

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

**SW 506 SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH  
Course Outline  
Spring 2004**

*Instructor: Marlys Staudt, Ph.D.*

*Class time: 9:02-12:05 Mondays*

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*Office hours: 8-9 Mondays and Thursdays and by appointment*

*Office: 202 Henson Hall*

*Class meets in room 306 Henson*

**TEXTS**

Montcalm, D. & Royse, D. (2002). Data analysis for social workers. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Rubin, A. & Babbie, E. (2001). Research methods for social work (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth /Thomson Learning.

Other required readings are on reserve in Hodges library.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Students are expected to:

- 1) Attend all class sessions,
- 2) Participate in class discussion and exercises,
- 3) Complete all assignments on time,
- 4) Complete all quizzes and exams,
- 5) Notify the instructor in a timely manner if extraordinary circumstances interfere with completion of course requirements,
- 6) If any student has a learning or other disability that requires specific learning needs or teaching modifications, please discuss with me early on in the semester.

**Major assignments will be as follows :**

1. Students will complete five quizzes or mini-exams. Each is worth 10% of the grade. Fifty percent of the final grade is based on the five quizzes. They will be given on 2/16, 3/1, 3/22, 4/5, and 4/26 at the

beginning of class. Students will have about 15 to 20 minutes to complete these. No extra time will be given if students are late to class.

2. Students will complete an assignment that requires data entry and analysis and reporting the findings. The assignment will be distributed after spring break and is due on April 30. It is worth 20% of the grade.

3. Students will develop a research proposal. We will talk about this early in the semester. See below for an outline of the research proposal. Also, see Appendix C in R & B. It is worth 25% of the grade. It is due on March 29.

4. Students will be asked to report on the articles that are assigned for readings. Five percent of the grade is based on the student's willingness to volunteer and participate in this activity, as well as overall participation in class, including attendance, being on time, and handing in assignments on time.

The outline for the research proposal is as follows:

#### Introduction

This section will include a description of the problem, a review of the literature, knowledge gaps, the research questions/hypotheses (which should flow from the current gaps in knowledge).

- introduce the problem and its significance
- develop the background
- state purpose and rationale of proposed study

#### Method

This section should describe how you propose to conduct the study. Basically it will tell the reader what you propose and how you propose to do it.

- description of the subjects (who will participate, how many will participate, how will they be recruited, methods used to protect human subjects)
- description of the measures used (what measures will be used, what are their reliability and validity, when and how will measures be taken)
- detailed description of the design and procedures

#### Data analyses

--how do you propose to analyze the data, specifically what statistical tests will you use to answer the research question(s) and/or test the hypotheses

#### Strengths and limitations

- what are the strengths and limitations of the proposed study

-- in what ways does the knowledge to be gained from the study justify its costs and potential risks to human subjects

Students's performance will be evaluated and final grades assigned according to the following criteria:

94-100 A  
90-93 B+  
83-89 B  
79-82 C+  
73-78 C  
69-72 D+  
68 and lower- D

Incompletes will not be given except in extraordinary situations. If you are faced with an unexpected personal or family situation that interferes with timely completion of the assignments and course work, please contact me as soon as possible.

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

**1/12, Session 1:** Introduction to the course; the scientific method; relationship between research and practice; introduction to the research process and basic terminology.

M & R: Chapter 1 "Introduction"

R & B: Chapter 1 "Scientific inquiry and social work"

Chapter 2 "Philosophical issues in science and research"

**1/19, MLK Holiday**

**1/26, Session 2:**

1) Theory and conceptualization; Conducting Literature Reviews

R & B: Chapter 3 "Theory and research"

Appendix A "Using the Library"

2) The Nature of Data

M & R Chp. 3

(we will begin to learn about data entry, using SPSS. Appendix H in R & B is a resource for you to use.)

**2/2, Session 3:**

1) Problem Formulation: Moving from Concepts to Operationalization

Rubin & Babbie: Chapter 5 “Problem Formulation”  
Chapter 6 “Conceptualization and Operationalization”

2) Frequency Tables, M & R: Chp. 4 Constructing and Interpreting Frequency Tables

**2/9, Session 4:**

1) Measurement

R & B: Chapter 7 “Measurement”  
Chapter 8 “Constructing Measurement Instruments”

Land, H. & Hudson, S. (1997). Methodological considerations in surveying Latina AIDS caregivers: Issues in sampling and measurement. Social Work Research, 21, 233-246.

2) Graphical Representations. M & R: Chp 5 “Preparing and Interpreting Graphical Representations”

**2/16, Session 5: QUIZ # 1**

Ethical Issues

R & B, Chp 4 “The Ethics and Politics of Social Work Research”  
M & R: Chp 2 “Ethical Considerations”

In-Class Video: The Deadly Deception

**2/23, Session 6:**

Sampling

R & B, Chapter 9 “The logic of sampling”

M & R, chp 8 “Normal Distribution” and chp. 9 “Inferential statistics: Understanding Probability and Sampling”

### **3/1, Session 7: QUIZ # 2**

Group Designs

R & B, Chp 10 “Causal inference and group designs”

Hepler, J. B. (1994). Evaluating the effectiveness of a social skills program for preadolescents. Research on Social Work Practice, 4, 411-435.

Mancoske, R. J., Standifer, D., & Cauley, C. (1994). The effectiveness of brief counseling services for battered women. Research on Social Work Practice, 4, 53-63.

3/8, Spring Break!!

### **3/15: Session 8**

1) Measures of central tendency

M & R: Chp 6 “Computing and Interpreting measures of central tendency”

2) Measures of dispersion

M & R, Chp 7, Computing and interpreting measures of dispersion

### **3/22: Session 9 QUIZ # 3**

1) Survey Research, R & B, Chp. 12 “Survey Research”

2) Hypothesis testing, M & R, Chp. 10 “Hypothesis testing”

Weinbach, R. W. (1989). When is statistical significance meaningful? A practice perspective. Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, 16, 31-37.

### **3/29, Session 10: Research proposal is due**

1) R & B, Chp. 13 Qualitative research methods

Carrese, J. A. & Rhodes, L. A. (1995). Western bioethics on the Navajo reservation: Benefit or harm? Journal of the American Medical Association, 274, 826-829.

Hughes, M. (1998). Turning points in the lives of young inner-city men forgoing destructive criminal behaviors: A qualitative study. Social Work Research, 20, 105-111.

2) M & R, Chp. 11 Bivariate analysis

**4/5, Session 11: QUIZ # 4**

1) R & B, Chp. 14 Unobtrusive research: Quantitative and qualitative methods

2) M & R, Chp. 12 Understanding and interpreting correlation

**4/12, Session 12:**

1) R & B, Chp. 19 Program evaluation

2) M & R, Chp. 13 t-tests and ANOVA: Testing hypotheses about means

**4/19, Session 13:**

1) Single system designs

R & B: Chp 11 “Single-case evaluation designs”

2) M & R, chp. 15, Selecting the appropriate statistical test

**4/26, Session 14: QUIZ # 5**

Course evaluations

Catch-up session