning environment, knowing that impact is more important than intent. It can be difficult to navigate the dual priorities of supporting authentic free speech and being open to diverse perspectives and ideas. Slurs of any kind should never be used. Threatening or using aggressive language towards the instructor or classmates will result in you being asked to leave the class and losing participation points for that day. Throughout the course, we will negotiate other guidelines about class discussions. Please bring your best selves to our classroom space. The words we use can make the difference between positive connections or creating distance in our personal and professional lives. Particularly in writing, impact is more important than intent. Increasing the inclusiveness of our language means striving to understand the ways that language often unconsciously makes assumptions about people and unintentionally reinforces dominant norms and inequitable systems. Please pay close attention to your language when speaking about cultural communities that you do not identify with. In doing so, please do your very best to:

- Respect and use contemporary and relevant language around social identities;
- Use language that recognizes varying abilities and is not ableist;
- Use language inclusive of diverse global contexts; and
- Provide developmental and educational support of others who may be unfamiliar with inclusive language practices.

It is expected that we all commit to using the correct name and pronouns of each other and our guests. Names and pronouns may change over time. Should someone accidently use the wrong name or pronoun, acknowledge the mistake, apologize, and move on with the correct version. Example: “As he was saying. I’m sorry; I meant to say, as they were saying, that was a very interesting article.”.

I invite you to bring it to my attention privately if I use language about a social identity or community that is harmful, dated, disrespectful, or otherwise problematic.

**Course Exemption**

This course is intended to be taken by students with limited research experience or have not previously received course credit in research methods courses taken prior to
enrolling in the UM SSW MSW program. If you have extensive research experience or have received academic credit for taking a research methods class in the past seven years you may be eligible to receive a course exemption. Contact your assigned academic advisor if you think you're eligible to be exempted from taking this class. This course is not required for Advanced Standing students.