University of Central Florida  
School of Social Work  

SOW 5404.0050  -  MSW Social Work Research  

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Term: Spring 2004  
Class Days: Wednesday  
Class Hours: 6:00-8:50pm  
Class Location: DTC 206  

Course 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 community-based preventive, developmental, supportive, and remedial social work practice.
2. Explain the research function in both micro and macro practice.
3. Understand social work research as a scientific approach.
4. Discuss the specific stages of the social work research process: (i.e., Formulation of practice questions and hypotheses, Sampling, Data Collection, Processing of data, Interpretation of statistical results and testing of hypotheses, and Report writing.
5. Develop data collection instruments for practice evaluation and need assessment.
6. Utilize the research designs for social work practice.
7. Use a computerized statistical program (SPSS) for data analysis.
8. Discuss beginning level statistical methods and their applications for social work research.
9. Conduct social research (quantitative/qualitative and descriptive/explanatory) related to community-based clinical practice.
10. Understand, critically evaluate and make use of the research findings of others.
11. Discuss the ethical and political issues, and sensitivity of studying the populations of diversity (women, racial and cultural minorities, gays and lesbians, handicapped, elderly, poor) incorporating the principles of the human subjects review process, and how it relates to social work research.

Evaluation of Learning and Grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Grade Point</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPSS/PC Exercise</td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td>April 14, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
<td>40 points</td>
<td>February 25, 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>40 points</td>
<td>April 21, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Analysis and Critique</td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td>March 31, 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100 Points</td>
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Grades  
A+ = 95-100 (4.0)  
A = 90-94 (3.75)  
A- = 90-86 (3.00)  
A-(c) = 90-87 (3.25)  
B+ = 87-89 (3.25)  
B = 84-86 (3.00)  
B-(c) = 84-83 (2.75)  
C+ = 77-79 (2.25)  
C = 74-76 (2.00)  
C-(c) = 74-73 (1.75)  
D+ = 67-69 (1.25)  
D = 64-66 (1.00)  
D-(c) = 64-63 (.75)  
F = 59 or less (0.00)

1. Examinations: There will be a mid-term and final written examination. The exam questions will be taken from the materials both covered in the class and assigned for reading. The exam may have any combination of true/false, multiple choice, and matching.

2. Research Paper: To help achieve the course objectives, each student is required to write an
analysis of a research-based article that is directly related to community-based clinical practice. The paper should not exceed 8-10 pages long and double spaced type-written/word-processed. The guidelines and other specifics for the research paper will be provided and discussed in the class. A letter grading system will evaluate the paper.

3. **SPSS/PC Exercise**: There will be one SPSS exercise. Students are expected to participate in the exercise.

4. **Class Attendance and Participation**: Students are expected to attend all classes and actively participate in learning activities.


**RESERVE READINGS**:


**Examples of Group Designs**:


**Example of a Qualitative Design**:


**Examples of Survey Research**:


**Other readings will be required throughout the semester.**

**Course Policies**: See *Social Work Student Handbook* and *The Golden Rule Handbook for UCF Students*. 
Course Outline and Schedule

Sessions 1 (January 7th) and Session 2 (January 14th): Unit Learning Objectives
1. Define and illustrate errors in human inquiry.
2. Understand the foundations of Social Science.
3. Identify the motivations for doing Social Work Research.
4. Understand deductive and inductive theory constructions.
5. Understand prejudice and stereotyping in human inquiry.

Content
1. Human inquiry
2. Foundations of social science
3. Motivations for social work research
4. Scientific theory and social work practice models
5. Deductive theory construction
6. Inductive theory construction

Readings Required: Rubin and Babbie, Chapters 1 - 3

Session 3 (January 21st) - The Ethics and Politics of Social Work Research
Unit Learning Objectives
1. Understand the issues of ethical controversies and cultural sensitivity in Social Work Research
2. Understand NASW Code of Ethics
3. Understand the Political issues of Social Work Research
4. Identify and discuss political and ethical issues in some of the researches on population at risk
5. Address the Human Subjects Review Process and protection for human subjects

Content
1. Human diversity and Social Work Research
2. Ethical issues and controversies in social work research
3. NASW Code of Ethics and the politics of social work research
4. The Guidelines for Human Subjects of School of Social Work and UCF Committee

Readings Required: Rubin and Babbie, Ch. 4

Session 4 (January 28th) - Problem Formulation
Unit Learning Objectives
1. Understand the Social Work Research process
2. Identify research topics related to social stress, support, shared responsibility, social functioning, empowerment, social/economic justice.
3. Explain the purposes of research and develop a problem statement, research questions and hypothesis.
4. Components of a research report: Introduction, Problem statement, Review of the literature, Study questions/hypotheses, Methodology, Results, Discussion, Conclusions, References, Appendices, and Abstracts

Content
1. Overview and purpose of the research process.
2. Parts of the Research Paper
3. Human diversity issues

Readings Required: Rubin and Babbie, Chap. 5 and 6
Session 5 (February 4th) - Conceptualization, Operationalization and Measurement

Unit 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.
5. Understand and use the four levels of measurement

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

Readings Required: Rubin and Babbie, Chaps. 6 and 7

Session 6 (February 11th), and Session 7 (February 18th) - Constructing Data-Collection Instruments

Unit Learning Objectives
1. Understand the guidelines for asking questions
2. Discuss the pros and cons of using closed-ended, and open-ended questions
3. Construct questionnaires, composite measures

Content
1. Guidelines for asking questions
2. Questionnaire construction with composite measures
3. Some prominent scaling (e.g., Guttman, Likert, Thurstone)
4. Cultural sensitivity issues in constructing questionnaires

Readings Requested:
1. Rubin and Babbie, CH. 8


Session 8 (February 25th): Midterm Exam

Session 9 (March 3rd) - The Logic of Sampling

Unit Learning Objectives
1. Discuss sampling concepts and terminology
2. Explain probability sampling theory
3. Understand the types of probability sampling and non-probability sampling
5. Discuss the problems of sampling

Content
1. Sampling concepts and terminology
2. Probability sampling theory
3. Types of probability sampling
4. Non-probability sampling
5. Problems of sampling
6. Human diversity issues in sampling

Readings Required: Rubin and Babbie, Chaps. 9 & 10
Session 10 (March 17th) - Causal Inference and Group Designs

Unit Learning Objectives:
1. Understand the components and variations within experimental designs
2. Explain sampling method for experiments
3. Understand and identify the factors that influence internal, and external validity
4. Discuss "natural" experiments and its implications for research

Content:
1. Experimental and Quasi-experimental designs
2. Internal validity and External validity
3. "Natural" experiments
4. Ethical issues in experiments and the use of control groups and randomization

Readings Required: Rubin and Babbie, Chap. 10

Reserve Readings:

Session 11 (March 24th) - Survey Research

Unit Learning Objectives:
1. Understand mail surveys and the building of self-administered questionnaires
2. Review the principles and problems that can occur with survey research

Content:
1. Self-administered questionnaire and cover Letter
2. Personal interviews and the role of the interviewer
3. Telephone surveys and electronic mail survey
4. Human diversity and ethical issues with survey research methods

Readings Required: Rubin and Babbie, Ch. 12

Reserve Readings:

Session 12 (March 31st) - Qualitative Research Methods

Unit Learning Objectives:
1. Identify topics appropriate to Qualitative research
2. Describe and understand the various roles of the observer and sampling in qualitative research
3. Understand how to ask questions and how to record observations
4. Be able to analyze data and to draw conclusions
5. Be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research

Content:
1. Topics appropriate and the roles of the observer.
2. Sampling, asking questions, recording observations, data processing and analysis, and, drawing conclusions.
3. The strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research
4. Human diversity and cultural sensitivity issues with qualitative research
Readings Required: Rubin and Babbie, Ch. 13 and 14

Research Paper due March 31, 2004

Session 13 (April 7) and Session 14 (April 14) - Interpreting Descriptive Statistics and Tables
Unit Learning Objectives:
1. Understand descriptive statistics
2. Conduct univariate analysis and subgroup comparisons
4. Discuss bivariate and multivariate analysis
5. Discuss the chance of a rival hypothesis
6. Understand measures of association and explain statistical significance
7. Understand statistical power analysis and discuss common misuses of inferential statistics
Content
1. Chance as a rival hypothesis
2. Statistical significance (Probability, One-Tailed and Two-Tailed Tests, Type 1 and Type II Errors)
3. Measures of association and selecting a test of statistical significance
4. Statistical power analysis and common misuses and misinterpretations of inferential statistics

SPSS/PC Exercise—April 14, 2004
Readings Required: Rubin and Babbie, Ch. 15, 16 and 17

FINAL EXAM: APRIL 21, 2004

Bibliography


