



SWK 531 (041E): Research for Practice

COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2014

This syllabus is tentative and will be finalized following first class meeting

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COURSE INFORMATION

Course Description

The scientific method in social work practice is presented. The methods of empirical research for knowledge building, the role of research in theory construction, research designs and data analysis, and methods of practice and program evaluation are introduced. Students learn to apply qualitative and quantitative research methods to the problems of social work practice. Prerequisites students must have been admitted to the MSW program and be in good standing in the MSW program.

PROGRAM GOALS & COMPETENCIES:

1. Prepare MSW graduates for professional advanced generalist practice that reflects application and integration of critical thinking, theoretical frameworks, and differential interventions

With successful completion of foundation courses students will be able to:

- F1.1 Demonstrate critical thinking and effective communication (2.1.3)
- F1.2 Demonstrate skills in research-informed practice and practice - informed research (2.1.6)
- F1.4 Engage in change strategies with individuals, families, groups and organizations & communities (2.1.10)

2. Enable MSW graduates to apply ethical reasoning to advance equality, justice, and social change

With successful completion of foundation courses students will be able to:

- F 2.2 Demonstrate knowledge of professional social work ethical values & principles.
- F 2.3 Demonstrate knowledge reflective of diversity in practice.

3. Promote leadership and service that is relevant to individual contexts of practice and enhances well-being and quality of life.

With successful completion of foundation courses students will be able to:

- F 3.1 Engage as professional social workers (2.1.1)

Relationship To Other Courses:

This course stresses the importance of evidence based theory and practice methods. Consequently, it supports the practice courses that emphasize the importance of demonstrating effectiveness in professional interventions. This course draws on materials from practice and HBSE to illustrate social work research principles, and it develops a professional model that utilizes practice evaluation to formulate a continuous improvement cycle in professional practice.

Textbook(s) Required

Grinnell, R.M; Williams, M. & Unrau, Y.A. (2014). *Research methods for social workers: An introduction*. 10th edition. Kalamazoo Michigan: Pair Bond Publications

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

ADDITIONAL READINGS RECOMMENDED

Salkind, N.J. (2007). *Statistics for people who think they hate statistics*. Excel edition. CA: Sage.

You will be expected to start to develop your own resource list in your research area. You should also include articles and resources that include ethical issues concerning research with your population/question under study. The reference list at the end of this syllabus may also provide some resources for your study.

Student Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to equip students to meet the increasing demands for practice accountability. The course prepares students to identify access and understand empirical studies that inform evidence based practice. Students will gain knowledge in program and practice evaluative methods; the process for developing an evidence-based evaluative project and basic statistical analysis for data.

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Communicate the connection between empirical research and evidence based practice
- Locate, understand and describe evidence-based research to support practice interventions (including comparative differences in quantitative and qualitative research approaches).
- Communicate the necessary steps for developing and carrying out program/practice evaluation.
- Communicate basic statistical procedures and when to use a specific statistical test.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Overview of Assignments

Ethics Reaction Paper *each student will watch the movie: The Pregnancy Project and write a reaction paper using an outline provided by the instructor (50 pts)*

Statistics Worksheets *provided throughout the semester, students will complete statistics worksheets that introduce them to the basics of descriptive and differential statistics (10 pts each)*

Article Analysis *each student will complete an analysis of a quantitative, qualitative and single-system design empirical study. Instructions and outline can be found on eCollege. (3 article analysis @ 25 pts each = 75 pts)*

Mid-Term Exam *will cover the concepts and information presented in units I-IV (50 pts)*

Comprehensive Final Exam *will cover concepts and information presented across all units in the semester. (100 pts)*

In addition, this class is designed as a "flipped classroom". Online resources and downloadable media will be available for students to control when and how content based on presentations (i.e. lectures) are viewed and used. Built upon the content that is provided through the online component for the learning process. Students must be present in the face to face class and actively participate to receive the points allotted. STUDENTS CANNOT MAKE UP WORK MISSED IN THE FACE-TO-FACE CLASS MEETINGS.

GRADING

You can access your grades in eCollege to see your grade (keep in mind that the grade only reflects work I have graded). Primarily evaluated through written assignments, there will be a lag time between when the assignment is posted and I grade it. In addition, the online quizzes require grading by me. You will receive an email from me each time the grade book has been update to reflect the most recent status.

90% of possible points = A
80% of possible points = B
70% of possible points = C
Below 70% of points must repeat the class

POLICY ON DUE DATES

(1) NO assignments will be accepted past the due date. If an assignment is not submitted by the specified due data and time, a 0 will be awarded. In the event of extenuating circumstances, (i.e. medical issues) and proper supporting documentation is provided, a arrangement between the instructor and student will be made for submission of assignments.

(2) NO unit quiz can be made up. In the event the student misses taking the online unit quiz, a zero will be given.

(3). NO activity awarded points and carried out in the face to face meeting can be made up. In the event the student misses the face to face class; a zero will be awarded in the place of points. In the event of extenuating circumstances (ie medical issues) and proper documentation is provided, an alternative assignment will be given to allow the student to earn points.

(4). ALL written assignments will be submitted in the correct drop box, online in eCollege by the due date and time. **DO NOT** email an assignment to me. In the hordes of email I receive daily, many get lost. It is your responsibility to know how and if your computer software is compatible with eCollege for uploading assignments.

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARATICIPATION

- The expectation is that students will attend class, reflecting responsibility, which is inherent in the development as a social work professional. Roll is 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 experimental 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 a .5 absence (2 tardies/early departures = 1 absence).
- A student is absent if he/she arrives more than 30 minutes late to class, leaves 30 minutes early or does not come to class.
- The following penalties for absences (unexcused, or excused, according to university policy) will be administered:

Weekly (class meets 1X week)	Up to 2 absences: No Penalty	3 absences: 1 letter grade drop	4 absences: Class grade of "F"	
Bi-Weekly (class meets 2X week)	Up to 3 absences: No Penalty	4 absences: 1 Letter grade drop	5 absences: 1 Letter grade drop	6 absences: Class grade of "F"
Summer 10- week	Up to 1 absence: No Penalty	2 Absences: 1 Letter grade drop	3 absences: 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 (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, expectation is that students will spend time reading and studying class materials.

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

This course will be facilitated using eCollege, the Learning Management System used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. To get started with the course, go to: <https://leo.tamuc.edu>.

You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.]

The following information has been provided to assist in preparing to use technology in your web-enhanced course.

The following technologies and a working knowledge of how to use them are required to be successful in this course:

- Internet connection - high speed recommended (not dial-up)
- Word Processor (Microsoft Office Word - 2003 or 2007).
- Access to University Library site
- Access to University email

Additionally, the following hardware and software are necessary to use eCollege:

- Our campus is optimized to work in a Microsoft Windows environment. This means our courses work best if you are using a Windows operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (6.0, 7.0 or 8.0)
- Courses will also work with Macintosh OS X along with a recent version of Safari 2.0 or better. Along with Internet Explorer and Safari, eCollege also supports the Firefox browser (3.0) on both Windows and Mac operating systems.
- Perform a "Browser Test" prior to start of your course. To launch a browser test, login to eCollege, click the "myCourses" tab, and then select the "Browser Test" link under support services.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures

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.

University Specific Procedures

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*).

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS	ASSIGNMENT
INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH			
August 26 th	Course Introduction Review Syllabus/Expectations		
September 2 nd	The Place of Research in Social Work	Chapter 1 in Text Review online Lecture	
WITH SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS UNIT, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Name and describe the research related roles of social workers ➤ List and explain the 3 accountability questions for the social work profession ➤ <i>Define basic statistical terms</i> 			
September 9 th	Research Ethics & Cultural competence	Chapter 3 & 4 in Text Review online Lecture	
September 16 th		Watch the Video Before coming to class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaction Paper • Statistics Worksheet
WITH SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS UNIT, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Apply ethical concepts to the process of designing a research study ➤ Discuss the importance of ethics in social work and how ethical considerations affect social work research ➤ Articulate necessary components of an informed consent ➤ Identify and describe guidelines for culturally competent researchers ➤ <i>Complete basic problems of descriptive statistics</i> 			

September 23 rd	The Quantitative Research Approach	Chapter 5 in Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative Article Analysis • Statistics Worksheet
<p>WITH SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS UNIT, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Explain the Positivist Way of Thinking ➤ Name and describe the steps within the quantitative approach to research ➤ <i>Differentiate between descriptive and inferential statistics</i> 			
Sept 30 th	The Qualitative Research Approach	Chapter 6 in Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative Article Analysis • Statistics Worksheet
<p>WITH SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS UNIT, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Explain the interpretative way of thinking ➤ Describe the phases within the qualitative approach ➤ <i>Complete and interpret statistics that determine associations</i> 			
October 7 th	Review of Weeks 2-5		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-Term Exam in Class
<p>WITH SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF REVIEW ACTIVITIES, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Name and describe the research related roles of social workers ➤ List and explain the 3 accountability questions for the social work profession ➤ Define basic statistical terms ➤ Apply ethical concepts to the process of designing a research study ➤ Discuss the importance of ethics in social work and how ethical considerations affect social work research ➤ Articulate necessary components of an informed consent ➤ Identify and describe guidelines for culturally competent researchers 			

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

October 14 th	Formulating Research Questions	Chapter 2 in Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In class activity • Statistics Worksheet
<p>WITH SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS UNIT, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Define and give examples of the Knowledge-level continuum ➤ List the classification of research questions ➤ Write a research question for each classification that meets the criteria for good questions. ➤ <i>Complete and interpret statistics that determine differences</i> 			
October 21 st	Sampling Designs: Selecting Participants	Chapter 9 in Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In class activity • Statistics Worksheet
<p>WITH SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS UNIT, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discuss the difference between probability and non-probability sampling ➤ List and briefly discuss the types of non-probability sampling ➤ List and briefly discuss the types of probability sampling ➤ Discuss the issue of generalizability in social work research 			
October 28 th	Research Designs Single -subject Designs Group Designs	Chapter 10 & Chapter 11 in Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single System Design Article Analysis
<p>WITH SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS UNIT, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Define and list requirements for a single subject design study ➤ Identify and explain Exploratory Designs ➤ Identify and explain Descriptive Designs ➤ Identify and explain Explanatory Designs ➤ Differentiate between characteristics of ideal experiments, one-group designs and two-group designs ➤ List and define threats to internal and external validity 			

November 4 th	Measurement	Chapter 7 & 8 in Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-Class Activity • Statistics Worksheet
<p>WITH SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS UNIT, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify and give examples of nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio levels of measurement ➤ Outline the criteria for selecting an instrument ➤ Discuss the difference between standardized and non-standardized measurements 			
November 11 th	Selecting a Data Collection Method	Chapter 14 in Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistics Worksheet
<p>WITH SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS UNIT, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use research criteria for selecting an appropriate data collection method ➤ Create a plan for implementing and evaluating a data collection method 			
November 18 th	Proposals and Reports	Chapter 17 & 18 in Text	
<p>WITH SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS UNIT, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Present the rationale for writing a research proposal ➤ Identify all elements in organizing a research proposal ➤ Differentiate between research proposals and reports 			
November 25 th	Program Evaluation and Review of The context of Social Work Research	Chapter 19 in Text	
<p>WITH SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS UNIT, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Link the context, concepts and practices of conducting social work research with developing and implementing program evaluations 			
December 2 nd	Comprehensive Final Exam	Online	