

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK  
NASHVILLE CAMPUS**

**SW 506 SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH  
SPRING 2003**

**Instructor:** Brian E. Bride, Ph.D.  
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**Class location:** Room 234  
**Class time:** Monday, 9:00-11:50  
**Office Hours:** Mon. & Tues., 11:50-1:00  
**Or by appointment**

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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](http://www.csw.utk.edu))

**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*, 2002).

**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 865-974-6087. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

**Course Description**

This course focuses on knowledge and practice of social scientific research philosophies and methodologies with respect to their evolution and application to the field of social work. It covers the history and philosophies of science; ethics of research practice; and the research process including problem formulation, research design, instrument use and construction; data collection, analysis and reporting, and evaluation and utilization of research.

**Rationale**

Social workers must be provided with the knowledge of research and its methods in order to conduct research for informed, effective, and accountable practice within the framework of research ethics. Toward that end, it is essential that social workers have the foundation knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to conduct research as well as retrieve and critically evaluate the existing research literature. It is also important that such a

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preparation for research practice be reinforced with the use of appropriate statistical procedures and computer technology. This course trains students to meet the increasing demands to develop knowledge and to demonstrate practice effectiveness with the help of such procedures and technology, in a responsible and ethical manner. It further aims to prepare students for more advanced research methods for clinical as well as management, community, and policy practice.

### **Objectives**

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

1. Understand of the role, history, and current status of research in social work theory and practice;
2. Understanding of how to conduct research within the ethical guidelines of the profession
3. Understand and know how to avoid potential biases in research with minority and disadvantaged groups;
4. Understand and be able to apply the major stages of the research process;
5. Understand the basic assumptions, concepts, foundations, and limitations of the traditional scientific approach and challenges to these foundations;
6. Know how to gain access to substantive and methodological research literature;
7. Understand the principles, logic, limitations, and alternative conceptualizations of qualitative and quantitative research designs;
8. Understand basic evaluation designs for clinical as well as program management, community, and policy practice;
9. Understand and be able to apply basic principles and methods of sampling;
10. Understand basic principles and limitations of measurement;
11. Select and use basic measurement methods for clinical as well as program management, community, and policy practice;
12. Prepare, enter, and manipulate data using a microcomputer;
13. Interpret and compute basic descriptive statistics using a microcomputer;
14. Understand basic principles of inferential statistics;

15. Compute basic inferential statistics using a microcomputer;
16. Critically formulate and interpret research conclusions;
17. Write a research report using proper form and style.

### **Required Text:**

Rubin, A. & Babbie, E. (2001). *Research methods for social work* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

### **Course Requirements**

*Quizzes (20% of final grade)* – Four quizzes will be given during the course of the semester. Quizzes will be held at the beginning of class on the 2/10, 3/3/, 3/31, and 4/21. Students who are late to class will not be afforded extra time to complete the quizzes. Each quiz will be worth 25 points.

*Research Proposal (40% of final grade)* – Students will form research teams of 2-4 individuals and design a research project on a question relevant to social work practice. The proposal must include the following: introduction, literature review, statement of the problem, sampling plan, research design, data analysis plan, and limitations.

*Article Review and Critique (20% of final grade)* – Students will choose one of several articles identified by the professor and provide a review and critique of the article. Further guidelines will be provided in class.

*Presentations (10% of final grade)* – Students will conduct group presentations of their research proposal during the last two class meetings.

*Participation (10% of final grade)* – Factors considered in the assignment of a participation grade include, attendance, completion of readings, participation in class discussions, and completion of in and out of class assignments.

### **Grading Scale**

A	93-100
B+	88-92.9
B	80-87.9
C+	77-79.9
C	70-76.9
D	60-69.9
F	< 60

### **Class schedule**

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<b><i>Date</i></b>	<b><i>Topics and Readings</i></b>
1/13/03	Introduction and review of syllabus Social Work and Research  <i>Rubin and Babbie, Chapter 1: Scientific Inquiry and Social Work</i>
1/20/03	MLK Holiday – <b>NO CLASS</b>
1/27/03	Ethical Issues in Research  <i>Rubin and Babbie, Chapter 4: The Ethics and Politics of Social Work Research</i>
2/3/03	The Philosophy of Science Role of Theory in Social Work Research  <i>Rubin and Babbie, Chapter 2: Philosophical Issues in Science and Research Chapter 3: Theory and Research</i>
2/10/03	Problem Formulation Conducting a Literature Review  <i>Rubin and Babbie, Chapter 5: Problem Formulation Chapter 6: Conceptualization and Operationalization</i>
	<b>QUIZ #1</b>
2/17/03	Data Analysis I: Data Processing and Descriptive Statistics  <i>Rubin and Babbie, Chapter 15: Processing Data Chapter 16: Interpreting Descriptive Statistics and Tables</i>
2/24/03	Data Analysis II: Inferential Statistics  <i>Rubin and Babbie, Chapter 17: Inferential Data Analysis, Part I Chapter 18: Inferential Data Analysis, Part II</i>
3/3/03	Sampling  <i>Rubin and Babbie, Chapter 9: The Logic of Sampling</i>
	<b>QUIZ #2</b>
3/10/03	Research Design I: Group Designs

	<i>Rubin and Babbie,</i>	<i>Chapter10: Causal Inference and Group Designs</i>
3/17/03	Spring Break – <b>NO CLASS</b>	
3/24/03	Research Design II:	Survey Design Single System Design
	<i>Rubin and Babbie,</i>	<i>Chapter 11: Single-Case Evaluation Designs</i> <i>Chapter12: Survey Research</i>
3/31/03	Measurement	
	<i>Rubin and Babbie,</i>	<i>Chapter 7: Measurement</i> <i>Chapter 8: Constructing Measurement Instruments</i>
	<b>QUIZ #3</b>	
4/7/03	Qualitative Research Unobtrusive Research	
	<i>Rubin and Babbie,</i>	<i>Chapter 13: Qualitative Research Methods</i> <i>Chapter 14: Unobtrusive Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Methods</i>
4/14/03	Program Evaluation	
	<i>Rubin and Babbie,</i>	<i>Chapter 19: Program Evaluation</i>
4/21/03	Student Presentations	
	<b>QUIZ #4</b>	
4/28/03	Student Presentations	

### **Supplemental Bibliography**

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