



**Spring 2014**

**SWK 350 - Research Methods for Social Work**  
**T/R 11:00 am & 1:00 pm**

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**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Brenda Moore, LMSW-AP  
**OFFICE:** Hen. 308  
**OFFICE HOURS:** Mon/Wed 9am-3pm; Tue/Thur 9am-11am \\  
or by appointment  
**OFFICE PHONE:** 903-886-5398  
**E-MAIL:** [brenda.moore@tamuc.edu](mailto:brenda.moore@tamuc.edu)

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course develops students' knowledge and skills in the use of research appropriate for the evaluation of practice with all levels of client systems. Students are also taught to critically evaluate the appropriateness of designs used in published research. Prerequisites: Math 141, 175 or 179; 8 s.h. US Science; SWK 322; SWK 328; SWK 329 and SWK 370; concurrent enrollment in SWK 325 and SWK 331 is required. Restricted to social work majors. 3 semester hours.

## **COMPETENCIES and Practice Behaviors (EPAS 2008):**

**Competency 2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice, as demonstrated by:**

|                          |     |                                                                                    |
|--------------------------|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Practice Behavior</b> | 2.3 | Recognizes and manages personal values to guide practice                           |
|                          | 2.5 | Is able to apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions |

**Competency 2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments, demonstrated by:**

|                          |     |                                                                   |
|--------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Practice Behavior</b> | 3.1 | Is knowledgeable about principles of logic and scientific inquiry |
|                          | 3.2 | Is able to grasp and comprehend what is obscure                   |

- 3.3 Is skilled in using critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity
- 3.5 Has good problem-solving skills
- 3.6 Has good data gathering skills
- 3.7 Analyzes complex material well
- 3.8 Is skilled at appraising and integrating multiple sources of knowledge and practice wisdom

**Competency 2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research, demonstrated by:**

- Practice Behavior**
- 6.1 Is skilled at using practice experience to inform research
  - 6.5 Comprehends quantitative research
  - 6.6 Comprehends qualitative research
  - 6.7 Understands scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge.

**Competency 2.1.10a Engages, assesses, intervenes and evaluates individuals, families, groups, organizations & communities**

- Practice Behavior**
- 10.2 Is skilled at using research and technological advances
  - 10.3 Is skilled at evaluating program outcomes

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. To enable students to develop an awareness of the overall research process used in the social sciences. This involves an understanding of the systematically organized methodology known as the scientific method.
2. To enable students to understand the relationship between theory and research, the differences between inductive and deductive logic, and the basic skills of qualitative and quantitative research.
3. To increase students awareness of the concept of causality in the social sciences and develop an understanding of key concepts in research, such as conceptualization, operationalization, and measurement.
4. To enable students to develop the ability to develop hypotheses and understand the logic behind hypothesis testing.
5. To enable students to investigate the connection between statistics and research methodology and utilize specific tools to evaluate service delivery to all levels of systems.

6. To enable students to learn techniques of evaluation research and single-subject designs in order to enhance a commitment to the use of research and program evaluation in their professional practice.
7. To enable students to become knowledgeable consumers of social science research by enhancing their understanding of ethical issues affecting the acquisition of knowledge.
8. To encourage sensitivity to issues of diversity in research design and execution.
9. To enhance students' identification with the ethics, values, and principles of professional social work practice as related to the research process.

### **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

1. **To demonstrate knowledge of basic research concepts**
2. **To demonstrate understanding of relationship between social work practice and research/evaluation**
3. **To demonstrate ability to apply research concepts**

### **RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER COURSES:**

Students will build upon their knowledge from HBSE SWK 275 & 322. Students will also use knowledge from SWK 325, 328, 329, and 331 to understand how research relates to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

### **TEXTS:**

Marlow, C.R. (2011). *Research methods for generalist social work* (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

|                 |                     |                                                    |
|-----------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>GRADING:</b> | Quizzes             | 100 points                                         |
|                 | Comprehensive Final | 100 points                                         |
|                 | Literature Review   | 100 points                                         |
|                 | Learning Activities | 100 points                                         |
|                 | (Research Project   | 100 points – TBD)                                  |
| Total Possible  |                     | 400 - 500 points (depending upon Research Project) |

|               |           |   |
|---------------|-----------|---|
| Grading Scale | 90 - 100% | A |
|               | 80 - 89%  | B |
|               | 70 - 79%  | C |
|               | 60 - 69%  | D |
|               | under 60% | F |

**Note:** *Promptness in completing assigned tasks and reading is a requirement of this course. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. Assignments submitted late will be penalized 5 points per day, beginning with the day they are due. Assignments over 7 days (actual calendar days) will not be accepted and a grade of "0" will be given for the assignment. Students who do not complete all class assignments cannot earn higher than a "C" for the class.*

## OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS

**1. Quizzes (100 points):** We will have quizzes throughout the semester, consisting of 10 -20 short answer, multiple choice, and true/false questions. Points will be awarded for each quiz for a total of 100 points.

**2. Comprehensive Final (100 points):** A comprehensive final exam will be given which includes information for the quizzes and other information discussed throughout the course. The final exam questions will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions. Additional short answer questions may be included

**3. Literature Review (100 points):** This paper will provide an opportunity for each student to demonstrate an understanding of writing a Literature Review related to one of the research approaches: Practice Evaluation (Single System Design), Program Evaluation, or Needs Assessment. Specific guidelines and the outline will be provided.

**4. Learning activities (100 points):** There will be a variety of learning activities, both in-class and through eCollege which are to be completed throughout the semester to maximize learning. Some of these will be individual projects and others will be group projects. Specific points will be assigned to each activity, for a total of 100 points possible.

**(TBD - 5. Research Projects (100 points):** Students will work in teams to complete an actual research project. Tentative expectations: Each student will be responsible for submitted a journal/log of their time and activities. Half of the project grade will be based on effort/participation and the other 50% will be on the completed project and resulting paper (one per project). TO BE DETERMINED)

**STUDENTS WILL BE EXPECTED TO LOG ON to eCollege for specific weekly activities, discussions, and exercises. THE INSTRUCTOR WILL COMMUNICATE IN CLASS OR THROUGH MyLeo email accounts when activities or assignments are posted. These will be included in the points assigned for Learning Activities. Late postings or failure to correctly follow eCollege directions will result in no points for the assigned week/activity.**

## CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

Students are expected to attend class, reflecting responsibility which is inherent in the development as a social work professional. Roll will be taken regularly. Students are expected to be on time and prepared to participate when class begins as well as be present throughout the entire class meeting. Classroom exercises, discussions, role plays, guest speakers and other in-class experiential exercises are essential for a student's professional learning and continued development of self-awareness. Tardiness (or early departure) of more than 15 minutes will count as .5 absence (2 tardies/early departures = 1 absence). A student is considered absent if he/she arrives more than 30 minutes late to class, leaves 30 or more minutes early or does not come to class.

The following penalties for absences (unexcused, or excused, according to university policy) will be administered:

|                   |                                |                                   |                                   |                                  |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Weekly            | Up to 2 absences<br>No penalty | 3 absences<br>1 letter grade drop | 4 absences<br>Class grade of "F"  |                                  |
| Bi-weekly         | Up to 3 absences<br>No penalty | 4 absences<br>1 letter grade drop | 5 absences<br>1 letter grade drop | 6 absences<br>Class grade of "F" |
| Summer<br>10-week | Up to 1 absence<br>No penalty  | 2 absences<br>1 letter grade drop | 3 absences<br>Class grade of "F"  |                                  |

ONLINE OR WEB-ENHANCED CLASSES: Just as students are required to attend face-to-face classes, students are required to log in and participate in online components. To receive credit for attendance online via eCollege, students must log in and complete assignments in a timely manner. Not logging in to eCollege (which can be monitored by the instructor) and completing assignments online during the appropriate time is the equivalent of an absence for each week this occurs.

Final evaluation and grades depend on both presence and participation. Students' grades will be significantly impacted by inadequate participation or lack of required time commitment each week. Students are expected to spend a comparable amount of time in the online learning environment as they would in class (3 hours a week in the classroom). In addition, just as in traditional F2F classrooms, students are expected to spend time reading and studying class materials.

NOTE: PROBLEMS WITH YOUR INTERNET CONNECTION AND/OR COMPUTER ARE NOT CONSIDERED AS REASONS FOR LACK OF PARTICIPATION. You have access to the university's computer labs (in the social work department AND other campus facilities, including the library) as well as local libraries and other access to computers and ISPs. If you believe that you are unable to fulfill the requirements for the course you should talk with your instructor about the possibility of dropping or withdrawing.

Class participation has three components: (1) Appropriate interactions with classmates,

(2) Attentiveness, and (3) Active involvement in class activities. Evaluation of class participation is based on instructor observation. Students will be given feedback if problems are evident.

**POLICY ON DUE DATES:** *Promptness in completing assigned tasks and reading is a requirement of this course. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. Assignments submitted late will be penalized 5 points per day, beginning with the day they are due. Assignments over 7 days (actual calendar days) will not be accepted and a grade of "0" will be given for the assignment. Students who do not complete all class assignments cannot earn higher than a "C" for the class.*

#### **POLICY ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:**

Every student is expected to do his/her own work. Law, ethical standards, university policy, and departmental policy demand that students refrain from plagiarism and any form of cheating. Plagiarism is the "Act of appropriating the literary composition of another, or parts of passages from of his [or her] writings, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as the products of one's own mind." (Black's Law Dictionary, Abridged Fifth Edition, 1983). When using others' words, phrases, or ideas in writing, the original author should be given proper credit.

Cheating may take different forms. These include, but are not limited to, copying others' answers during an exam, using notes or other forms of help during an examination or quiz, except when explicitly permitted by the instructor, giving or receiving help on exams or assignments, or submitting work for one class which has already been submitted for another class for credit. Use of citations from the Internet without paraphrasing content AND proper referencing is regarded as plagiarism. Professors have the right to use electronic review programs (such as Turn It In™) to identify plagiarism.

The department does not tolerate plagiarism or cheating. A student found to be engaging in such illegal and unethical conduct may receive a failing grade in the course and may be subjected to further disciplinary proceedings. Any assignment or exam that lacks honesty will be given a grade of "0".

#### **ACCEPTABLE CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR:**

“Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to obey all federal, state, and local laws, in addition to the regulations of the University. The standards of Student Conduct including disciplinary rules and procedures are designed to provide and conform to the basic tenets of due process, as developed by institutions of higher education. As such, the University distinguishes these procedures and regulations as an educational and growth process which is not intended to conform to adversary proceedings as in a court of law. (Student’s Guide Book, 2011, p. 35).

#### **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS**

The Department of Social Work expects all social work students to conduct themselves in an ethical, professional manner. Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession articulates its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards as set forth in the *NASW Code of Ethics* to guide social workers' conduct. The *Code* is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve. Accordingly, we expect social work students to demonstrate courtesy, respect and support for fellow students, instructors, clients, and all other persons.

All students enrolled in BSW or MSW classes are expected to observe the tenets of the NASW Code of Ethics and the Social Work Student Code of Conduct. Our Code of Conduct is reflective of professional and academic expectations – a student who cannot demonstrate appropriate behaviors will not be appropriate for practice in the social work profession. Students who violate these Codes may be asked to meet with appropriate Social Work faculty (instructors or Program Directors). In addition, the department's Academic and Professional Issues (API) Committee is responsible for dealing with student issues when requested by faculty.

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

It is the policy of Texas A&M University-Commerce and the Social Work Department to do everything we can to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law, and the University's commitment to providing equal opportunities. Any student with a disability who needs accommodation, for example, in accessibility, seating placement or in arrangements for examinations should not hesitate to inform the instructor. If required, large type, Braille or cassette recordings of syllabus or assignments can be provided.

Students with conditions that require special attention or accommodation should contact the Director of Disability Resources & Services at 903-468-5150 (located in the Library, Room 132).

### Class Schedule

| Week | Topic                                           | Week       | Completed Out-of-Class                        | In-Class Activities                                 |
|------|-------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | Introduction & Overview<br>What is Science?     | 1/14-1/16  | <b>Text, Ch. 1</b>                            | <b>Pre-Test</b>                                     |
| 2    | Research and Generalist<br>Social Work Practice | 1/21-1/23  | <b>Text, Ch. 2<br/>Online activities</b>      | <b>Quiz 1 (Ch. 1-2)</b>                             |
| 3    | Deciding the Question<br>Research Strategies    | 1/29 –1/30 | <b>Text, Ch. 3<br/>Online activities</b>      |                                                     |
| 4    | Literature Review and<br>Identifying Variables  | 2/4 – 2/6  | <b>Text, Ch. 4<br/>Online activities</b>      | <b>Quiz 2 (Ch. 3)</b>                               |
| 5    | Research Writing                                | 2/11-2/13  | <b>Ch. 13<br/>Online activities</b>           | <b>Quiz 3 (Ch. 4)</b>                               |
| 6    | Designing Needs<br>Assessments                  | 2/18-2/20  | <b>Text, Ch. 5<br/>Online activities</b>      | <b>Quiz 4 (Ch. 13, 5)</b>                           |
| 7    | Designing Program<br>Evaluations                | 2/25 -2/27 | <b>Text, Ch. 6<br/>Online activities</b>      | <b>Quiz 5 (Ch. 6)</b>                               |
| 8    | Evaluation of Practice<br>(SSD)                 | 3/5- 3/6   | <b>Text, Ch. 7<br/>Online activities</b>      | <b>Quiz 6 (Ch. 7)</b>                               |
|      | SPRING BREAK                                    | 3/10-3/15  |                                               | WHOOO HOOOO!!                                       |
| 9    | Selection of Participants                       | 3/18-3/20  | <b>Text, Ch. 8<br/>Online activities</b>      | <b>Quiz 7 (Ch. 8)<br/>LITERATURE<br/>Review DUE</b> |
| 10   | Collecting the Data                             | 3/25-3/27  | <b>Text, Ch. 9<br/>Online activities</b>      |                                                     |
| 11   | Collecting the Data                             | 4/1 – 4/3  | <b>Ch. 9 continued<br/>Online activities</b>  | <b>Quiz 8 (Ch. 9)</b>                               |
| 12   | Organizing the Data                             | 4/8- 4/9   | <b>Text, Ch. 10<br/>Online activities</b>     | <b>Quiz 9 (Ch. 10)</b>                              |
| 13   | Analysis of Quantitative<br>Data                | 4/15-4/17  | <b>Text, Ch. 12<br/>Online activities</b>     | <b>RESEARCH<br/>PROJECT PAPER<br/>DUE</b>           |
| 14   | Analysis of Quantitative<br>Data                | 4/22-4/24  | <b>Ch. 12 continued<br/>Online activities</b> | <b>Quiz 10 (Ch. 12)</b>                             |
| 15   | Analysis of Qualitative Data                    | 4/29 – 5/1 | <b>Text, Ch. 11<br/>Online activities</b>     |                                                     |
|      | <b>COMPREHENSIVE<br/>FINAL</b>                  | Tues 5/6   |                                               |                                                     |

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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