

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK
SW 519 SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH

Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisite: None

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.utk.csw.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*, 2008).

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 2227 Dunford Hall (865) 974-6087. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

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

1. Recognize and explain differences between an evidence-based helping professional and one guided by tradition, authority, dogma, and speculation (CT/EBP F.1, F.3, F.4; Practice F.6) [*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. Access relevant data bases for research evidence to support or refute social work practice, program and policy decisions (Research: F.1) [*Content: evidence based practice, purpose of a literature review, sources of literature, and assess the quality of available literature*]
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 (Research- F.2, F.3; CT/EBP- F.3) [*Content: research questions/hypotheses, practice problems (and transitions 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 (Diversity- F.1, F.3, F.5, F.6; Pops at- risk & SJ- F.2) [*Content: principles and methods of sampling, measurement, and design; data interpretation; and culturally competent research*]
 5. Prepare, enter, and manipulate data using a spreadsheet or other software programs (Research- F.4) [*Content: Level of measurement, hypothesis testing, compute and interpret basic descriptive and inferential statistics; and selecting statistical tests*];
 6. Apply appropriate empirical techniques to evaluate process and outcomes with program evaluation and single client systems (Research- F.5) [*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 and the International Federation of Social Work Code of Ethics) to research in settings with diverse constituencies across multiple systems (Values/Ethics- F.1, F.3, F.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) (Research- F.6) [*Content: writing a research report, APA style, research proposal components; framework for evaluation of research studies*]
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University of Tennessee College of Social Work
SW-519 SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH
Section 001- Spring 2009 Monday & Wednesday 9:05 - 12:05

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THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE UNTIL THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS

REQUIRED TEXTS

Yegidis, B. L. & Weinbach, R. W. (2009) *Research Methods for Social Workers, 6/E* . Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Patterson, D. A. & Basham, R. (2006) *Data Analysis with Spreadsheets*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

The two books are available as a course packet. **Package ISBN-10: 0205493017 | ISBN-13: 9780205493012**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to:

1. Arrive on time and attend all class sessions.

2. Participate in class discussion and exercises

3. Complete all assignments on time. A student who wishes an extension of time for an assignment due to medical or personal emergency should consult the instructor in advance. However, an extension is not automatic and there may be a grade penalty.

4. Complete all examinations.

EVALUATION

Assignment	Percent of Grade
Computer Assignments (5% points each)	15
Quizzes (10% points each)	40
Research Paper	35
Class Attendance and Participation	10
Total	100

Student grades letter grades are assigned based on the total points distribution for the class. Students in the first standard deviation above the mean will receive a B+. Students in the second standard deviation above the mean will receive an A. Students in the first standard deviation below the mean will receive a B and those in the second standard deviation below the mean will receive a C+.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS – All assignments are to be submitted through the digital drop box.

Assignment 1 (Course Competency 6) – Produce three types of Single System Design graphs, (1) B-design, (2) A-B, and (3) ABAB in Excel

Assignment 2 – (Course Competency 5) - Create a spreadsheet containing practice data, compute descriptive statistics, and frequency distributions.

Assignment 3 – (Course Competency 5) - Conduct bi-variate data analyses including Chi-square, Pearson's correlation coefficient, and t-test.

RESEARCH PAPER - Competencies 2, 3, 4, 8

Write a brief research report addressing either a specific topic relevant to your current field placement or the issue of homelessness. You will develop a research topic, review and critique the relevant research literature, formulate a research question, develop a study design, collect the requisite data or use an existing database, conduct appropriate data analysis, and report your findings. Students selecting a topic germane to their field placements will need to identify available appropriate data and obtain permission from the field setting to use the de-identified data. Students electing to study topics related to homelessness will be provided data set stripped of personal identifiers.

This brief research report should be ten pages in length, excluding title page and references. It should demonstrate evidence of...

- 1.utilization of relevant data bases,
- 2.critically evaluation of the methodological rigor of the different kinds of qualitative and quantitative research studies reviewed,
- 3.critically evaluation of 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

GRADING: The research team paper will be graded on the basis of clarity, specificity, quality of writing, and the demonstration and integration of sound research knowledge.

ORGANIZATION: The paper should include at least six sections.

1. INTRODUCTION

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

3. STATEMENT PROBLEM

4. METHODOLOGY

Subjects

Sampling

Instruments

Data Analysis

5. RESULTS

6. DISCUSSION

Limitations of the study

Implications for practice

Conclusions

Evidence of Course Competencies are highlighted in yellow below.

Date	Topics	Readings
01/07/09	Course introduction - Scientific inquiry, philosophical issues, evidence-based practice	Yegidis & Weinbach– Chap. 1 – Toward Evidence-Based Practice Patterson & Basham – Chap. 1 - An Introduction to Spreadsheets
01/12/09	Values and Ethics	Yegidis & Weinbach– Chap. 2 – Ethical Issues in Research
01/14/09	Problem formulation Conceptualization & specification	Yegidis & Weinbach– Chap. 3- Research Problems and Questions, Chap. 4 – Finding and Using Existing Knowledge, Chap. 5 – Focused Research Questions and

		Research Hypotheses
1-19-2009- Martin Luther King Holiday	No class	
01/21/09 Quiz 1 – Course Competencies 1, 2 & 7	Research design - Sampling	Yegidis & Weinbach– Chaps. 7& 9 Patterson & Basham – Chap. 3 – Selecting Samples
1-26-2009	Clinical multisubject research	Yegidis & Weinbach– Chap. 6 – Clinical Multisubject Research
01/28/09	Measurement	Yegidis & Weinbach– Chap. 10 - Measurement Concepts and Issues Patterson & Basham – Chap. 2 – Data Collection Ways and Means
02/02/09 Quiz 2 – Course Competencies 3 & 4	Single-subject designs	Yegidis & Weinbach– Chap. 14 – Evaluating Individual Practice Effectiveness Patterson & Basham – Chap. 10 – Single System Design
2-4-2009- – Assignment 1 – Course Competency 6	Qualitative – Design Examples	Yegidis & Weinbach– Chap. 8 – Other Ways to Describe Research Methods
02/09/09– Assignment 2 - Course Competency 5	Computers in Research - Implementation	Yegidis & Weinbach– Chap. 11 Data Collection Instruments Patterson & Basham – Chaps. 4- Data Cleaning & 5 - Frequency Distributions and Histograms
2-11-2009 - Quiz 3 – Course Competencies 5, 6	Quantitative Analysis	Yegidis & Weinbach– Chap. Analysing Data and Disseminating Research Findings Patterson & Basham – Chap. 6 - Descriptive Statistics,7 - Statistical Inference and Hypothesis Testing
2-16-2009- Assignment 3 - Course Competency 5	Quantitative Analysis	Patterson & Basham – Chap. 8- Bivariate Statistics, Chap. 11- Correlation and Regression
2-18-2009-	Interpretation and Dissemination – Graphical Representation	Patterson & Basham – Chap. 12 - Graphical Representation of Practice Information.

02/23/09 –	Data Analys and Research Paper Consultation	
2-25-2009- Quiz 4 – Course Competencies 5 & 8 Research paper due - Course Competencies 2, 3, 4, 8	Course wrap-up	