

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS

STEVE HICKS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Course Number:	SW 385R	Instructor:	Patricia A. Cody, PhD, MSW
Unique Number:	60800		triciacody@austin.utexas.edu
Semester:	Spring 2019	Office:	3.212A
Meeting Time/Place:	Thursday 5:30pm-8:30pm Room 2.118	Phone:	512-413-6405 (cell)
		Office Hours:	Thursday 3:00pm-4:00pm Other times by appointment

Social Work Research Methods

I. STANDARDIZED COURSE DESCRIPTION

This Foundation 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. 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 to evaluate programs and practice, sampling, alternative quantitative and qualitative data gathering and analytic techniques, and preparation and use of research reports. The emphasis in the course is on equipping students with the research knowledge and skills they'll need to engage in the evidence-based practice process at all levels of social work practice. As part of that process, they will learn how to critically appraise sources of scientific evidence and how the criteria for that appraisal will vary depending upon the purpose of the research.

II. STANDARDIZED COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Formulate answerable evidence-based practice research questions;
2. Efficiently conduct advanced searches of electronic bibliographic databases and other sources to find evidence bearing on evidence-based practice research questions;
3. Critically appraise sources of scientific evidence and explain how the criteria for that appraisal will vary depending upon the purpose of the research;
4. Discuss why research evidence needs to be integrated with practice expertise and idiosyncratic client preferences, circumstances and values in the evidence-based practice process;
5. Design evaluations as part of evidence-based practice.
6. Explain how both qualitative and quantitative research processes apply in evidence-based practice;
7. Define basic qualitative and quantitative research concepts and describe the basic principles of causal inference, and their relationship to the various types of research designs;
8. Describe key concepts in measurement bearing on evidence-based practice, such as sources of measurement error, reliability and validity, and measurement equivalence across cultures.
9. Find measurement instruments applicable to evidence-based practice, sources of evidence bearing on the suitability of those instruments for specific practice scenarios, and critically appraise those sources from the standpoint of measurement principles and cultural sensitivity.
10. Describe the logic of probability sampling procedures, issues in the use of non-probability sampling procedures, how sampling issues bear on conducting evidence-based practice research at mezzo and macro levels of practice, and the implications of sampling for appraising and integrating sources of evidence in guiding practice decisions;

11. Describe how particular values and sensitivity to ethical issues influence the conducting of research;
12. Give examples of the issues that diversity (e.g., gender, ethnicity, culture, age, sexual orientation, race, class, and physical or mental ability) raises in the conduct of research and in appraising and utilizing research to guide practice decisions;
13. Critically appraise how social work commitment to equity and social justice influences and differentiates the social work research process.

EPAS Competencies

The Steve Hicks School of Social Work has been continuously accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) since 1952. In order to maintain our accreditation status, the UT SHSSW engages in ongoing curriculum assessment to demonstrate compliance with CSWE's Education Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS).

Using a common evaluation instrument, this course measures the implementation of knowledge, skills, values, and/or cognitive and affective processes to assess the following competencies:

Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Outcome 4.1: Use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research

Outcome 4.2: Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings

Outcome 4.3: Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery

III. TEACHING METHODS

The primary methods of instruction are interactive lectures (students are encouraged to ask questions and make comments), class discussions, group/class exercises, reading assignments. Students are encouraged to meet individually with the instructor to review their progress in the course and to ask questions regarding the course content and the social work profession. The instructor is available to meet by appointment and is responsive to emails. Students are expected to come to all classes having carefully completed all reading assignments, to be prepared to discuss the reading material, and to be able to participate in the class activities by sharing your thoughts, views and questions. **Please expect to be called upon during each class to discuss your understanding of the reading material.**

IV. REQUIRED TEXT AND MATERIALS

Required Text:

Rubin & Babbie (2017). *Essential Research Methods for Social Work, 9th Edition*. Cengage Learning.

Available in the University Coop or as an eBook or print copy rental:

<https://www.cengage.com/c/empowerment-series-research-methods-for-social-work-9e-rubin>

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignment	Points
<p>Human Subjects Training</p> <p>Online training: https://utdirect.utexas.edu/citi/citi_login.WBX</p> <p>Course to be completed: Social/Behavioral Researchers - Basic Course <i>Required Modules:</i> History and Ethical Principles; The Federal Regulations, Informed Consent; Privacy and Confidentiality <i>Elective Modules:</i> Internet-Based Research <i>Supplemental Modules:</i> Avoiding Group Harms – US Research Perspectives; History and Ethics of Human Subjects Research; Basic Institutional Review Board (IRB) Regulations and Review Process plus 2 more supplemental modules of your choice</p> <p>Please submit screen shots of the completion page for each training module via Canvas.</p>	5
<p>Tests</p> <p>Three tests will be given throughout the semester. Each quiz will be 10 points with 2 possible extra credit points for a possible total of 36 points. Make up tests will not be given. In the event of a documented emergency or illness, student must make an alternate arrangement with the professor.</p>	30
<p>Research Lecture Paper</p> <p>Students must attend one research lecture on campus in any department. Lecture must present original, empirical data and may be on any topic. In the event that there are not sufficient lectures available on campus to attend, a class session during the second half of the semester will be offered and the professor will present original data for the purposes of this assignment.</p> <p>Student must write a summary and critical assessment of the lecture to include the following content areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) topic of the lecture and research questions or hypotheses, 2) methodology used, 3) conclusions drawn by the researcher, 4) challenges faced by the researcher and 5) Student assessment of the lecture. <p>Student assessment should be thorough and be backed up by examples. Paper should be 2-3 pages, double spaced, APA style.</p>	15

<p>Research Design Project</p> <p>There are four sections of this project. Professor will provided written feedback within 1 week of due date for sections 1-3.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Topic choice and development of possible questions. Choose a topic and formulate three different research questions that would help you learn more about this issue, one for each of the different purposes of research: Exploration, Description, and Explanation. Students should select one of the three questions to utilize for the remainder of this assignment (6 points) 2) Review of empirical literature. (12 points) This should include a minimum of 5 recent, empirical studies published in peer reviewed journals. The outcome of the literature review will either be a confirmation that the research question is still relevant or it will uncover a new area of inquiry where more research is needed requiring a modification of the research question. 3) Methodology and Sampling. (12 points) Students will design a research project to answer the research question that was developed in part 1 or revised in part 2. Sections to be included: Research question, Methodology, Sampling Plan, and Anticipated Challenges. Each section should include a justification for decisions. 4) Final paper. (10 points) The final submission will include sections 1-3 with all suggestions and feedback addressed. <p><i>A more detailed assignment handout will be provided and discussed in depth in class.</i></p>	40
<p>Class Participation and Attendance</p> <p>Students are expected to attend class and participate in class activities and discussion. One unexcused absence will be allowed without penalty.</p>	10

VI. GRADES

94.0 and Above	A
90.0 to 93.999	A-
87.0 to 89.999	B+
84.0 to 86.999	B
80.0 to 83.999	B-
77.0 to 79.999	C+
74.0 to 76.999	C
70.0 to 73.999	C-
67.0 to 69.999	D+
64.0 to 66.999	D
60.0 to 63.999	D-
Below 60.0	F

VII. CLASS POLICIES

The use of laptops/tablets is not allowed in class unless you have individual approval from the instructor. Please take notes on paper. The use of cell phones is not allowed in class. Unless you are a parent or caretaker (and need to be available for a possible emergency call), please silent your cell phone and keep it stored in your bag during class.

VIII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS HONOR CODE. The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND CIVILITY IN THE CLASSROOM. The professor expects students to act as professionals in class. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another's opinions. A course brings together a group of diverse individuals with various backgrounds. Students are influenced and shaped by such factors as ethnicity, gender, sex, physical abilities, religious and political beliefs, national origins, and sexual orientations, among others. We expect to learn from each other in an atmosphere of positive engagement and mutual respect. Social Work also deals with complex and controversial issues. These issues may be challenging and uncomfortable, and it would be impossible to offer a substantive classroom experience that did not include potentially difficult conversations relating to challenging issues. In this environment we will be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometimes we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. Nevertheless, the professor requires that students engage one another with civility, respect, and professionalism.

UNANTICIPATED DISTRESS. Students may experience unexpected and/or distressing reactions to course readings, videos, conversations, and assignments. If so, students are encouraged to inform the professor. The professor can be responsive and supportive regarding students' participation in course assignments and activities, but students are responsible for communicating clearly what kind of support is desired. If counseling is needed, students may contact a service provider of their choosing, including the UT Counseling Center at 512-471-3515 or online at <https://cmhc.utexas.edu/>.

POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION. Public social networks are not private. Even when open only to approved or invited members, users cannot be certain that privacy will exist among the general membership of sites. If social work students choose to participate in such forums, please assume that anything posted can be seen, read, and critiqued. What is said, posted, linked to, commented on, uploaded, subscribed to, etc., can be accessed and archived, posing potential harm to professional reputations and prospective careers.

Social work students who use social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and other forms of electronic communication (e.g. blogs) must be mindful of how their communication may be perceived by clients, colleagues, faculty, and others. Social work students are expected to make

every effort to minimize material which could be considered inappropriate for a professional social worker in training. Because of this, social work students are advised to manage security settings at their most private levels and avoid posting information/photos or using any language that could jeopardize their professional image.

Students are asked to consider the amount of personal information posted on these sites and are obliged to block any client access to involvement in the students' social networks. Client material should not be referred to in any form of electronic media, including *any* information that might lead to the identification of a client or compromise client confidentiality in *any* way. Additionally, students must critically evaluate any material that is posted regarding community agencies and professional relationships, as certain material could violate the standards set by the School of Social Work, the Texas Code of Conduct for Social Workers, and/or the NASW Code of Ethics.

Social work students should consider that they will be representing professional social work practice as well as The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work program while in the classroom, the university community, and the broader area communities.

POLICY ON SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>.

USE OF COURSE MATERIALS. The materials used in this course, including, but not limited to exams, quizzes, and homework assignments, are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized duplication of the course materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary action being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of course materials without the specific, express approval of the professor may be a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty, which could result in further disciplinary action. This sharing includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of distributing those materials to other current or future students.

DOCUMENTED DISABILITY STATEMENT. Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471- 6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). A student should present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed and followed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS. By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, examination, work assignment, or project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

TITLE IX REPORTING. In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the University of Texas at Austin is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from discriminatory conduct based on gender. Faculty, field instructors, staff, and/or teaching assistants in their supervisory roles are mandated reporters of incidents of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, stalking, interpersonal violence, or any other forms of sexual misconduct. Students who report such incidents will be informed of University resources. Incidents will be reported to the University's Title IX Coordinator and/or the Title IX Liaison for the SHSSW, Professor Tanya Voss. Students, faculty and staff may contact Professor Voss to report incidents or to obtain information. Further information, including student resources related to Title IX, may also be found at <http://socialwork.utexas.edu/dl/files/academic-programs/other/qrg-sexualharassment.pdf>.

CAMPUS CARRY POLICY. The University's policy on concealed fire arms may be found here: <https://campuscarry.utexas.edu>. You also may find this information by accessing the Quick Links menu on the School's website.

CLASSROOM CONFIDENTIALITY. Information shared in class about agencies, clients, and personal matters is considered confidential per the NASW Code of Ethics on educational supervision and is protected by regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as well. As such, sharing this information with individuals outside of the educational context is not permitted. Violations of confidentiality could result in actions taken according to the policies and procedure for review of academic performance located in sections 3.0, 3.1, and 3.2 of the Standards for Social Work Education.

USE OF E-MAIL FOR OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO STUDENTS. Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible for keeping the university informed about a change of e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <https://cio.utexas.edu/policies/university-electronic-mail-student-notification-policy>.

SAFETY. As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should notify the professor regarding any safety concerns.

BEHAVIOR CONCERNS ADVICE LINE (BCAL). If students are worried about someone who is acting differently, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership between the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY. Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors in the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor’s instructions.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you are given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

IX. COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Assignment Due	Readings
1/24	Introduction		Syllabus
1/31	Chapter 1: Why Study Research Chapter 2: Evidence Based Practice		Chapters 1 and 2
2/7	Chapter 3: Factors Influencing the Research Process Chapter 4: Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methods of Inquiry	Human Subjects Training Due	Chapters 3 and 4
2/14	Chapter 5: The Ethics and Politics of Social Work Research Chapter 6: Culturally Competent Research	Research Design Project – Topic and Research Questions	Chapters 5 and 6
2/21	Chapter 7: Problem Formulation Chapter 8: Conceptualization of Quantitative and Qualitative Inquiry		Chapters 7 and 8
2/28	Chapter 9: Measurement Chapter 10: Constructing Measurement Instruments	Test #1 Chapters 1-8	Chapters 9 and 10
3/7	Chapter 11: Causal Inference and Experimental Design Chapter 12: Quasi-Experimental Design		Chapters 11 and 12

3/14	Chapter 13: Single Case Evaluation Design	Research Design Project – Empirical Literature Review	Chapter 13
3/21	Spring Break – No Class	--	--
3/28	Chapter 14: Program Evaluation		Chapter 14
4/4	Chapter 15: Sampling In Class Research Lecture for Research Lecture Paper	Test #2 Chapters 9-14	Chapter 15
4/11	Chapter 16: Survey Research Chapter 17: Analyzing Existing Data: Quantitative and Qualitative Methods	Research Lecture Paper Due	Chapters 16 and 17
4/18	Chapter 18: Qualitative Research: General Principles Chapter 19: Qualitative Research: Specific Methods Chapter 20: Qualitative Data Analysis	Research Design Project – Methodology and Sampling	Chapters 18, 19, and 20
4/25	Chapter 21: Descriptive Data Analysis Chapter 22: Inferential Data Analysis		Chapters 21 and 22
5/2	Chapter 23: Writing Research Proposals and Reports	Test #3 Chapters 15-22	Chapter 23
5/9	Last Day of Class	Research Design Project – Final Paper Due	No readings

X. Bibliography

Rubin & Babbie (2017). *Essential Research Methods for Social Work, 9th Edition*. Cengage Learning.