

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

**SW 520 – Foundations of Evidence-Based Social Work  
Sections 503 and 506  
Summer 2019 (First Session)  
1 credit hour**

Prerequisite(s): None

**Instructor:** Matthew Moore, PhD

**Email:** [mmoore92@utk.edu](mailto:mmoore92@utk.edu)

**Office Hours:** by appointment

**Live Online Date: 5/30/19 from 6:30-8:30 CST**

**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](http://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 advanced curriculum course. The course examines how to (1) convert information needs related to practice decisions into well-structured answerable questions; (2) efficiently locate the best evidence with which to answer such questions; (3) critically appraise such evidence; (4) apply results to practice and policy decisions; and (5) evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the application of such results to practice and policy decisions.

## **Course Rationale**

In order to maximize services to client systems that are effective in achieving valued outcomes, and to minimize ineffective and harmful services, social workers must have the knowledge and skills to formulate well-structured answerable questions about practice and policy decisions, and locate, critically appraise, apply, and evaluate the best evidence for making practice and policy decisions within a culturally affirming generalist social work context.

## **Course Competencies**

By the completion of this course, the students are expected to be able to demonstrate (through course activities, assignments, and/or exams):

1. Define, articulate, and apply principles of critical thinking by learning how to recognize, define, and avoid practice fallacies to improve care given and care received with diverse clients/client systems. (*Content: assertions and assumptions of practice; common logical fallacies when examining evidence; common errors in reasoning that violate principles of science called “practitioners’ fallacies”; steps in evidence-based practice; controversies and misconceptions about evidence-based practice*).
2. Formulate well-structured answerable questions about practice and policy decisions through engagement with the client, a mutual understanding of expectations, and a careful assessment of service needs and availability, the client/client system's culture, context, and motivation. (*Content: Client Oriented Practical Evidence Search” (COPES) questions; evaluation, prevention, assessment, description, and risk questions*).

3. Employ a scientific analytic approach using qualitative and/or quantitative methods to rigorously, critically and open-mindedly investigate, analyze, synthesize, and interpret available primary and secondary data and research findings, evaluation outcomes and other information toward formulation of professional judgments and conclusions. *(Content: steps in evidence-based practice; utilizing electronic searches and information technology using methodological filters; quality of study rating forms and frameworks for evaluating research studies; meta-analysis).*
4. Analyze the influence and implications of cultural, geographic, community, gender-based, religious, political, ideological and other identities and orientations on thinking about social issues, concerns, ethics and values. *(Content: identity formation; experiences of individuals in these contexts; formation of multiple identities; case studies of life experiences in identity formation and their relationships with the thoughts on contemporary social issues; critical analysis of self with respect to the above identity designations; history of cultural insensitivity in research; generalization of research findings to other groups; recruitment and retention of minority and oppressed populations in research studies; problematic issues in making research more culturally competent).*

### **Academic Integrity**

University policies on academic integrity will be strictly enforced. If you have any questions about what academic integrity and academic dishonesty mean, please bring these up with me as soon as possible. Please read and follow the UTK Center for Student Conduct and Community Standards' statement on academic integrity at [http://studentconduct.utk.edu/students\\_current\\_dishonesty.php](http://studentconduct.utk.edu/students_current_dishonesty.php).

**Required Readings and Podcasts** (There is no required textbook for this course. All materials will be posted on the Canvas site)

Thyer, B. A. (2004). What is evidence-based practice? *Brief Treatment and Crisis Intervention*, 4(2), 168-176.

Okpych, N. J. & Yu, James L-H. (2014). A historical analysis of evidence-based practice in social work: The unfinished journey toward an empirically grounded profession. *Social Service Review*, 88(1), 3-58. **(READ PAGES 3-32)**

Gibbs, L., & Gambrill, E. (2002). Evidence-based practice: Counterarguments to objections. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 12(3), 452-476.

Singer, J. B. (Host). (2011, March 9). The process of evidence-based practice: An interview with Danielle E. Parish, Ph.D. [Episode 65]. *Social Work Podcast*. [Audio Podcast] Retrieved from <http://www.socialworkpodcast.com/2011/03/process-of-evidence-based-practice.html>

Yeager, K. R. & Roberts, A. R. (2006). A practical approach to formulating evidence-based questions in social work. In A. R. Roberts & K. R. Yeager (Eds.), *Foundations of evidence-based social work practice* (pp. 47-58). New York, NY: Oxford University

Press.

Nochajski, T. (Host), (2016, August 29). The Science of Social Work: Interview with Dr. Jeane Anastas, and Dr. Cynthia Franklin, Ph.D. [Episode 198]. *inSocialWork*<sup>®</sup> Podcast Series. [Audio Podcast]. Retrieved from <http://www.insocialwork.org/episode.asp?ep=198>

Anastas, J.W. (2013). When is research good evidence? Issues in reading research. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 42, 107-115.

Gambrill, E. (2005). *Critical thinking in clinical practice: Improving the quality of judgments and decisions*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons. (**Chapter 6: Formal and informal fallacies: Mistakes in thinking and how to avoid them**)

Singer, J. B. (Producer), (2008, April 14). Social work research for practitioners: Interview with Allen Rubin, Ph.D. [Episode 37]. *Social Work Podcast* [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from <http://www.socialworkpodcast.com/2008/04/social-work-research-for-practitioners.html>

Mullen, E. J., Bledsoe, S. E., & Bellamy, J. L. (2007). Implementing evidence-based social work practice. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 18(4), 325-338.

Thyer, B. A. (2008). The quest for evidence-based practice?: We are all positivists! *Research on Social Work Practice*, 18(4), 339-345.

Bakk, L. (Host), (2019, January 28). Translation and Implementation of Evidence-Based Practice: Interview with Dr. Lawrence Palinkas. [Episode 256]. *inSocialWork*<sup>®</sup> Podcast Series. [Audio Podcast] Retrieved from <http://www.insocialwork.org/episode.asp?ep=256>

### **Assignments**

Your grade for this course will consist of an average of your scores on four (4) weekly quizzes.

- Quizzes will be due 11:59 PM CST each Wednesday  
\* **Please do not wait until the end of the evening to take your quiz. Technical issues do arise from time-to-time and you will not have time to resolve the issue before the deadline.**
- Quizzes will primarily cover material from the week's readings/podcast, but may also reference material from previous weeks
- Quizzes are timed and you will have 1 hour to complete each quiz once you start  
\***You may use your notes for the quizzes, but be sure to thoroughly read the material beforehand, as you will not have time to read the articles during your quiz**

### **Assignment Weighting**

Quiz 1	25%
Quiz 2	25%
Quiz 3	25%
Quiz 4	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Grading Scale**

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.

### **Technical Problems**

This course will be completed entirely online and your grade is comprised solely of your scores on the weekly quizzes. As such, it is critical that you address technical problems immediately, and in advance of all deadlines.

If you experience a problem with a quiz or with the Canvas site, please inform your instructor by email **and contact the OIT Help Desk**. The Help Desk is available by phone at 865-974-9900, by online help request at [help.utk.edu](http://help.utk.edu), or by live chat at [oit.utk.edu/help/chat/](http://oit.utk.edu/help/chat/).

### **Late Assignments**

Failure to complete the weekly quizzes by the posted due date will result in a grade of zero (0). Exceptions to this policy will only be granted in case of emergency, and it is your responsibility to notify the instructor immediately.

## Course Outline

5/30 – 6/05 Week 1	<p><b>LIVE ONLINE CLASS – 5/30/19 (6:30PM-8:30PM CST)</b> <i>Course Overview/Syllabus Review</i></p> <p><b>Topic: Introduction to Evidence-Based Practice</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Thyer, B. A. (2004). What is evidence-based practice? <i>Brief Treatment and Crisis Intervention</i>, 4(2), 168-176.</p> <p>Okpych, N. J. &amp; Yu, James L-H. (2014). A historical analysis of evidence-based practice in social work: The unfinished journey toward an empirically grounded profession. <i>Social Service Review</i>, 88(1), 3-58. <b>(READ PAGE 3-32)</b></p> <p>Gibbs, L., &amp; Gambrill, E. (2002). Evidence-based practice: Counterarguments to objections. <i>Research on Social Work Practice</i>, 12(3), 452-476.</p> <p><b>Podcast:</b> Singer, J. B. (2011, March 9). The process of evidence-based practice: An interview with Danielle E. Parish, Ph.D. [Episode 65]. <i>Social Work Podcast</i>. Retrieved from: <a href="http://www.socialworkpodcast.com/2011/03/process-of-evidence-based-practice.html">http://www.socialworkpodcast.com/2011/03/process-of-evidence-based-practice.html</a></p>
	<p><b>Quiz #1</b> <b>*Due 6/05/19 by 11:59 pm CST</b> Competencies: 1 and 4; Dimension: Knowledge</p>
6/06 – 6/12 Week 2	<p><b>Topic: Formulating Questions and Searching for Evidence</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Yeager, K. R. &amp; Roberts, A. R. (2006). A practical approach to formulating evidence-based questions in social work. In A. R. Roberts &amp; K. R. Yeager (Eds.), <i>Foundations of evidence-based social work practice</i> (pp. 47-58). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.</p> <p><b>Podcast:</b> Nochajski, T. (Host), (2016, August 29). The Science of Social Work: Interview with Dr. Jeane Anastas, and Dr. Cynthia Franklin, Ph.D. [Episode 198]. <i>inSocialWork® Podcast Series</i>. [Audio Podcast]. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.insocialwork.org/episode.asp?ep=198">http://www.insocialwork.org/episode.asp?ep=198</a></p>
	<p><b>Quiz #2</b> <b>*Due 6/12/19 by 11:59 pm CST</b> Competencies: 2 and 3; Dimensions: Knowledge, Skill</p>

<p>6/13 – 6/19 Week 3</p>	<p><b>Topic: Appraising Research</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Anastas, J.W. (2013). When is research good evidence? Issues in reading research. <i>Clinical Social Work Journal</i>, 42, 107-115.</p> <p>Gambrill, E. (2005). <i>Critical thinking in clinical practice: Improving the quality of judgments and decisions</i>. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley &amp; Sons. Chapter 6: <i>Formal and informal fallacies: Mistakes in thinking and how to avoid them</i></p> <p><b>Podcast:</b> Singer, J. B. (2008, April 14). Social work research for practitioners: Interview with Allen Rubin, Ph.D. [Episode 37]. <i>Social Work Podcast</i> [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.socialworkpodcast.com/2008/04/social-work-research-for-practitioners.html">http://www.socialworkpodcast.com/2008/04/social-work-research-for-practitioners.html</a></p>
	<p><b>Quiz #3</b> <b>*Due 6/19/19 by 11:59 pm CST</b> Competencies: 1, 3, and 4; Dimensions: Knowledge, Skill, Values</p>
<p>6/20 – 6/26 Week 4</p>	<p><b>Topic: Implementing Evidence-Based Interventions</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Mullen, E. J., Bledsoe, S. E., &amp; Bellamy, J. L. (2007). Implementing evidence-based social work practice. <i>Research on Social Work Practice</i>, 18(4), 325-338.</p> <p>Thyer, B. A. (2008). The quest for evidence-based practice?: We are all positivists! <i>Research on Social Work Practice</i>, 18(4), 339-345.</p> <p><b>Podcast:</b> Bakk, L. (Host), (2019, January 28). Translation and Implementation of Evidence-Based Practice: Interview with Dr. Lawrence Palinkas. [Episode 256]. <i>inSocialWork® Podcast Series</i>. [Audio Podcast] Retrieved from <a href="http://www.insocialwork.org/episode.asp?ep=256">http://www.insocialwork.org/episode.asp?ep=256</a></p>
	<p><b>Quiz #4</b> <b>*Due 6/26/19 by 11:59 pm CST</b> Competencies: 1, 2, 3, and 4; Dimensions: Knowledge, Skill, Values</p>