

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

**SW 520 FOUNDATIONS OF EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE
(1 credit hour)**

**Spring, 2009
Wednesdays, 1:00-2:50pm, Nashville**

Instructor Information

Instructor: Sam Choi, Ph.D., M.S.W.
Office: Room 266, Polk Center, Nashville
Phone: 615-782-5191
Email: schoi9@utk.edu
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 3:00-5:00pm

Pre-requisites: 510, 512, 513, 517, 519, 522, 538.

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

Course Description

This is a required concentration 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. (CT/EBP-C.1, C.2, C.3, C.4; Values/ethics-C.1, C.2, C.3, C.4; Pops at-risk & SJ- C.1; Research-C.3; Practice-C.1). (*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. (CT/EBP-C.1, C.2, C.3, C.4; Diversity-C.3, C.4; Values/ethics-C.1, C.2, C.4) (*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 (CT/EBP-C.3, C.4; Practice-C. 2) (*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; using research to inform practice and practice to inform research*).
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. (CT/EBP-C.1, C.2, C.4; Diversity- C.3, C.4; Values/ethics- C.1, C.2, C.3). (*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*).

Text

No textbook is required for this course. Required readings are listed below and will be available on BlackBoard.

Required Readings

Brodsky, H., Green, A., & Koschera, A. (2003). Meta-analysis of psychosocial interventions for caregivers of people with dementia. *Journal of the American Geriatric Society*, 51, 657-664.

Cnaan, R. A. & Dichter, M. E. (2008). Thoughts on the use of knowledge in social work practice. *Research on Social Work Practice*,

Gibbs, L. E. (2003). Meta-analysis: Evaluating review quality & applying findings to practice. In *Evidence-Based Practice for the Helping Professions* (pp. 185-195). Pacific Grove, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.

Gira, E. C., Kessler, M. L. & Poertner, J. (2004). Influencing social workers to use research evidence in practice: Lessons from medicine & the allied health professions. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 14(2), 68-79.

Mullen, E. J. (2006) Facilitating practitioner use of evidence-based practice. In A. R. Roberts & K. R. Yeager (Eds.), *Foundations of Evidence-Based Social Work Practice* (pp. 152-159). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

O'Hare, T. (2005). Definition, processes, and principles. In *Evidence-Based Practices for Social Workers*, (pp. 3-13). Chicago, IL: Lyceum Books.

O'Hare, T. (2005). Selecting & implementing interventions. In *Evidence-Based Practices for Social Workers*, (pp. 28-45). Chicago, IL: Lyceum Books.

Danya International, Inc. (2007). *Research & Empirical Applications for Curriculum Enhancement in Social Work*. Silver Spring, MD: Danya International, Inc.

Roberts, A. R. & Yeager K. R. (2006). Directory of internet resources on EBP & research in health care and human services. In A. R. Roberts & K. R. Yeager (Eds.), *Foundations of Evidence-Based Social Work Practice* (pp. 349-360). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Rubin, A. & Babbie, E. (2007). Culturally competent research. In *Research Methods for Social Work* (6th ed.), (pp. 301-322). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Shlonsky, A. & Gibbs L. (2006). Will the real evidence-based practice please stand up? In A. R. Roberts & K. R. Yeager (Eds.), *Foundations of Evidence-Based Social Work Practice* (pp. 103-121). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

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.

Course Requirements

Assigned Readings, Activities, and Attendance

Students are expected to complete all readings assigned by the instructor before attending class; participate in all in class and online discussions; and demonstrate respect for the beliefs and experiences of others. Civility is required. Students are encouraged to bring their reactions and questions to class for discussion.

Regular attendance is essential. Students are expected to be on time, attend all class sessions, and stay until the completion of class. In the case of a medical or personal emergency, students should make reasonable effort to contact the instructor in advance via e-mail or voice mail. Students will only be excused for documented emergencies. Unexcused absences from the course and chronic lateness will result in reduction of the final grade by one grade level.

Quizzes

Brief (5-item) multiple choice quizzes will be taken online throughout the semester. The purpose of quizzes is to measure student mastery of course competencies based on weekly readings and other assigned activities. Topics covered in each weekly quiz are as follows:

- Quiz 1 Searching for Evidence (CC 1&3)
- Quiz 2 Searching for Evidence & Building Sound Research Questions (CC 2,3)
- Quiz 3 Culturally & Ethically Competent Research & Implementing EBP (CC 1,2,3 & 4)

Each quiz will be available for 7 days. Each week quizzes will be available at 5:00PM (CST) on Wednesday and close at noon (CST) on the following Wednesday. For example, Quiz 1 will open on March 4 at 5:00 PM and close on March 11 at noon. Occasionally, exceptions to these timeframes will be made in the event of Blackboard outages or extreme circumstances. Any changes in these time frames will be clearly announced in Blackboard. Students may take quizzes at any point during the week. Quizzes will be open book and have no time limit. However, each quiz must be completed in one sitting. Students will not be permitted back into the quiz after they have left the quiz site and a quiz may not be taken after it closes. Each quiz is worth 10 points. Three quizzes will be administered. Quizzes account for 30 points of a student's final grade in this course.

Activities

Three out-of-class activities will be completed throughout the semester. The purpose of activities is to allow students to gain experience in forming questions, locating research and assessing its appropriateness for use with clients. In addition, activities are designed to measure student mastery of course competencies. Activities are due at the start of class as noted in the course outline and each activity must be typed. The point value of each activity varies and is specified in the instructions below. Grades will be assigned based on the thoroughness, clarity (including spelling & grammar), accuracy and demonstrated mastery of course competencies. Activities account for 170 points of a student's final grade in this course. Activities are as follows:

Activity 1: Evidence-Based Programs (Course Competencies 1-3, 30 points, due date: 3/25 at 7:00PM)

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) provides a useful website that provides detailed information regarding effective evidence-based programs for a variety of topics and clinical issues.

Visit the website at: www.modelprograms.samhsa.gov.

Search for evidence-based programs in your area of interest. Identify one or two programs.

Once you have found a program, answer the following questions:

1. Which program did you select and why? (6 points)
2. What are the program characteristics? (6 points)
3. How was the program developed? (6 points)
4. How was the program shown to be effective? (6 points)
5. How does the program fit within the three elements of evidence-based practice in social work discussed in class and in REACH handouts? (6 points)

Late submissions of Activity 1 will result in a penalty of 2.5 points per day. No late submissions of Activity 1 will be accepted after 3/27.

Activity 2: Finding & Assessing Research Evidence (Course Competencies 1-3, 100 points, due date: 4/8 at start of class)

Using an example from your own practice or file experience, develop and answer a research to practice question following the steps below.

1. Develop research to practice question using PICO or COPES format. (10 points)
2. Identify & list keywords and search terms for research to practice question, including using MOLES search terms. Also include keyword search combinations using the Boolean method. (5 points)
3. Investigate various research resources and search engines that may be used to answer the research to practice question. Document your investigation using the REACH Search Term Documentation Table. (20 points)
4. Select 5 articles. If possible, try to select a range of research types related to your topic. Provide a full citation for each article using the correct APA format. Identify the types of research each represents and rank them using the Reach Hierarchy of Evidence handout. (15 points)
5. Assess each article using the REACH Four Conceptual Questions handout. (10 points)
6. Assess the source credibility of each of the articles, using the questions provided in the REACH Source Credibility handout. (10 points)
7. Assess the scientific credibility of each document using the REACH Scientific Credibility handout. (15 points)

8. Assess the practical significance and applicability to social work practice of each of the research documents using the associated REACH handout. (15 points)

Late submissions of Activity 2 will result in a penalty of 5 points per day. No late submissions of Activity 2 will be accepted after 4/10.

Activity 3: Finding Implementation Resources (Competencies 3 & 4, 40 points, due date 4/22 at the start of class)

Using data gathered in Activity 2, search for implementation resources you supporting an evidence-based intervention. Find implementation resources by using two strategies: following links on Web pages and conducting searches.

Go to a Web page that promotes evidence-based practices, such as:
<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/cmhs/communitysupport/toolkits>

Choose a program and explore the implementation resources available there.

NOTE: Some implementation materials will have costs associated with them. For these, gather as much information as possible to determine what time, effort, and resources would be needed to implement the intervention if your agency paid for the implementation materials.

Identify implementation resources and respond to the following questions.

1. List and describe implementation resources found. Include a description of where each resource was located. (10 points)
2. Do you have enough information to conduct the intervention in your practice setting? Why or why not? (10 points)
3. Are implementation materials an initial good fit with your agency or setting, including staffing and caseload issues? Discuss. Don't forget to include a discussion of cultural, geographic, community, gender and other identities and orientations. If the materials found are not a good fit what specific implementation materials do you need to adapt or develop? (10 points)
4. What resources can you find that you could modify to fit the intervention you want to implement and what modifications would be necessary? (10 points)

Late submissions of Activity 3 will be penalized 2.5 points per day. No late submissions of Activity 3 will be accepted after 4/24.

Grading Scale

The final grade for this course will be determined as follows:

Quizzes	30 points
Activity 1	30 points
Activity 2	100 points
<u>Activity 3</u>	<u>40 points</u>
	200 points possible

The following scale will be used in determining your final score for this course.

A = 190-200 points

B+ = 180-189 points

B = 170-179 points

C+= 160-169 points

C = 150-159 points

F = 149 points or below

Course Outline

Section I: Defining Research Evidence

- March 4 **Course Introduction & Expectations**
Critical Thinking & Practice Fallacies
Overview of Steps in EBP 1
 Tasks
- Read Cnaan & Dichter (2008), Thoughts on the use of knowledge in social work practice
 - Read O'Hare (2005), Definition, processes, and principles
- March 11 **Overview of Steps in EBP II**
Searching for Evidence
 Tasks
- Read Shlonsky & Gibbs (2006), Will the real evidence-based practice please stand up?
 - Read REACH Handouts
 - Seven steps to EBP in social work
 - EBP definitions & components
 - Benefits of EBP
 - Challenges of EBP
 - Development of EBP in Social Work
 - Complete Quiz 1 Online
- March 18 **Spring Break**

March 25 **NASW Social Work Legislative Conference & TCSW**

Tasks

- Activity 1 Due online at 7:00PM

Section II: Finding & Assessing Research Evidence

April 1 **Searching for Evidence & Building Sound Research Questions**

Tasks

- Read O'Hare (2005) Selecting & implementing interventions
- Review Roberts & Yeager (2006) Directory of internet resources on EBP & research in health care and human services
- Read Yeager & Roberts (2006) A practical approach to formulating EBP questions in social work
- Read REACH Handouts
 - Search Terms
 - Search Resources
 - Search Strategy with Boolean Method
 - Search Term Documentation Table
- Complete Quiz 2 Online

April 8 **Meta-Analysis & Assessing Evidence**

Tasks

- Read Gibbs (2003) Meta-Analysis: Evaluating review quality & applying findings to practice
- Read Brodaty et al (2003) Meta-Analysis of psychosocial interventions for caregivers of people with dementia
- Read REACH handouts
 - Hierarchy of evidence
 - Four conceptual questions
 - Source credibility
 - Scientific credibility
 - Components of a research article
 - Statistical terms & concepts
 - Practical significance & applicability
- Activity 2 Due at the start of class 4/8

Section III: Applying Research Evidence

April 15 **Culturally & Ethically Competent Research & Implementing EBP**

Tasks

- Read Rubin & Babbie (2007) Culturally competent research
- Read Mullen (2006) Facilitating practitioner use of EBP
- Read Reach Handouts
 - Finding implementation resources & assessing quality
 - Assessing fit between intervention, client system, practitioner & organization

- Communication & collaborative decision making
- Fidelity
- Administrative factors
- Evaluation of effectiveness & efficiency of EBP
- Adaptation or modification of EBP
- Complete Quiz 3 Online

April 22

Implementing EBP II and Evaluating the Use of EBP

Tasks

- Read Gira et al (2004) Influencing social workers to use research evidence in practice: Lessons from medicine & the allied health professions
- Read Reach Handouts
 - Communication & collaborative decision making
 - Fidelity
 - Administrative factors
 - Evaluation of effectiveness & efficiency of EBP
 - Adaptation or modification of EBP
- Activity 3 due at the start of class 4/22