

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

**SW 519 - Foundation Research
Section 001
(3 credit hours)
Summer 2019**

**Instructor: Marlys Staudt, MSW, Ph.D.
Class Time: 3:30 to 6:30, Thursdays, HH 318**

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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 Office of Disability Services 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).

Text:

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. R. (2016). *Essential research methods for social work* (4th ed.). Boston: MA: Cengage.

Optional:

We will use SPSS in the Henson Hall computer lab. Students can also download it to their computer, but it's not required.

<https://web.dii.utk.edu/softwaredistribution>

Course Requirements:

Quizzes: (30%) Three quizzes, each worth 10 points. Quizzes will be posted on CANVAS and available for several days. Specific dates and times will be announced in class. Approximate date for quiz 1 is 6/13; approximate date for quiz 2 is 7/4; approximate date for quiz 3 is 7/25. Quiz 1 will be focused on basic research terminology and measurement (**competencies 1 and 3**). Quiz 2 will be focused on sampling, survey research and research ethics (**competencies 3, 4, and 7**). Quiz 3 will be focused on group designs (**competencies 3 and 6**). Note that even though the quizzes are focused on certain topics, that does not mean they are exclusive to those topics. Anything covered to that date in the class may be on the quiz.

Dimension of Measurement: Knowledge

Completion of NIH web based Protecting Human Research Participants course: (10%) Due on 7/11. Students must register online, complete the course and turn in the certificate of successful completion. The course can take three hours to complete, but does not have to be completed at one time. <http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php> (**competency 7**) **Dimension of Measurement: Knowledge; Values**

Research Proposal: (30%) (competencies 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8) Due on 8/9. Each student (see below regarding students working together) will write a research proposal on the topic of his or her interest. **Dimensions of Measurement: Knowledge; Cognitive and Affective Processes, Skills, Values** The final product of this assignment consists of two sections:

Section I: Problem statement and research question/hypothesis (Min. of 4 pages, excluding references)

State the significance of the problem you would like to address in your research proposal. Conduct a critical review of the literature on the question that you formulate. Drawing upon the literature review, discuss the research questions/underlying assumptions/hypotheses that guide your research. The significance of the problem section should inform the reader about how you will build on prior related work and also how your proposed research will differ from prior research.

Section II: Research methods: Description of proposed research (Min. of 6 pages, excluding references)

This part of your proposal will focus on the research design. It provides a detailed explanation of the research you are proposing. This section should include each of the following:

- Data collection
- Sampling methods; recruitment of participants
- Measurement
- Human subject issues
- Study implications (if not discussed in Section I)
- Limitations and strengths of the proposed study

***Two or three students may work together on the proposal. Should students elect to work together, then each student will receive the same grade. When students work together, they should each turn in one page detailing the contribution of each person.**

Data analysis assignment: (20%) Students will be provided data and conduct data analysis using SPSS. It is expected this assignment can be completed in class during computer lab time. Students can consult with one another and the instructor during or outside of lab, but each student should turn in an assignment. The assignment consists of a list of questions that require short answers that students will answer based on the findings from the data analysis. **(competencies 5 and 6). Dimensions of Measurement: Knowledge, Skills, Cognitive and Affective Processes**

Attendance, classroom behaviors, and class participation (10%)

Students are expected to get full points unless a student (1) consistently misses class or is late for class without prior notice to the instructor; (2) does not fully participate in and contribute to the class (as evidenced by not being prepared to discuss the readings, checking email, texting, etc.) and/or (3) engages in other behaviors that interfere with a positive classroom environment or the productive learning of others. **(competencies 1**

and 8) Dimensions of Measurement: Skills, Values, Knowledge, Cognitive and Affective Processes

Final Grading:

94-100: A
90-93: A-
88-89: B+
83-87: B
80-82: B-
77-79: C +
73-76: C
65-72: C-
64 and below: D

Outline: (Instructor reserve the right to make changes to what is covered in each session to ensure material is adequately covered).

5/30: Introductions; course overview; introduction to scientific inquiry in social work.

R & B: Chapter 1: Why Study Research?
Chapter 2: Evidence-based Practice

6/6: The Research Process.

R & B: Chapter 3: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods of Inquiry
Chapter 4: Factors Influencing the Research Process

6/13: Ethical and Cultural Issues in Social Work

R & B: Chapter 5: Ethical Issues in Social Work Practice
Chapter 6: Culturally Competent Research

6/20: Problem Formulation and Measurement

R & B: Chapter 7: Problem Formulation
Chapter 8: Measurement in Quantitative and Qualitative Inquiry
Chapter 9: Quantitative and Qualitative Measurement Instruments

6/27: Sampling and Surveys

R & B: Chapter 10: Surveys
Chapter 11: Sampling: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

7/11: Designs for Evaluating Programs and Practice

R & B: Chapter 12: Experiments and Quasi-Experiments
Chapter 13: Single-Case Evaluation Designs
Chapter 14: Program Evaluation

7/18: Additional Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods

R&B: Chapter 15: Additional Methods in Qualitative Inquiry
Chapter 16: Analyzing Available Records: Quantitative and Qualitative
Methods

7/25: Data Analysis

R&B: Chapter 17: Quantitative Data Analysis
Chapter 18: Qualitative Data Analysis

8/1: Applied Data Analysis (Meet in Henson Hall Computer Lab)

8/8: Catch-up