DESCRIPTION: Study of quantitative and qualitative methods of building knowledge for social work and the ethical use of research in professional practice.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES: By the end of the term, students will be able to:
1. Understand social work research as an integral part of informed practice.
2. Explain the research function in both micro and macro practice.
3. Discuss the specific stages of the social work research process:
   a. Formulation of practice questions and hypotheses
   b. Sampling
   c. Principles of Protection of Human Subjects
   d. Data collection
   e. Processing of data
   f. Interpretation of statistical results and testing of hypotheses
   g. Report writing
4. Identify sources of secondary social welfare data and applications to community-based practice.
5. Identify data collection methods for practice evaluation and needs assessment.
6. Utilize the experimental designs for social work practice.
7. Understand the basics of the usage of SPSS for data analysis.
8. Discuss beginning level statistical methods and their applications in describing and analyzing the variables in practice.
9. Understand, critically evaluate and make use of social work research as presented by others.
10. Discuss the ethical issues of dealing with minority populations (women, racial and cultural minorities, handicapped, elderly, and the poor) for social work research.
11. Conduct different types of social work research (quantitative/qualitative).

EVALUATION OF GRADING AND LEARNING: Your grades will be based upon mid and final exams, SPSS/PC exercises, a research project, and class attendance and participation in projects. The final course grade is computed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Grade Point</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Exam</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>February 22, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Exam</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>April 26, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>April 20, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPSS Exercise</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>200 Point Total</td>
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1. **EXAMINATIONS:** There will be two exams. The exam questions will be taken from the materials both covered in the class and assigned for reading. Each exam may have any combination of true/false, multiple choice, matching, completion, and brief response essay questions. Exam 1 is 2/22/05, Exam 2 is during finals week

2. **RESEARCH PAPER:** Each student is required to prepare a simple social work research proposal in the form of a research paper. This research proposal is designed to help students integrate the basics of research into practice and engage in critical thinking. The guidelines for the research paper will be provided to each student and the specifics of this assignment will be discussed in class. Students will lose 10 points for every week that the paper is late, unless the student has notified the professor directly in advance of extraordinary circumstance, and provides documentation. Due 4/20/05

3. **SPSS/PC EXERCISE:** There will be an exercise(s) designed to expose students to the statistical package SPSS and all students are expected to participate. If you are not present for the exercise you will not receive the 10 points.

4. **CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:** Regular class attendance is expected. Your participation in each stage of the research class is essential. Students who miss three (3) or more classes REGARDLESS OF THE REASON, will have their final grade lowered by one letter grade (eg. B+ to a B)

A final course grade will be based upon the total number of points accumulated on the above evaluations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>B+  = 87-89 (3.25)</th>
<th>C+  = 77-79 (2.25)</th>
<th>D+  = 67-69 (1.25)</th>
<th>F = 59 or less (0.00)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95-100 (4.0)</td>
<td>A-  = 90-94 (3.75)</td>
<td>B-  = 80-83 (2.75)</td>
<td>C-  = 70-73 (1.75)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TEXTS REQUIRED:**

**RESERVE READINGS:**

**Example of Group Design:**

**Examples of Qualitative Designs:**
378.

Example of Survey Research:

Example of Program Evaluation:

EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING:

GETTING YOUR WORK IN ON TIME:
1. All assignments are due on the scheduled date unless the student has EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES that prevent the student from meeting the deadline. In those cases the student MUST speak directly with the instructor and MUST make prior arrangements. Please note that documentation of the special circumstances must be presented to the instructor. Approval for late work must be obtained directly from the instructor. Papers will not be accepted through email, snail mail or under office door. **There will be no extra credit assignments available at any time during the semester**
2. If prior approval for submitting a paper or an assignment has not been obtained, OR if the reason that the student has not met the paper deadline does not meet EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES, then one letter grade will be subtracted for each week that an assignment is late.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR READINGS:
1. Students are responsible for required and reserved readings. The instructor may include additional reserve readings throughout the semester. STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR READING ALL OF THE ASSIGNED MATERIALS REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE MATERIAL IS COVERED IN CLASS.

EXPECTED STUDENT BEHAVIORS:
1. Students should arrive for class on time and avoid disrupting the class with late arrivals.
2. While it is not expected that students will resort to academic dishonesty, students must be aware that any evidence of dishonesty/cheating will result in a failing grade for the course and will be subject to other consequences inherent in the School of Social Work.
3. Students are expected to demonstrate courtesy and respect for the instructor and for peers. Differences in points of view expressed constructively, as the basis of academic freedom are encouraged. **Side conversations during class will not be tolerated.**

AUDIOTAPING OF LECTURES: Students are prohibited from audio taping any part of the course lectures, unless the student is registered with the university's Student Disability Office and requires such arrangement for learning purposes. Students with special needs that require this accommodation must discuss this personally with the instructor at the beginning of the course.

SPECIAL TESTING/LEARNING NEEDS: Students that require special learning/testing arrangements are REQUIRED to register with the Office of Student Disabilities and to inform the instructor at least 3 weeks before an examination date. The instructor will make every effort to accommodate the student's special testing needs.
ATTENDANCE POLICY: It is expected that students attend all classes. Your attendance is critical in each stage of research. Excessive absences (more than 3), will result in a letter grade reduction (Example from a B to a B-).

INSTRUCTOR'S OFFICE HOURS: Students should make appointments with the instructor. The instructor's office hours are included in this syllabus. If for some reason the student cannot make the designated office hours, the instructor will try whenever possible to accommodate the student's schedule. When emailing instructor please put course number in the subject line.


Course Outline and Schedule

Week 1 - 1/12/05: Social Work Practice and Social Work Research
Learning Objectives - Upon completion on this unit, the student should be able to:
1. Explain the concept and content of informed practice.
2. Identify research questions arising from both micro and macro practice.
3. Understand the research function in micro practice.
4. Understand the research function in macro practice.
5. Explain and emphasize the importance of understanding the needs of the community in formulating research design and projects

Content
1. Informed practice and social work research.
2. Scaling and social work research.
3. Research functions in macro practice.
4. Research functions in micro practice.
5. Accountability and Social Work practice.

Required Readings: Yegidis and Weinbach, Chapter 1
Learning Methods Lecture - discussion

Week 2 - 1/19/05: An Introduction to the Scientific Research Process
Learning Objectives - Upon completion of this Unit, the student should be able to:
1. Define and illustrate errors in human inquiry
2. Understand the foundations of Social Science
3. Identify the motivations and begin critical thinking in regard to formulating Social Research
4. Explain the two logical systems of creating social science
5. Understand deductive theory construction and inductive theory construction
6. Understand the Human Subjects Review Process and protection of human rights

Content
1. Native human inquiry
2. Errors in personal human inquiry
3. Foundations of Social Science
4. Motivations for research
5. The creations of Social Science theory
6. Deductive theory construction
7. Inductive theory construction

Required Readings: Required Text: continue Chapters 1-2.
Reserve Readings:

Learning Methods Lecture - discussion
Week 3 & 4 - 1/26/05 & 2/1/05: Ethics and Politics, Problem Formulation and Writing the Research Paper

Learning Objectives
1. Identify the ethical issues in Social Work Research
2. Understand NASW Code of Ethics
3. Discuss two ethical controversies
4. Understand the political issues of Social Work Research
5. Illustrate political issues in some of the research on race relations
6. Understand the Social Work Research Process
7. Identify Social Work Research problems
8. Develop the research proposal
9. Explain the purposes of research
10. Discuss the units of analysis
11. Steps in preparing the research report

Content
1. Ethical issues in Social Work Research and NASW Code of Ethics
2. The politics of Social Work Research, methods employed, costs & use of the outcome
3. Minorities and Social Work Research
4. The Guidelines of UCF Human Subjects Committee
5. Overview of research process and the research proposal.
6. Problem identification.
7. Purposes of research and units of analysis.
8. Considerations in report preparation:
   a. Introduction
   b. Problem statement
   c. Review of literature
   d. Study questions/hypotheses
   e. Research design
   f. Discussion of findings
   g. Implications for social policies and programs
   h. Conclusions/Summary

Required Readings: Text Chapter 3, 6, 7
Reserve Readings: Examples of Qualitative Designs
Learning Methods: Lecture - discussion

Week 5 – 2/8/05: Conceptualization and Operationalization

Learning Objectives - Upon completion of this Unit, the student should be able to:
1. Develop the conceptual framework for research questions.
2. Explain the logic of conceptualization and its relationship to measurement.
3. Define and give examples of dimensions and indicators.
4. Distinguish conceptualization from operationalization.

Content
2. Operational definitions.
3. Conceptualization
4. Definitions and research purposes.
5. Operationalization of choices.

Readings - Required: Required Chapters 8 and 10
Reserve Readings:
Learning Methods: Lecture - discussion

Week 6 – 2/15/05: Sampling

Learning Objectives - Upon completion of this Unit, students should be able to:
1. Discuss sampling concepts and technologies.
2. Explain probability sampling theory.
3. Identify the types of probability sampling methods.
4. Understand non-probability sampling.
5. Identify the problems of sampling.

Content
1. Sampling concepts and terminologies.
2. Probability sampling theory.
3. Types of probability sampling.
4. Non-probability sampling.
5. Problems of sampling.

Required Readings: Required Text Chapters Chapter 9

Learning Methods  Lecture - discussion

Week 7 – 2/22/05: First Exam

Week 8 – 3/2/05: Measurement

Learning Objectives - Upon completion of this Unit, the student should be able to:
1. Explain the term measurement.
2. Understand and use the four levels of measurement.,
3. Discuss single indicators.
4. Develop composite indicators.
5. Identify common sources of measurement errors.
6. Understand the criteria for measurement quality.

Content
1. Definitions of measurement
2. Levels of measurement: Nominal, Ordinal, Interval, and Ratio
3. Single or composite indicators
5. Criteria for measurement quality
   a. Reliability
   b. Validity

Readings - Required: Required Text Chapter 10

Learning Methods  1. Lecture discussion
2. Classroom Activity: measurement of variables

Week 9 – 3/9/05: Constructing Measurement Instruments

Learning Objectives - Upon completion of this Unit, the student should be able to:
1. Understand the guidelines for asking questions.
2. Discuss the pros and cons of using closed-ended questions and open-ended questions.
3. Construct questionnaire.
4. Construct composite measures.
5. Discuss prominent scaling.

Content
1. Guidelines for asking questions.
2. Questionnaire construction.
3. Constructing composite measures.
4. Using scales

Readings Requested: Required Text, Continue Chapter 10, and Chapter 11.

Reserve Readings:  

Learning Methods  
1. Lecture - Discussion
2. Handout: Examples of questionnaire
SPRING BREAK- MARCH 16, 2005 - NO CLASS

Week 10– 3/23/05: Quantitative Methodology, Causal Inference and Group Designs

Learning Objectives - Upon completion of this Unit, students should be able to:
1. Identify the components of experimental design.
2. Explain sampling method for experiments.
3. Describe the variations on experimental design.
4. Understand internal validity and external validity.
5. Identify the factors that influence internal and external validity.
6. Discuss "natural" experiments and their implications for research.

Content
1. Experimental design.
2. Quasi-experimental designs.
3. Internal validity.
4. External validity.
5. "Natural" experiments.

Required Readings: Required Text: Chapter 8
Reserved Readings: Examples of Group Designs

Learning Methods
1. Lecture - discussion
2. Handout: Classical experimental design

Week 11 – 3/30/05: Survey Research, Field Research & Qualitative Methods

Learning Objectives - Upon completion of this Unit, students should be able to:
1. Identify topics appropriate to survey research.
2. Describe the steps of survey research.
3. Use self-administered questionnaires.
4. Conduct interview surveys.
5. Conduct telephone surveys.
7. Identify topics appropriate to field research.
8. Understand the various roles of the observer.
9. Prepare to conduct Field research

Content
1. Topics appropriate to survey research.
2. Self-administered questionnaire.
3. Interview surveys.
4. Telephone surveys.
5. Topics appropriate to field research.
6. The various roles of the observer.
7. Preparing for the field.
8. Sampling in field research.
9. Recording observations.
10. Data processing.
11. Data analysis.
12. Drawing conclusions.

Readings - Required: In text, Chapter 7
Reserved Readings Survey Research

Learning Methods: Lecture - discussion.

Week 12 – 4/6/05: Processing Data

Learning Objectives - Upon completion of this Unit, the student should be able to:
1. Discuss computers in social research.
2. Understand the beginning level of SPSS usage.
3. Construct Coding and Codebook.
4. Develop data file and program file.
5. Access and command the SPSS system.

Required Readings: Required Text Chapter 11

Learning Methods
1. Lecture - discussion.
2. Possible Guest speaker: Computer Center
3. SPSS/PC Practice Exercise

Week 13 – 4/13/05: Interpreting Descriptive Statistics and Tables

Learning Objectives - Upon completion of this Unit, the student should be able to:
1. Understand descriptive statistics.
2. Conduct univariate analysis.
3. Conduct subgroup comparisons.
4. Discuss bivariate analysis.
5. Explain multivariate analysis.

Content
1. Descriptive Statistics
2. Univariate analysis
3. The frequency of distribution
4. Subgroup comparisons
5. Measures of Central Tendency
6. Multivariate analysis
7. Measures of dispersion
8. Discuss "chance" as a rival hypothesis
9. Understand measures of association
10. Explain statistical significance
11. Illustrate statistical power analysis
12. Identify common misuses and misinterpretations

Required Readings: Required Text Chapter 12

Learning Methods:
1. Lecture - Discussion
2. Statistical Assignment: Create Data File and Categorize Variables.

Week 14- 4/20/05: Evaluation Research

RESEARCH PAPER DUE

Learning Objectives - Upon completion of this Unit, the student should be able to:
1. Understand basic program evaluation process.
2. Define a needs assessment.
3. Evaluate program implementation.
4. Be familiar with other types of evaluation research.
5. Access and command the SPSS system.

Required Readings: Required Text Chapter 13

Reserve Readings: Program Evaluations

Learning Methods Lecture - discussion.

Week 15 (4/26/05) - Final Exam at 6PM
Bibliography


Proposal Outline

A research proposal must be completed in an area of social work that you are interested in practicing. The final draft should be 15-20 pages in length, double-spaced. The proposal should follow APA format, utilizing headings and proper citing procedures. Topics must be approved by the instructor. You will not actually carry out this research.

Your research questions must be in the following format:

WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF (your topic) ON (Your outcome of interest). For example, “what is the effect of having a pet on depression levels of a person who is elderly”?

THERE SHOULD BE NO “I” STATEMENTS ANYWHERE IN THE PAPER

YOUR PAPER SHOULD CONTAIN NO MORE THAN ONE DIRECT QUOTE (if there is more than one you will lose points on your paper).

Paper is due

I. INTRODUCTION

- Provide a formal description and a brief explanation of your proposed project. Include the following:
  - The overall (broad) research question
  - The population you plan to study
  - Your dependent variable-what do you want to see a change in
  - What intervention you plan to study
- State whether you used deductive or inductive method to arrive at your research question
- Why is this worthwhile to study, i.e. why should we care about this issue?
- What don’t we know about this issue?
- How do you think your research will contribute to society?

II. Overview of Theoretical Framework

- Identify and discuss one substantive theory that can be utilized in your proposed project.
- Discuss three concepts that are components of this theory and describe how they are linked to your proposed project.
- What does this theory predict about the relationship of characteristics to your dependent variable?

III. Literature Review

- Describe the present state of our knowledge of your area, citing the results of other studies. Be sure to include a discussion of the important concepts/characteristics you identified in the theory section and what other researchers have found regarding the relationships of these concepts to your outcome of interest. Also address issues of diversity and how they may impact your study.
- Describe at least three hypotheses regarding the relationship of important characteristics or factors to your dependent variable that you will test based on the empirical findings you identified in reviewing the literature.
• How will your research contribute to the understanding of this issue for practicing social workers and their clients?

IV. DATA
• Identify where and how you will get your sample and how many subjects you will have in your study.
• How will you ensure confidentiality?
• How will you control for bias in the selection of the sample?
• Define your dependent variable and how you will measure.
• Name and describe the three most important independent variables you think will relate to your dependent variable.
  • State whether each variable is dichotomous, continuous or categorical
  • Give the value for each variable (i.e. male=1, female=2)
  • Tell why you think each variable is important
• Identify and briefly describe the instrument you will use. Include the following:
  • What has it been used to measure?
  • What populations it has been used with?
• Identify and describe possible threats to internal and external validity and how you will control for these threats.

V. Methods/Procedures
• Name and describe your research design.
• Name and describe the statistical method(s) you will use to investigate your question.
• Identify three limitations of your research
• This section should end with a brief restatement of your research question, what you plan to do and hope to achieve by conducting the proposed research.

References
• Must be in APA format
• Include with each assignment