

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK**

**SW 519 - Foundation Research
Section Number: 002
3 credit hours
Summer 2019**

**Instructor: Andrea Joseph
Class Time: 9:00-12:00
Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:00-2:00**

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Code of Conduct

It is the student's responsibility to have read the College of Social Work Ethical Academic and Professional Conduct Code that is in the College of Social Work MSSW Handbook (www.csw.utk.edu). Students are also expected to sign and adhere to the Social Work Field Placement Code of Conduct.

The Honor Statement

An essential feature of The University of Tennessee is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the University, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity. (*Hilltopics*).

University Civility Statement

Civility is genuine respect and regard for others: politeness, consideration, tact, good manners, graciousness, cordiality, affability, amiability and courteousness. Civility enhances academic freedom and integrity, and is a prerequisite to the free exchange of ideas and knowledge in the learning community. Our community consists of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and campus visitors. Community members affect each other's well-being and have a shared interest in creating and sustaining an environment where all community members and their points of view are valued and respected. Affirming the value of each member of the university community, the campus asks that all its members adhere to the principles of civility and community adopted by the campus:

<http://civility.utk.edu/>

Disability

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability or if you have emergency information to share, please contact The University of Tennessee, Knoxville Student Disability Services office at 100 Dunford Hall (865) 974-6087. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

Dimensions of Diversity

The College of Social Work and the University of Tennessee welcome and honor all people. In accordance with the U.S. National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the U.S. Council on Social Work Education (CSWE 2015 Educational Policy Statement), “the dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including” age, class, color, culture, mental or physical disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, gender identity, immigration status, marital status, national origin, political ideology, race, regionality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. The College values intellectual curiosity, pursuit of knowledge, and academic freedom and integrity. “A person’s diverse life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim” (CSWE 2015 Educational Policy Statement). The College of Social Work promotes social justice and social change, and strives to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice.

Course Description

This is a required Foundation course. This course is designed to help students gain an understanding of and appreciation for the use of research as a tool for professional evidence-based practice with and on behalf of at-risk populations and to evaluate programs and practices. Students are introduced to the concepts and skills underlying a systematic approach to social work research, including basic research terminology, the scientific method in social work, the value of research in social work, research ethics and the social work value base, problem formulation and conceptualization, measurement, research designs, sampling, alternative quantitative and qualitative data gathering and analytic techniques, and relevant information and computer technologies.

Course Rationale

Social workers must be critical consumers of research and possess the knowledge of research and its method in order to use research as a tool for competent and accountable evidence-based practice with and on behalf of at-risk populations. Toward that end, it is essential that social workers have the foundation knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to formulate questions about practice and policy, access and critically appraise the research literature available to answer such questions, and to prepare for more advanced methods used to evaluate programs and practices.

Course Competencies

By the completion of this course, the students are expected to be able to demonstrate:

1. Recognize and explain differences between an evidence-based helping professional and one guided by tradition, authority, dogma, and speculation.
4.1 (Content: role, history, knowledge acquisition, and current status of research in social work; basic assumptions, concepts, foundations, and limitations of the traditional scientific approach and challenges to these foundations; principles, logic, limitations, and alternative conceptualizations of qualitative and quantitative research designs);

2. Use technology ethically and appropriately to access relevant data bases for research evidence to support or refute social work practice, program and policy decisions. 4.2, 1.4 (*Content: evidence based practice, purpose of a literature review, how to use technology to appropriately access data bases and other sources of literature, and assess the quality, credibility and limitations of available literature including research gained from electronic sources; use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy and service delivery*)
3. Critically evaluate the methodological rigor of different kinds of qualitative and quantitative research and use this information to prioritize knowledge into a hierarchy of evidence from the most to the least rigorous. 4.2, 4.3 (*Content: research questions/hypotheses, practice problems and transitions/translations to research questions and hypotheses from these practice problems*) principles and methods of sampling, measurement, design; descriptive and inferential statistics; and framework for evaluating research studies).
4. Critically evaluate the strengths and limitations of qualitative and quantitative research in reference to race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, family structure, relational status, national origin, age and religion within the context of social, economic and environmental justice 4.2 (*Content: principles and methods of sampling, measurement, and design; data interpretation; and culturally competency research*)
5. Prepare, enter, and manipulate data using a spreadsheet or other software programs. 4.1, 1.4 (*Content: Level of measurement, hypothesis testing, compute and interpret basic descriptive and inferential statistics; and selecting statistical tests*)
6. Select and apply appropriate empirical techniques to evaluate process and outcomes with program evaluation and single client systems. Assess the utility of the research to inform practices and programs 4.3 (*Content: case level research designs; univariate and bivariate statistics*)
7. Articulate the core values and ethical standards of the social work profession (based on the NASW Code of Ethics, the NASW & ASWB Standards for Technology and Social Work Practice and the International Federation of Social Work Code of Ethics) to research in settings with diverse constituencies across multiple systems ensuring that the conduct, evaluation, dissemination and implementation of research using technological approaches do so in a manner that ensures ethical credibility and informed consent of the participant. 1.1, 1.4 (*Content: NASW code of ethics, historical overview of ethics in research, voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, and cultural competent research*)
8. Effectively communicate empirically-based knowledge (or lack thereof) and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo and macro levels. 4.2, 4.3 (*Content: writing a research report, APA style, research proposal components; framework for evaluation of research studies*).

After completing SW 519 students will be able to:

1. Appreciate and articulate the importance and place of research in the practitioner's life and in the social work profession
2. Compare and contrast quantitative and qualitative approaches to inquiry
3. Articulate practice experiences and integrate these with research-based knowledge.
4. Identify various types of both quantitative and qualitative research designs and for what issues and questions they are most appropriate
5. Identify practice questions as research questions
6. Demonstrate proficient use of library resources to locate relevant literature
7. Evaluate empirical work relative to use of theory, sample design, instrumentation, method of data collection, and significance of findings for social work practice
8. Critique empirical work with respect to its cultural inclusiveness and relevance
9. Interpret and conduct univariate and bivariate statistical procedures in social work research
10. Assess quantitative measures for reliability and validity
11. Conceptualize and operationalize outcomes of social work interventions
12. Identify acceptable research instruments that are culturally appropriate
13. Identify important elements of a survey study, a single subject design study, a qualitative study utilizing individual interviews or focus groups, and an experimental design study
14. Assess internal and external validity
15. Demonstrate understanding of ethical issues that warrant attention in conducting research and know appropriate ways to avoid or resolve potential dilemmas
16. Demonstrate understanding of safeguards to protect research participants from harm that could arise as a result of participation in research
17. Demonstrate understating of appropriate consent forms and procedures

Topics and organization of the course

It is essential that you have regular access to a computer with internet capacity and Microsoft Excel. There will be detailed course materials provided through the computer and delivered via a software program called Canvas. You may access Canvas at utk.instructure.com

To do well in this class you will need to attend class every week, check the Canvas course site regularly, complete reading and submit assignments on time, and read and refer to this syllabus carefully throughout the semester. This syllabus is posted on Canvas for your convenience.

be assigning some additional readings as the semester evolves. Our Canvas homepage will include updated information on the class as well as electronic links to some resources. Assignments and due dates are included in this syllabus and will be posted on the Canvas site for our class.

Text

Much of the required reading for this course is from our textbook: Rubin, A. & Babbie, E. (2016). *Essential research methods for social work, 4th edition*. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

Resources:

1. You will need your laptop every class. If you do not have access to a laptop, please inform Dr. Joseph in advance so that she can schedule your in-class quiz in the computer lab.
2. You will need to download SPSS for this course.

Class Schedule, Required Reading, and Assignment Due Dates

Introduction to the Scientific Method and Evidence-Based Social Work Practice

6-4-19 – Online Live Class 9:00-10:00

1. Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 1, Why study research?

6/11/19 – No Class

1. Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 2, Evidence-based practice
2. Schoeder, D.A., Johnson, D.E. & Jensen, T.D. (2012). Reading research reports: A brief introduction. In T.C. Lomand, ed., *Social science research: A cross section of journal articles for discussion and evaluation*, 7th ed, pp. 254-257. Glendale, CA: Pycszak.

Research Design and Methods

Date 6/18/19
(The start of Face-to-Face Classes)

1. Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 3, Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods
2. Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 4, Factors influencing the research process
3. Grabe, S., Grose, R. G., & Dutt, A. (2014). Women's land ownership and relationship power: A mixed methods approach to understanding structural inequities and violence against women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, DOI: 10.1177/0361684314533485

Ethical Issues and Cultural Competency in Research

6/25/19

- A. Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 6, Cultural-competency in research
- B. Jackson, K.F. (2010). Ethical considerations in social work research with

multiracial individuals. *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*, 7(1), 10 pps.

- C. Power, Robert. (2001). Reflections on participant observation in drug research. *Addiction Research & Theory*, 9(4), 325-337.
- D. McCorkel, J. A., & Myers, K. (2003). What difference does difference make? Position and privilege in the field. *Qualitative Sociology*, 26(2), 199-231.

Problem Formulation & Measurement

7/2/19

- 1. Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 7, Problem Formulation
- 2. Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 8, Measurement in quantitative and qualitative inquiry
- 3. Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 9, Quantitative and qualitative measurement instruments
- 4. Hall, S. & Adams, R. (2011). Newlyweds' unexpected adjustments to marriage. *Family & Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, 39(4), 375-387.

Assignment Due:

- A. Project research question

Due 7/6/19

Survey Research and Sampling

7/9/19

- 1. Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 10, Surveys
- 2. Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 11, Sampling: Quantitative and qualitative approaches
- 3. Gibelman, M. & Sweifach, J. (2008). Acting on our values: Do social workers volunteer? *Social Work*, 53(1), 53-65.

Experiments, Quasi-Experiments & Single-Case Designs

7/16/19

Note: Please Download SPSS before the start of class.

- 1. Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 12, Experiments and quasi-experiments

2. Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 13, Single-case research designs
3. Huang, J., Sherraden, M. & Purnell, J.Q. (2014). Impacts of Child Development
4. Accounts on maternal depressive symptoms: Evidence from a randomized statewide policy experiment. *Social Science & Medicine*, 112, 30-38.

Quantitative Methods Data Analysis

7/23/19

1. Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 17, Quantitative data analysis
2. Waldfogel, J., Craigie, T. & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2010). Fragile families and child wellbeing. *The Future of Children*, 20(2), 87-112.

Qualitative Methods, Qualitative Analysis & Program Evaluation

7/30/19

1. Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 14, Program Evaluation
2. Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 15, Qualitative Methods
3. Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 18, Qualitative data analysis
4. Collins-Camargo, C., Sullivan, D., & Murphy, A. (2011). Use of data to assess performance and promote outcome achievement by public and private child welfare agency staff. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33(2), 330-339

Research Proposal Presentations

8/6/19

Assignments

1. Discussion Board Responses w/ Peer Review: (Competencies #1 & 7)

Directions: Respond to the discussion board questions on Canvas. You will be randomly assigned to provide a feedback to one of your classmates.

Question:

1. What is your gut-level reaction to taking a course on research and what do you think has caused this reaction? (200-300 Words)

2. How can understanding research methods improve your ability as a social worker? (200-300 Words)
3. How does the use of evidence-based practices align with the NASW code of ethics? (200-300 Words)

Due Dates:

- A. Questions due 6/07/19
- B. Peer review responses due 6/10/19

#2

UTK CITI Human Subjects Training

Due 6/15/19 11:59pm

(Course Competences: 1, 2, 3,4,7 and 8, Dimensions of measurement: Knowledge, cognitive and affective processes, values.)

This online training provides you with the opportunity to understand ethics and practices in relation to conducting research with human subjects.

Please register with CITI and complete the basic course in human subjects “Social Behavior Research Basic”. Save your certificate of completion and submit on Canvas.

You may begin this assignment here:

<http://irb.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/29/2016/09/CITI-Training-and-Registration-Instructions-All-Users.pdf>

#2: Test One: Take-Home Test

Due 7/5/19 11:59 pm

(Competencies 1, 3, 4, & 7; Dimensions: Knowledge; Cognitive and Affective Processes; Values)

1. **Purpose:** This take-home exam will contain content covered in weeks 1 through 4.

#3: Project Research Question – Submit on Canvas

Due 7/6/19 11:59 pm

Select an area of interest in social work practice and develop a research question related to your interest area. Your question may be focused on a specific intervention, e.g. What treatment modalities effectively reduce depressive symptoms in older adults? Or, you may choose to compare two interventions you already know about, e.g. Is permanent supportive housing more cost effective than emergency shelters for families experiencing homelessness? Submit your question on Canvas. This assignment will prepare you to start your literature review assignment.

#4

Literature Review Table: Submit on Canvas

Due 7/20/19 11:59 pm

(Competencies 2, 3, 4, & 8; Dimensions: Knowledge, Cognitive and Affective Processes; Skill)

Purpose: In this assignment you will: (1) further explore practice interests to inform the development of research questions and (2) critically analyze published research as a guide to social work practice. This assignment is intended to help you develop knowledge and build skills in using existing research evidence to inform your social work practice. More specifically, by completing this assignment, you will have the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities in:

- Understanding the scientific process and the use of scientific language in applied social science, as well as a basic understanding of how to use research to inform and guide social work practice.
- Understanding methods used in inquiry related to both the development and testing of theory.
- Formulating research questions that address social work practice and/or the social and economic well-being of clients and communities, and select appropriate methods given those questions.
- Reviewing, analyzing, and critiquing published research, including the ability to identify, compare, and contrast qualitative and quantitative designs and methods.
- Identifying gaps in the knowledge base and critically analyzing the use of practice wisdom to inform future research questions and studies to help fill those gaps.

Directions:

1. Use the research question you developed for the “project research question” assignment to build your literature review table. If you want to change your question, you must get approval from Dr. Joseph first.
2. Review the empirical literature in your area of interest that addresses your question and has been published in peer-reviewed journals. Focus on studies that have been published in the past five years, include both qualitative and quantitative research, and take an interdisciplinary approach by reviewing research in social work as well as related fields.
3. Use the excel template provided to fill in the following information for your table: APA Citation, Research Design, Data, Measures, Sample, Analyses, Results, Strengths, and Limitations. As you review the research in your chosen area, fill in the spreadsheet. Enter information for 12 articles. Convert this spreadsheet into a PDF for submission.
4. In a word document, provide a brief summary of “what we know” from the research you reviewed. Then identify what we don’t know on the basis of the empirical literature to date. For example, does the research you reviewed adequately answer the research question(s) you formulated in the earlier of this assignment? For some groups of people

or everyone? In one place or many places? Under what conditions? What additional studies need to be planned to further our knowledge in your area of interest? This should adhere to APA style, including citations. It should be no longer than four pages.

#5 Test Two: Take-Home Test

Due: 8/4/19 11:59

(Competencies 5 & 6; Dimensions: Knowledge; Skill)

Purpose: This in-class exam will contain content covered in weeks 4 through 8. This test will also cover univariate and bivariate statistical tests and applications.

#6: Presentation of the Research Proposal:

Due in class 8/7/19 – Upload on Canvas

(Competencies: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, & 8; Dimensions: Knowledge, Skills, Cognitive and Affective Processes; Values)

Purpose: To help you think through and present each aspect of conducting research, and to give you an opportunity to enhance your professional presentation knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Directions: This assignment builds on the previous “Literature Review Table” assignment. First, you will present your operationally defined research question and a brief summary of the current research on this topic, pointing out the current gaps in the knowledgebase. Next, you will present a study you have designed to address this gap. This will include methodology: design, sample, data collection, measurement, and an analytic plan.

You will prepare and present your research proposal using PowerPoint or similar slides. For this assignment, you will earn points based on the accuracy of information and quality of your preparation for the presentation, as well as your presentation itself including your slides. This presentation is to contain no more than 10 slides and be no longer than 10 minutes, leaving time at the end of the presentation for one audience question.

Grading

A (95-100) Outstanding/Superior. Student consistently exceed expectations.

B+ (90-94) Above Average. Student consistently meets, and occasionally exceeds, normal expectations for the course.

B (85-89) Average. Student consistently meets normal expectations for the course.

C+ (80-84) Below Average. There is unevenness in grasping course content. Student is inconsistent in meeting normal expectations for the course.

C (70-79) Poor. There is lack of understanding of course content. Student does not meet course expectations.

F (69-Below) Very Poor. Course expectations are not met. There is a lack of attendance or incomplete assignments.

Final grades in this course are based on the number of points you earn of 100 points available:

- Participation grades are based on the number of *In-Class Quizzes completed (2 Points each quiz for a total of 16 Points)*

- *Discussion Board (8)*
- *CITI Training (10 points)*
- *Project Research Question (4 Points)*
- *Tests (15 points each X 2 tests = 30)*
- *Literature Review Table (20)*
- *Presentation of the Research Proposal (12)*

Late Work

In-class exercises, quizzes, and assignments must be submitted no later than the due date and time. If extenuating circumstances make this impossible, students must contact me in writing at least 24 hours before the assignment due date to negotiate alternative arrangements. Students will lose points for late assignments or postponed quizzes at a rate of 1 point per day. Late *weekly* exercises will not be accepted, though you are encouraged to complete these for your own learning and preparation for future assignments and quizzes. Attendance will be noted as class begins. Points will be deducted for late arrival and/or early departure.

Attendance Policy

Attendance will affect grades in this course. Any student missing more than two classes will need to contact the instructor to discuss implications regardless of the circumstances that led to these absences. Students who miss more than two classes may be assigned a failing grade in this course. If this rare circumstance should occur, the instructor will consult with the MSSW Program Director regarding failing the student on the basis of excessive absences. The decision of the instructor in consultation with the MSSW Program Director shall be final.

Confidentiality and Privacy Considerations

The NASW Code of Ethics requires that social workers protect client confidentiality and privacy. Various state and federal regulations, including the HIPPA Privacy Rule, may also protect the confidentiality of client information in settings where social work students are engaged in practicum placements. In order to safeguard these client rights:

- Always disguise the name and other personal identifying information when you speak or write about a client.
- If writing in great detail about a client, ask permission from that client.
- Share nothing discussed in class about specific clients, agencies, or other students outside of this classroom.
- Any information shared with the instructor will be confidential, within the limits defined by the NASW Code of Ethics and relevant legal guidelines.
- Information regarding your performance or behavior as a student is protected by the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act. However, student information can be shared between UT faculty, staff, administration, or field instructors when there is a compelling educational or safety reason to do so.

Recording and Sharing of Lectures

Course materials prepared by the instructor, together with the content of all lectures and review sessions presented by the instructor are the property of the instructor. Video and audio recording of lectures and review sessions without the consent of the instructor is prohibited. On request, the instructor will usually grant permission for students to audio tape lectures, on the condition that these audio tapes are only used as a study aid by the individual making the recording. Unless explicit permission is obtained from the instructor, recordings of lectures and review sessions may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course.

Rules of Academic Etiquette

General rules of thumb:

- When in doubt about how you should speak, write, or act, always err on the side of formality. You will never offend or annoy someone by being overly formal and polite.
- While you are in college, your coursework is your job. You should behave as you would in a professional work environment.
- Write in complete sentences with correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- Proofread your email before sending it.

When addressing your professors in person:

- Always address them as “Professor Smith” or “Dr. Smith.”
- Do not call them by their first names or anything else unless they explicitly ask you to do so.

When writing an email to your professor:

- Begin the email with “Dear Professor Smith,” “Dear Prof. Smith,” or “Dear Dr. Smith.” Do not begin the email “Hi” without addressing your professor by their title and surname.
- Be alert to the tone of your message. Any email to a professor or teaching assistant should sound like a formal letter, not a text message or a demand to a customer service representative.

For example, you should write:

Dear Professor Smith,

I cannot come to your office hours this week. Are you available at any time on Monday instead?

Sincerely, Jane

Do NOT write:

Hi,

I need to talk to you about the test. Can I come by Mon? Thx Jane

Do NOT write:

Hello, I’m a senior and I need your class to graduate. Onestop says I need permission. I need you to enroll me immediately. Jane