

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

**SW 506 SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH METHODS**

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 10 AM - 1 PM

Wednesday 11 AM - 1 PM

Summer Semester 2003

Tuesday 1:30 - 4:45

Room 209 (Henson Hall)

**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 - 2003*).

**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 191 Hoskins Library 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 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.
18. Understand beginning level applications of systematic evaluation of practice.

**Required Texts:**

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

Gilovich, T. (1991). *How we know what isn't so: The fallibility of human reasoning in everyday life*. New York: The Free Press.

**Recommended Texts:**

Kazdin, A. (1998). *Methodological issues and strategies in clinical research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

**Assignment of Grades**

The final course grade will be based on the following point totals:

A = 90 - 100 (Superior performance)

B+ = 87 - 89 (Better than satisfactory performance)

B = 80 - 86 (Satisfactory performance)

C+ = 77 - 79 (Less than satisfactory performance)

C = 70 - 76 (Performance well below the standard expected of graduate students)

**Course Requirements/Evaluation Procedures:**

Students are expected to:

- 1) attend all class sessions;
- 2) read all assignments and be ready to discuss these readings in class;
- 3) complete all assignments on time;
- 4) notify the instructor in a timely manner if circumstances interfere with the completion of course requirements

2 Exams (30% each)	60%
Daily quizzes	25%
1 Statistics Assignment	<u>15%</u>
	100%

### 1. Exams

There will be two multiple choice exams during this course. The first will be given at about the midpoint of the course. The second will be given at the end of the course on the last day of class (August 5, 2003).

### 2. Daily Quizzes

There will be a quiz over assigned readings and material from the previous lecture at the beginning of each class.

### 3. Statistics Assignment

There will be one statistics assignment during the course of the semester, involving the use of the computer. The assignment will involve creation of a data file and the use of SPSS (or any other data analysis program you wish to use) to conduct a series of statistical analyses of data in this file. The assignment will involve the use of the computer to build frequency distributions and compute descriptive statistics, conduct a Chi-square, and to conduct two different types of t-tests. Details of these assignments will be given in class. You will be given a data set with the statistics assignment when it is handed out in class. This assignment is due July 29, 2003.

## **Readings and Outline:**

### I. Overview of Research in Social Work

- A. The role, history, and current status of research in social work theory and practice
- B. Accessing, synthesizing, and using the research literature and (social work and related journals, computerized and non-computerized library resources, internet access to literature, documents, and data)

Rubin & Babbie, Appendix A and C

#### Supplementary Readings:

Videka-Sherman, L. (1986). Studies of research on social work practice: A bibliography. Silver Springs, MD: NASW.

Klein, W. C. & Bloom, M. (1994). Is there an ethical responsibility to use practice methods with the best empirical evidence of effectiveness? Yes. In W. W. Hudson & P. S. Nurius (Eds.), Controversial issues in social work research. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Chandler, S. M. (1994). Is there an ethical responsibility to use practice methods with the best empirical evidence of effectiveness? No. In W. W. Hudson & P. S. Nurius (Eds.), Controversial issues in social work research. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Lindsey, D. & Kirk, S. A. (1992). The continuing crisis in social work research: Conundrum or solvable problem? An essay review. Journal of Social Work Education, 28, 370-382.

### II. Ethical Principles

- A. Ethical and political considerations in the conduct and interpretation of research
- B. Avoiding bias and understanding the perspectives of minority and disadvantaged groups in the conduct and interpretation of social research

Rubin & Babbie, Chapters 3 & 18

Required Readings:

Ruckdeschel, R. (1994). Are traditional empirical research methods inherently biased against people of color? Yes. In W. W. Hudson & P. S. Nurius (Eds.), Controversial issues in social work research. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Balassone, M. L. (1994). Are traditional empirical research methods inherently biased against people of color? No. In W. W. Hudson & P. S. Nurius (Eds.), Controversial issues in social work research. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

III. Foundations and Basic Principles of Research

A. Foundations and limitations of the traditional scientific approach and challenges to these foundations

B. Theory and problem formulation

Rubin & Babbie, Chapters 1, 2 & 4

Required Readings:

Rodgers-Farmer, A., & Potocky-Tripodi, M. (2001). Gender, ethnicity, and race matters. (Chapter 26 in *The handbook of social work research methods* [B. Thyer (Ed.); pp. 455 - 472].

Supplementary Readings:

Davis, L. V. (1994). Is feminist research inherently qualitative, and is it a fundamentally different approach to research? Yes. In W. W. Hudson & P. S. Nurius (Eds.), Controversial issues in social work research. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Marsh, J. C. (1994). Is feminist research inherently qualitative, and is it a fundamentally different approach to research? No. In W. W. Hudson & P. S. Nurius (Eds.), Controversial issues in social work research.

research.

Schinke, S. P. (1994). Are some research methodologies inherently more worthy of professional endorsement than others? Yes. In W. W. Hudson & P. S. Nurius (Eds.), Controversial issues in social work research. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Nugent, W. R. (1994). Are some research methodologies inherently more worthy of professional endorsement than others? No. In W. W. Hudson & P. S. Nurius (Eds.), Controversial issues in social work research. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

#### IV. Issues in Measurement

A. Principles and limitations of measurement (reliability, validity, relevance to practice and program processes, goals, and populations)

B. Measurement techniques for treatment and program evaluation

Rubin & Babbie, Chapters 5, 6, 7 & 13

#### Required Readings:

Okazaki, S., & Sue, S. (1995). Methodological issues in assessment research with ethnic minorities. Psychological Assessment, 7(3), 367 - 375.

Rogler, L. (1993). Culturally sensitizing psychiatric diagnosis: A framework for research. Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, 181(7), 401- 408.

Kurtz, M. E., Johnson, S. M. & Rice, S. (1989). Student' clinical assessments: Are they affected by stereotyping? Journal of Social Work Education, 25, 3-12.

#### Supplementary Readings:

Blythe, B. J. & Tripodi, T. (1989). Measurement in direct practice. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Seaberg, J. R. (1988). Child Well-Being Scales: A critique. Social Work Research and Abstracts, 24, 9-15.

Koeske, G. F. & Koeske, R. D. (1992). Parenting locus of control: Measurement, construct validation, and a proposed conceptual model. Social Work Research and Abstracts, 28, 47-48.

Balassone, M. L. (1991). A research methodology for the development of risk assessment tools in social work practice. Social Work Research and Abstracts, 27, 16-23.

## V. Principles and methods of sampling

Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 8  
Class Handout

### Required Readings:

Michaud, P., Blum, R., & Slap, G. (2001). Cross-cultural surveys of adolescent health and behavior: Progress and problems. Social Science and Medicine, 53(9), 1237 - 1246.

## VI. Research Designs

- A. Designs for practice and program evaluation: experimental and quasi-experimental group designs
- B. Designs for practice and program evaluation: survey designs
- C. Designs for practice and program evaluation: qualitative designs
- D. Designs for practice and program evaluation: single-system/time-series designs

Rubin & Babbie, Chapters 9, 10, 11 & 12

### Required Readings:

Hanson, B. (1985). Drug treatment effectiveness: The case of racial and ethnic minorities in America—some research questions and proposals. International Journal of the Addictions, 20(1), 99 - 137.

McMurtry, S. L. & Lie, G-Y (1992). Differential exit rates of minority children in foster care. Social Work Research and Abstracts, 28,

42-48

Supplementary Readings:

Bloom, M. (Ed.) (1993). Single-system designs in the social services: Issues and Options for the 1990s. Journal of Social Service Research, Special Issue.

Vera, M. I. (1990). Effects of divorce groups on individual adjustment: A multiple methodology approach. Social Work Research and Abstracts, 26, 11-20.

Wells, K. & Whittington, D. (1993). Child and family functioning after intensive family preservation services. Social Service Review, 67, 55-83.

Toseland, R. W. (1990). Long-term effectiveness of peer-led and professionally led support groups for caregivers. Social Service Review, 64, 308-327.

VII. Data Management and Analysis

- A. Preparation, entry, and manipulation of data using microcomputers
- B. Interpretation and computation of basic descriptive statistics using a microcomputer (frequency distributions, measures of central tendency and variability, indexes of correlation and association, crosstabulation)
- C. Basic statistical principles and microcomputer methods for computing inferential statistics and testing hypotheses
- D. Bivariate tests of statistical significance and associated microcomputer methods: chi-square, t-test for independent and dependent groups, one-way analysis of variance

Rubin & Babbie, Chapters 14, 15, 16 & 17

Rubin & Babbie, Appendix G & H

**SUPPLEMENTAL BIBLIOGRAPHY: ARTICLES**

- Benda, B. B., & Dattalo, P. (1990). Homeless women and men: Their problems and use of services. Affilia, 5(3), pp. 50-82.
- Burkett, S. R., & Warren, B. O. (1987). Religiosity, peer associations and adolescent marijuana use: A panel study of underlying causal structures. Criminology, 25(1), 109-130.
- Buttrick, S. M. (1990). The breadth and diversity of research. Social Work Research and Abstracts, 26(1), pp. 3-4.
- Combs-Orme, T. D., Orme, J. G., & Guidry II, C. J. (1990). Reliability and validity of the protective services questionnaire. Journal of Social Services Research, 14(1/2), 1-20.
- Coughlin, P. C. (1990). Premenstrual syndrome: How marital satisfaction and role choice affect symptom severity. Social Work, 35(4), 351-355.
- Cowger, C. D. (1984). Statistical significance tests: Scientific method? Social Service Review, 58(3), pp. 358-372.
- DeMaris, A. (1989). Attrition in batterers counseling: The role of social and demographic factors. Social Service Review, pp. 142-153.
- Fraser, M. W., Lewis, R. E., & Norman, J. L. (1990). Research education in M.S.W. program: An exploratory analysis. Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 4(2), 83-104.
- Galinsky, M. J., & et al. (1993). Confronting the reality of collaborative practice research: Issues of practice, design, measurement and team development. Social Work, 38(4), pp. 440-449.
- Grossman, B. (1980). Teaching research in the field of practice. Social Work, 25(2), pp. 36-39.
- Gruber, K. J., & Jones, R. J. (1983). Identifying determinants of risk of sexual victimization of youth: A multivariate approach. Child Abuse and Neglect, 7, 17-24.
- Harper, K. V. (1990). Power and gender issues in academic administration: A study of directors of BSW programs. Affilia, 5(1), pp. 81-93.
- Heineman, M. B. (1981). The obsolete scientific imperative in social work research. Social Service Review, 55(e), pp. 371-397.

- Hoffman, L. (1990). Constructing realities. Family Process, 29(1), pp. 1-12.
- Holden, G., Moncler, M. S., Slinker, S. P., & Barker, K. M. (1990). Self-efficacy, children, and adolescents: A modern analysis. Psychological Reports, 66, 1044-1046.
- Holt, R. R. (1989). College students' definitions and images of enemies. Journal of Social Work Issues, 45(2), 33-50.
- Hudson, W. W. (1982). Scientific imperatives in social work research & practice. Social Service Review, 56(2), pp. 246-258.
- Imre, R. W. (1985). Tacit knowledge in social work research and practice. Smith College Studies in Social Work, 55(2), pp. 137-149.
- Imre, R. W. (1991). What do we need to know for good practice? Social Work, 36(3), pp. 198-200.
- Karger, J. H. (1983). Science research and social work: Who controls the profession? Social Work, 28(3), pp. 200-205.
- Krueger, L. W., & Ruckdeschel, R. (1985). Micro-computers in social service settings: Research applications. Social Work, 30(3), pp. 219-224.
- Memmott, J., & Brennan, E. M. (1988). Helping orientations and strategies of natural helpers and social workers in rural settings. Social Work Research & Abstracts, 15-20.
- Miller, R. (1990). A method for quantifying unstructured data. Social Work Research & Abstracts, 26(3), pp. 31-34.
- Mutschler, R., Mutschler, A., & Mutschler, E. (1982). Social work students & practitioners' orientation to research. Journal of Education for Social Work, 18(3), pp. 62-68.
- O'hare, T. M. (1991). Integrating research and practice: A framework for implementation. Social Work, 36(3), pp. 220-223.
- Peile, C. (1988). Research paradigms in social work: From stalemate to creative synthesis. Social Service Review, 62(18), pp. 1-19.
- Pieper, M. H. (1989). The heuristic paradigm: A unifying and comprehensive approach to social work research. Smith College Studies in Social Work, 60(1), pp. 8-34.

- Russell, R., & et al. (1993). Dysfunction in the family of origin of MSW and other graduate students. Journal of Social Work Education, 29(1), pp. 121-129.
- Sherman, L. V. (1988). Meta-analysis of research on social work practice in mental health. Social Work, 33(4), pp. 325-330.
- Shireman, J. F., & Johnson, P. R. (1986). A longitudinal study of black adoptions: Single parent, transracial, and traditional. Social Work, 31(3), pp. 172-176.
- Siporin, M. (1989). Metamodels, models and basics: An essay review. Social Service Review, 63(3), pp. 474-480.
- Weber, M. (1946). Science as a vocation. In H. H. Gerth, & C. W. Mills (Ed.), From Max Weber essays in sociology (pp. 129-156). London: Oxford University Press.
- Weick, A. (1990). Knowledge as experience: Exploring new dimensions of social work inquiry. Social Thought, 16(3), 36-46.
- Werrbach, G. B., & DePoy, E. (1993). Social work students' interest in working with persons with serious mental illness. Journal of Social Work Education, 29(2), pp. 200-211.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL BIBLIOGRAPHY: BOOKS**

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- Allen, T. H. (1978). New methods in social science research: Policy sciences future research. New York: Praeger Publishing.
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- Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., & Razavieh, A. (1979). Introduction to research in education (2nd ed.). New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
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- Bambridge, W. S. (1992). Social research methods and statistics: A computer assisted introduction. Belmont, California: Wadsworth.
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- and accountability in clinical and educational settings. New York: Pergamon Press.
- Barlow, D. H. & Hersen, M. (1984). Single case experimental designs: Strategies for studying behavior change (2nd ed.). New York: Pergamon.
- Bauman, K. E. (1980). Research methods for community health and welfare. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Blalock, H. M. (1979). Social statistics (Rev. 2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Bloom, M. (Ed.) (1993). Single-system designs in the social services: Issues and Options for the 1990s. Journal of Social Service Research, Special Issue.
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- Filstead, W. J. (Editors). (1978). Qualitative methodology. Chicago: Markhan.
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- research and practice. New York: Macmillan.
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Massachusetts: Schenkman Publishing Company.

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Miller, D. C. (1983). Handbook of research design & social measurement (4th ed.). New York: Longman.

Nurius, P. S., & Hudson, W. W. (1993). Human services practice, evaluation and computers. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks-Cole Publishing Company.

Olson, F., & Sprentsle, D. (Eds.). (1988). Circumplex model, systematic assessment and treatment of families. New York: Haworth Press.

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Shadish, W., et al. (1991). Foundations of program evaluation: Theories of practice. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

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Siegel, S., & Castellan, N. J. (1988). Nonparametric statistics for the behavioral sciences (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

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