THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

SW 519 - Foundation Research
43827
3 credit hours
Fall, 2015

Instructor:  Sara Hall
Email:  s.hall@utk.edu

Class Time: 9-12 Monday
Office Hours: By Appointment

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). Students are also expected to sign and adhere to the Social Work Field Placement Code of Conduct.

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).

University Civility Statement
Civility is genuine respect and regard for others: politeness, consideration, tact, good manners, graciousness, cordiality, affability, amiability and courteousness. Civility enhances academic freedom and integrity, and is a prerequisite to the free exchange of ideas and knowledge in the learning community. Our community consists of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and campus visitors. Community members affect each other’s well-being and have a shared interest in creating and sustaining an environment where all community members and their points of view are valued and respected. Affirming the value of each member of the university community, the campus asks that all its members adhere to the principles of civility and community adopted by the campus: http://civility.utk.edu/

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.

Dimensions of Diversity
The College of Social Work and the University of Tennessee welcome and honor all people. In
accordance with the U.S. Council on Social Work Education and the U.S. National Association of Social Workers, the College of Social Work defines “the dimensions of diversity as the intersectionality of multiple factors, including” age, class, color, culture, mental or physical disability, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, gender identity, immigration status, marital status, national origin, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. The College values intellectual curiosity, pursuit of knowledge, and academic freedom and integrity. A person’s diverse life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. The College of Social Work promotes social justice and social change, and strives to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice.

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 the completion of this course, the students are expected to be able to demonstrate:

1. Recognize and explain differences between an evidence-based helping professional and one guided by tradition, authority, dogma, and speculation.  
   4.2, 4.4, 4.5 (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.  4.3 (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. 4.5, 4.3 [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. 4.1 (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. 4.3 (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. 3.3, 3.4, 4.1 (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. 1.1 (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). 4.5, 4.3 (Content: writing a research report, APA style, research proposal components; framework for evaluation of research studies)

**Inclement Weather**
Class will be cancelled only if the University is closed due to inclement weather. Campus and local radio and TV stations will be notified, so that appropriate announcement may be made. If class is cancelled, any assignments due that day will be due the next time class meets.

**Required Text**
Supplemental Readings
The course instructor may assign supplemental readings to augment information contained in the course text. These supplemental readings will address competencies #1-8.

Course Requirements for students in SW 519

All assignments are due when indicated on the topical outline/course schedule. In the rare event an assignment is accepted late, one letter grade per day (including weekend days) will be deducted for the late work. Acceptance of late work is at the discretion of the instructor.

A. Attendance, Participation, and Classroom Behaviors: (25 total points) Addresses competencies # 1-8 Students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive punctually. If you will be missing a class or will be late the instructor must be notified PRIOR to the BEGINNING of the class. Attendance sign-in sheets will be passed around at the beginning of each class. It is the student’s responsibility to sign in as the attendance sheets are the final say for attendance. EACH unapproved late arrival will result in 0.5 point deducted from your attendance grade. EACH unapproved absence will result in one (1) point deducted from your attendance grade. Only three (3) approved absences will be allowed without point deductions unless it is under extreme circumstances. Anyone who misses more than one thirds (1/3) of class will automatically fail the class. Classroom behaviors that impair a positive learning will also lower students’ grade.

CELL PHONE USE IS NOT PERMITTED IN THIS CLASS UNLESS IN USE FOR A CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENT. THE INSTRUCTOR WILL LET YOU KNOW WHEN IT IS APPROPRIATE TO USE YOUR CELL PHONE. LAPTOPS ARE NOT PERMITTED UNLESS THEY ARE IN USE FOR A CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENT. THE INSTRUCTOR WILL LET YOU KNOW WHEN IT IS APPROPRIATE TO USE YOUR LAPTOP. Special circumstances can be discussed with the instructor prior to class and permission is made at the discretion of the instructor.

Students are expected to participate in all in-class and online discussions and presentations. Class attendance is required in order for students to receive a grade for the assignments that are completed in class. There is no make-up for these assignments and activities unless previously arranged with the instructor. On-line discussions must be substantive. Merely agreeing or disagreeing with what someone else posted is not acceptable. Students may not record audio or video in any classes without the prior approval of faculty and students.

B. The Human Subjects Training (25 points): Addresses competencies # 9 and 10 Students will complete the IRB training through CITI (http://www.citiprogram.org/) and submit a completion/grade report. Details will be announced in class.

C. Critical Appraisal of Empirical Article (2 @ 25 points ea.; 50 total points): Addresses competencies #1,2,4 and 5 The purpose of this assignment is to help students develop skills to identify and evaluate the components of research articles and apply the results to practice issues. This assignment focuses on measurement of the concepts stated in research hypotheses or questions, sampling design, recruitment of participants, method of data collection, and threats to internal and external validity and other limitations of the proposed research. Students must evaluate one qualitative and one quantitative article. Instructions for this assignment are located in BB.

D. Class Quizzes (10 @ 10 points ea.; 100 possible points): Addresses competencies #1-8 There
will be 10 quizzes. Quizzes will be posted on Blackboard and cover the material presented in the text book corresponding to the weekly reading assignments. Quizzes will be available at the end of class on Monday and will be accessible until Friday (12am) of that week. Quiz questions and answers will be discussed the following Monday at the beginning of class. You will have 30 min. to complete each quiz and only one opportunity to complete the quiz once you have begun. Each quiz will be comprised of 10 questions each with a score value of 1 point for a total of 10 points/quiz. There will be no make-up quizzes. These quizzes stand in place of exams as context and content evaluations of the weekly textbook reading assignments.

E. Homework (8 assignments @ 15 points ea.; 120 possible points): Addresses competencies #1,2,4,6 and 8 Homework is assigned throughout the semester to advance concepts covered in class, online, and/or in the textbook and supplemental readings. Instructions for homework can be found on BB. Please refer to the course calendar for important dates.

F. In Class Assignments (10 assignments @ 15 points ea.; 150 possible points): Addresses competencies #1-8 Class Assignments may include group work, individual assignments and discussion. In class assignments provide experiential learning opportunities to interact with the topics covered in the text and supplemental readings. Please refer to the course calendar for important dates.

G. Discussion Board (5 @ 20 points ea.; 100 possible points): Addresses competencies #1,2,4,5,6,8 Students will participate in five discussion boards coinciding with group project progression and assigned materials. Please refer to the course calendar for important dates. A detailed grading rubric will be posted on BB.

Each student must post at least three times to each discussion board. The initial post must occur before 11:59 PM on Monday. The remaining two posts (minimum) are in response to posts by other students and/or responses to posts made on the students’ original post. Discussion boards close the following Thursday at 11:59 PM. Please refrain from short congratulatory or concurrence comments. Merely agreeing or disagreeing with the DB content or providing superficial comments is not sufficient. It is expected that postings will be pertinent to the discussion topic. Information from the text, supplemental readings, and personal experience are welcome. Postings need to demonstrate understanding, critical evaluation, and synthesis of the content being discussed. Besides the opportunity to demonstrate critical thinking, discussion boards also provide a chance to clarify and find answers to questions regarding the content of the course. Additionally, the discussion board is an outlet for group collaboration. Please document all resources on the discussion board using APA format.

H. Research Proposal (200 possible points)*: Addresses competencies #1-8 In this exercise you will design a research proposal using a selected type of method of research, and addressing a specific research topic. Please refer to BB and the course calendar for more detailed information and important dates.

Each group will select a DIFFERENT area of study for their project. The design for the proposed study could be either qualitative or quantitative design (or both). You must identify a population of interest and identify inclusion/exclusion criteria as well as sampling methods for each topic chosen. You will also identify the risks and benefits of your proposed research.

It is expected that each group member will contribute his/her fair share of work on the project, which will be evaluated by each group member through a Peer Evaluation form.

A template for a research proposal will be provided to you. You may use it as a guide for formatting your research proposal. The research proposal template can be found on BB.
1. Decide on a specific concern in your area to examine through literature to see if your topic has enough material for your research proposal. The quantity and quality of the previous research will inform you whether a quantitative or qualitative design will answer your research question(s)/hypothesis(es) best. You may also propose a mixed method design if appropriate. Your intent is NOT to repeat the research that has been done, but to address an area of NEED identified from the current research. You do not want to repeat a topic unless existing research calls for a repeat under different circumstances such as in a different population. If there is little or no research, you might want to use a qualitative design to describe and define the phenomenon. Your review of the current research should focus on BOTH qualitative and quantitative approaches to answering your research question(s)/hypothesis(es). Ultimately, you will need to choose an approach that fits your topic as well as your specific philosophical positions regarding research. How you choose to define (or not to define) your research question(s)/hypothesis(es) will determine your research path.

2. You will need to use the library databases for your literature review and are encouraged to broaden your search outside of the social work databases. The field of social work encourages interdisciplinary collaboration and there is a wealth of information that can be reached by expanding your search to other health care fields, policy study journals, psychological journals and education journals. The quality of the articles you ultimately select for review will reflect the depth and breadth of your research efforts. Each group member must contribute at least four articles that can be used for the literature review. These should be shared with each group member to read to ensure there is no overlap in articles, that everyone’s articles contribute to the final product, and that no gaps exist in your literature review. You will complete an annotated bibliographical reference for the four articles you feel best reflect a critical appraisal of your research topic and that directly address your research question(s)/hypothesis(es).

3. You will be given time throughout the semester to collaborate with your group as well as receive support and guidance from the instructor. You are expected to come to these meetings prepared with an outline of your progress, all required documents, and a list of questions you would like to address. Further, you are expected to keep up with your group’s progress in order to meet the benchmarks set to ensure proper and timely completion of the project. Accountability of each participant will be established through a Group Contract outlining the responsibilities and expectations of the group members, how the group will work through any problems, and terms for dismissal of a member from the group if responsibilities/expectations are not met. See BB for more information.

* A detailed grading rubric will be discussed in class and posted on BB.

I. Research Presentation (200 possible points): Addresses competencies #1-8 The purpose of the presentation portion of the group assignment is to educate your fellow students. Your group is responsible for presenting the topic of your research proposal. This presentation can be as broad or as narrow as you see fit as long as your peers learn something new from your presentation and it is informative. The presentation is not intended to be based on your research proposal, only the topic.

Each presentation should include a short power-point-like presentation (min. 10 frames) designed using Prezi. The program can be accessed at https://prezi.com/. More information about the Prezi program will be covered in class. Creativity is strongly encouraged. You may also use other teaching elements in your presentation—props, videos, demonstrations, music, etc.—if you feel they add to the content. You will be graded on creativity/audience engagement as part of your total grade. You must include references in APA format in your presentation (if appropriate).
Presentations can vary in length from 10-15 min. not to exceed 15 min. Please refer to the course calendar for important dates. More information can be found on BB.

You will be graded on the following elements*:
1. Content [40pts] – through presentation of content
2. Clarity/Preparedness [40pts] – the flow of the presentation and ease of understanding
3. Participation [30pts] – all group members should contribute to the presentation
4. Structure/Organization [40pts] – Prezi structure and presentation flow
5. Creativity/Audience Engagement [20pts] – use of creativity in presentation (other teaching elements)
6. Class ratings [20pts] – you will be evaluated by your classmates

*A detailed grading rubric will be discussed in class and posted on BB.

J. Moxtra Participation (10 possible points): Addresses competencies #1-6 and 8 You will use this collaboration software to communicate with your group members about the research proposal. Each group will be assigned a binder to collect resources, edit and share documents, and collaborate in real time. Instructions for downloading Moxtra desktop client can be found at http://www.moxtra.com/download/. You may also want to download the application onto other devices for ease of access-found at www.moxtra.com/. Information about Moxtra can be found here: http://support.moxtra.com/. You will be evaluated based on your participation and collaboration in Moxtra. More information will be provided throughout the semester to familiarize you with the features of the software and the expectations for use.

K. Statistics Assignment (20 possible points): Addresses competencies #1,4,5,6, and 7 The purpose of this assignment is to assess your understanding of the statistical information included in this course. This assignment will be covered in class and additional information can be found on BB.

The course grade for students in SW 519 will be calculated as follows:

A. Attendance, Participation, Classroom Behaviors - 25 points (2.5%)
B. Human Subjects Training Certificate – 25 points (2.5%)
C. Critical Appraisal of Article (2) - 50 points (5%)
D. Quizzes (10 quizzes) – 100 points (10%)
E. Homework (8 assignments) – 120 points (12%)
F. In Class Assignments (10) – 150 points (15%)
G. Discussion Boards (5) – 100 points (10%)
H. Research Proposal – 200 points (20%)
I. Research Presentation – 200 points (20%)
J. Moxtra Participation – 10 points (1%)
K. Statistics Assignment – 20 points (2%)

Grading Scale for SW 519
A  90-100          D  60-69.9
B  80-89.9         F  Below 59
C  70-79.9

*The course syllabus and course calendar are subject to change at the discretion of the Instructor.
# COURSE CALENDAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Homework/Discussion Boards/Due Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 Aug. 24</td>
<td>R &amp; B Ch. 1, 24, Appendix A</td>
<td>Introduction to research in SW; How to use resources; How to read a book; How to read &amp; critique research; Parts of a research paper; Self care for Social Workers</td>
<td>Syllabus Expectations Questions Menuxa Critical reading of Dr. Seuss</td>
<td>CQ # 1 Available until Fri. DB#1 Introduction; Discuss Topics of Interest &amp; Email Address Available until Thurs. HW #1 Journal (1/3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2 Aug. 31</td>
<td>R &amp; B Ch. 2.3 Additional Readings on BB</td>
<td>Paradigms, Theories, and Models in SW Evidence Based Practice</td>
<td>Choosing a research path IC # 1 Problem based learning assignment (COPES) Choose topic area &amp; Group selection</td>
<td>CQ # 2 available until Fri. DB # 2 Perspectives on research Available until Thurs. HW # 2 Bring one article related to your research proposal Monday 9/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3 Sept. 14</td>
<td>R &amp; B Ch. 4,5,6 Additional Readings on BB</td>
<td>Comparing quant. and qual. &amp; mixed methods Ethics &amp; Politics of Social Work; Culturally competent Research</td>
<td>IC # 2 Article Critique IC # 3 IRB Informed Consent</td>
<td>CQ # 3 Available until Fri DB # 3 Begin working in Moxta for group collaboration – Choose 4 articles &amp; post annotated bibliography to binder HW # 3 CITI training due Mon. 9/21 Journal (2/3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4 Sept. 21</td>
<td>R &amp; B Ch. 7-10 Additional Readings on BB</td>
<td>Problem Formulation; Conceptualization &amp; Measurement</td>
<td>IC # 4 Reliability &amp; Validity IC # 5 Constructing a scale</td>
<td>CQ # 4 available until Fri DB # 4 Collaborate on Part 1 of proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5 Sept. 28</td>
<td>R &amp; B Ch. 11-14 Additional Readings on BB</td>
<td>Correlation; Causal inference; Experimental designs; Single case evaluation designs; program evaluation</td>
<td>Interpreting ambiguous results Word association IC # 6 Threats to internal validity Causal language Factor analysis Rubin: The Family Preservation Evaluation from Hell</td>
<td>CQ # (Ch. 11,12) Savable until Fri. Journal (3/3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6 Oct. 5</td>
<td>No Reading</td>
<td>Group Work</td>
<td>Group Meetings with Instructor</td>
<td>CQ # 6 (Ch. 13,14) DB # 5 Collaborate on Part 2 of proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7 Oct. 12</td>
<td>R &amp; B Ch. 15 Additional Readings on BB</td>
<td>Non-probability sampling; Probability sampling; multistage cluster sampling; Sampling methods</td>
<td>IC # 7 Sampling and measurement selection Group Project meetings</td>
<td>CQ # 7 available until Fri Journal (4) HW # 4 Article Critique Due Fri.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8 Oct. 19</td>
<td>R &amp; B Ch. 16,17 Additional Readings on BB</td>
<td>Survey Research &amp; Analyzing available records: Quant. &amp; Qual. Methods</td>
<td>IC # 8 The (mini) Life Story Interview</td>
<td>CQ # 8 available until Fri Bring your journal entries to class Mon. Nov. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 9 Oct. 26</td>
<td>R &amp; B 18-20 Additional Readings on BB</td>
<td>Qualitative data analysis</td>
<td>IC # 9 Coding w/group</td>
<td>CQ # 9 available until Fri HW # 5 Life Story reflection Due HW # 6 Mini ethnographic study PP &amp; reflexivity statement (instructions &amp; example on BB)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10 Nov. 2</td>
<td>R &amp; B Ch. 21-23 Additional Readings on BB</td>
<td>Quant. data analysis &amp; Inferential data analysis</td>
<td>IC # 10 Statistics assignment Group work for presentation &amp; meetings with instructor</td>
<td>CQ # 10 available until Fri HW # 6 Mini ethnographic study PP &amp; Reflexivity statement due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 11 Nov. 9</td>
<td>Research exposure, experience, &amp; participation</td>
<td>Topic Intro; Frontline video</td>
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<td>HW # 7 IHI Module</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 12 Nov. 16</td>
<td>Research exposure, experience, &amp; participation</td>
<td>Group discussion of HW; Ted Talk</td>
<td>Guest Speaker Role play Project activity Assign com. project</td>
<td>HW # 8 Com. Project; Critical reflection (Due Mon. Nov.23) Post test due by Sat.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 13 Nov. 23</td>
<td>Research exposure, experience, &amp; participation</td>
<td>Discussion of results; Research model; Comparison of results across samples; Impacting practice</td>
<td>Situational learning using project groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 14 Nov. 30</td>
<td>No Reading</td>
<td>Group Presentations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Group &amp; Self Critique Due by Wed. Research Proposal due by 12AM</td>
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