THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

SW 520: Foundations of Evidence-Based Practice
Section
Summer, 2016| 1 credit hour

Instructor: Rodney A. Ellis, PhD, MSW (Rod)

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Class time and location: Online

Office Hours: As scheduled via phone or chat room

Prerequisites: 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 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 100 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. National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the U.S. Council on Social Work Education (CSWE 2015 Educational Policy Statement), “the dimensions of
diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, mental or physical disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, gender identity, immigration status, marital status, national origin, political ideology, race, regionality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. 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” (CSWE 2015 Educational Policy Statement). 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 advanced curriculum course. The 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 the following competencies (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 at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. (2.1, 4.1) 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 engaging in effective assessment at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. (2.2, 2.3) (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, theory, and practice experience to rigorously, critically and open-mindedly investigate, analyze, synthesize, and interpret, translate, and use available primary and secondary data and research findings, evaluation outcomes and other information toward formulation of professional judgments and conclusions. (4.1, 4.2, 4.3) (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).

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, incorporating and utilizing the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and other relevant codes of ethics. (1.1) (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).

ORGANIZATION OF COURSE AND BLACKBOARD
This course will be taught as a flipped course. This means that all readings and assignments will be made online. Weekly class sessions will be limited to a brief discussion and a question and answer period about the assignments. Assignments are due to be completed for each week before the students arrive in class.

Students will need to decide what grade they want to earn and will submit the required number of assignments in order to earn that grade. The process is described below under Assignments and Grading. The section below entitled “Required Activities” describes what kinds of projects must be completed in order to earn each grade. This process is known as “contracting for a grade”.

Please note: Although you will not need to use APA style to complete these assignments, the assignments must be completed at an acceptable level in order to count toward the grade. Each assignment will, therefore, receive a satisfactory or unsatisfactory grade. Satisfactory completion of every assignment required for a specific grade will result in the student receiving that grade. Failure to complete an assignment or assignments satisfactorily will result in failure of the course. Students who submit an unsatisfactory assignment will have one opportunity to bring that assignment up to a satisfactory level.

Also please note: You MUST submit a written contract specifying which grade you wish to receive by June 9. Please do NOT post your desired grade on the discussion board. Please submit it directly to the instructor through Blackboard.

With the exception of the required text (Gibbs, listed above) all materials for this course are posted on Blackboard. This includes the worksheets required for the weekly readings, as well as the materials and instructions for the projects required to earn a B+ or an A.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING
Required activities

Project 1- In order to earn a ‘B’ - Students must successfully and satisfactorily 1) read the required text (Gibbs) and complete one worksheet for each chapter based on the weekly readings and post questions and/or comments on the Discussion board. These worksheets and posts must be completed according to the schedule listed in the Course Outline below.

Project 2- In order to earn a ‘B+’ - Students must successfully and satisfactorily complete all the activities
identified in Project 1 (contract for a “B”) AND must view the video clips posted on Blackboard and complete the assignments posted along with them.

Project 3- In order to earn an “A”- Students must successfully and satisfactorily complete all the activities described in both Project 1 (contract for an A) and Project 2 (contract for a B) AND must complete review the four PowerPoints posted on Blackboard and complete the assignment related to each.

All assignments must be submitted according to the schedule provided in the course outline below. All assignments must also be submitted through Blackboard. Instructions for submissions through Blackboard will be provided in the Course Information section of the website.

Grading Scale

The University of Tennessee grading scale is as follows:

93 – 100 A
88 – 92 B+
83 – 87 B
78 – 82 C+
73 – 77 C
68 – 72 D+
63 – 67 D
<63 F

Class policies

1. Students are expected to complete all assignments and submit them by the due date. Exceptions will be granted only in extraordinary circumstances in advance of the due date.

2. Incompletes will be given only according to the rules specified in the written policies of the most recent edition of Hilltopics.

3. All written assignments are due at midnight on the day specified in the course outline. Assignments received after that time will not be accepted unless prior approval is given.

4. Cheating and/or plagiarizing will not be tolerated. Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will be subject to the disciplinary procedures outlined in their university’s student policies.

5. University policy regarding religious holidays will be observed. Any student may request to be excused from class or rescheduling of an assignment to observe a religious day from his/her faith.

REQUIRED TEXT

COURSE OUTLINE

The following assignments are due ON THE DAY listed below. Please note that classes begin on Tuesday, June 2. The first readings and worksheets are due the following week.

Week 1- June 2, 2016

No assignments due. Meet to discuss course policies and assignments.

Week 2- June 9, 2016

By this dates these tasks should be completed and submitted:

Those contracting for a B should have: Read chapters 1 and 2 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard.

Those contracting for a B+ should have: Read chapters 1 and 2 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard.

Those contracting for an A should have: Read chapters 1 and 2 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard.

Please note that for the first week the assignments for all three grade contracts are the same. Students do not need to submit their contract statements until Week 2. At that point they must begin to complete all assignments relate to their chosen grade.

Meeting the competencies: Students who complete the readings and worksheets will have answered a series of questions, written and rewritten questions of their own, participated in Discussion Board communications, and conducted both library and internet research to meet competencies 1 and 2. These competencies are:

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 at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. (2.1, 4.1) 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.
Week 3- June 16, 2016

By this date these tasks should be completed and submitted:

Submit a written statement of the grade for which you will contract.

Those contracting for a B should have: Read chapters 3 and 4 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard.

Those contracting for a B+ should have: 1) Read chapters 3 and 4 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard. 2) Viewed Video Clip #1, posted on Blackboard, and complete the exercise associated with it.

Those contracting for an A should have: Read chapters 3 and 4 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard. 2) Viewed Video Clip #1, posted on Blackboard, and completed the exercise associated with it. 3) Reviewed PowerPoint #1, posted on Blackboard, and completed the exercise associated with it.

Meeting the competencies: Students who complete the readings and worksheets will have answered a series of questions, written and rewritten questions of their own, participated in Discussion Board communications, and conducted both library and internet research to meet competencies 2 and 3. These competencies are:

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 engaging in effective assessment at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. (2.2, 2.3) (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, theory, and practice experience to rigorously, critically and open-mindedly investigate, analyze, synthesize, and interpret, translate, and use available primary and secondary data and research findings, evaluation outcomes and other information toward formulation of professional judgments and conclusions. (4.1, 4.2, 4.3) (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).
Week 4- June 23, 2016

By this dates these tasks should be completed and submitted:

Those contracting for a B should have: Read chapters 5 and 6 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard.

Those contracting for a B+ should have: 1) Read chapters 5 and 6 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard. 2) Viewed Video Clip #2, posted on Blackboard, and completed the exercise associated with it.

Those contracting for an A should have: 1) Read chapters 5 and 6 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard. 2) Viewed Video Clip #2, posted on Blackboard, and completed the exercise associated with it. 3) Reviewed PowerPoint #2, posted on Blackboard, and completed the exercise associated with it.

Meeting the competencies: Students who complete the readings and worksheets will have answered a series of questions, written and rewritten questions of their own, participated in Discussion Board communications, and conducted both library and internet research to meet competencies 2 and 3. These competencies are:

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 engaging in effective assessment at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. (2.2, 2.3) (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, theory, and practice experience to rigorously, critically and open-mindedly investigate, analyze, synthesize, and interpret, translate, and use available primary and secondary data and research findings, evaluation outcomes and other information toward formulation of professional judgments and conclusions. (4.1, 4.2, 4.3) (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).

Week 5- June 30, 2016

By this dates these tasks should be completed and submitted:

Those contracting for a B should have: Read chapters 7 and 8 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard.
Those contracting for a B+ should have: 1) Read chapters 7 and 8 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard. 2) Viewed Video Clip # 3, posted on Blackboard and completed the exercise associated with it.

Those contracting for an A should have: 1) Read chapters 7 and 8 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard. 2) Viewed Video Clip # 3, posted on Blackboard, and completed the exercise associated with it. 3) Reviewed PowerPoint #3, posted in Blackboard, and completed the exercise associated with it.

Meeting the competencies: Students who complete the readings and worksheets will have answered a series of questions, utilized descriptor words, developed descriptor word research plans, participated in Discussion Board communications, and conducted both library and internet research to meet competencies 2, 3, and 4. These competencies are:

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 engaging in effective assessment at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. (2.2, 2.3) (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, theory, and practice experience to rigorously, critically and open-mindedly investigate, analyze, synthesize, and interpret, translate, and use available primary and secondary data and research findings, evaluation outcomes and other information toward formulation of professional judgments and conclusions. (4.1, 4.2, 4.3) (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).

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, incorporating and utilizing the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and other relevant codes of ethics. (1.1) (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).

Week 6- July 6, 2014

CLASS DOES NOT MEET ON THIS DAY. IT IS INCLUDED IN THE SYLLABUS AS A REMINDER OF THE ASSIGNMENTS DUE.

By this date these tasks should be completed and submitted:

Those contracting for a B should have: Read chapters 9 and 10 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some
kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard.

Those contracting for a B+ should have: 1) Read chapters 9 and 10 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard. 2) Viewed Video Clip #4, posted on Blackboard and completed the exercise associated with it.

Those contracting for an A should have: Read chapters 9 and 10 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard. 2) Viewed Video Clip #4, posted on Blackboard, and completed the exercise associated with it. 3) Reviewed PowerPoint #4, posted in Blackboard, and completed the exercise associated with it.

Meeting the competencies: Students who complete the readings and worksheets will have answered a series of questions, utilized descriptor words, developed descriptor word research plans, participated in Discussion Board communications, conducted both library and internet research, and written brief papers to meet competencies 3, and 4. These competencies are:

3. Employ a scientific analytic approach using qualitative and/or quantitative methods, theory, and practice experience to rigorously, critically and open-mindedly investigate, analyze, synthesize, and interpret, translate, and use available primary and secondary data and research findings, evaluation outcomes and other information toward formulation of professional judgments and conclusions. (4.1, 4.2, 4.3) (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).

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, incorporating and utilizing the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and other relevant codes of ethics. (1.1) (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).