

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
Social Work Research Methods
(Required Course – BSW Program)

Course Number: SW 313	Instructor: Patricia A. Cody, MSW, PhD
Unique Number: 61095	Semester: Fall 2016
Class Time: M, W 4:00pm – 5:30pm	Class Location: SSW 1.212
Office Hours: M 3:00pm – 4:00 pm and by appointment	Office Location: SSW 2.212A
Instructor Email: triciacody@austin.utexas.edu	Instructor Number: 512-413-6405

I. Standardized Course Description

This course is one of two research courses in the BSW curriculum. The course introduces students to the following topics: social work values, the research process, problem formulation and conceptualization, measurement, research design and inference, single subject design and practice evaluation, sampling, alternative data gathering techniques and analyses, and uses of research in social work. SW313 is a prerequisite for entry into the social work major.

The goal of the course is to help students develop a basic understanding of the research process in order to engage with research for evidence-based practice. *See section VII below for the detailed Standardized Course Objectives.*

II. 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.

III. Required Text and Additional Required Readings

Rubin & Babbie (2016). *Essential Research Methods for Social Work, 4th Edition*. Cengage Learning.

IV. Course Requirements

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.**

Students are encouraged to meet individually with the instructor to review your progress in the course and to ask questions regarding the course content and social work profession. The instructor is available to meet by appointment and is responsive to emails.

Assignment	Points
Human Subjects Training Online training: https://utdirect.utexas.edu/citi/citi_login.WBX Course to be completed: Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research Course 1. Due: Wednesday 9/7/2016. Students may submit a printed or electronic copy of their course completion certificate.	5
Monday Weekly Reading Quiz Twelve quizzes will be given on Mondays throughout the semester. Ten quizzes will be calculated for the full 30 points assigned. Students may elect to drop/not take up to two quizzes or students may elect to drop/not take one quiz and add the score from quiz into the total score as extra credit. <i>There will be no make quizzes offered.</i>	30
Research Lecture Paper Students must attend one research lecture on campus in any department. Lecture must present original, empirical data and may be on any topic that the student is interested. Student must write a summary and assessment of the lecture to include the following content areas: 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's assessment of the lecture. Student assessment should be thorough and be backed up by examples. Paper will be 2-3 pages, double spaced.	15
Research Design Project There are four sections of this project. Sections 1-3 will be submitted on date due. Professor will provided written feedback within 1 week of due date. 1) Topic choice and development of research question (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. <i>A more detailed assignment handout will be provided and discussed during day one.</i>	40
Class Participation	10

V. Classroom 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 (and need to be available for a possible call regarding your children) please turn your cell phone off and keep it stored in your bag.

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 (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and other forms of electronic communication (i.e. blogs, etc.) 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, instructors, staff, and/or teaching assistants in their supervisory roles are mandated reporters of incidents of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, or 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 Deputy for the SSW, 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 <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

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.

GRADING SCALE

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. Standardized Course Objectives

The goal of the course is to help students develop a basic understanding of the research process. Upon completion of this course students should be able to:

- 1) Describe the fundamental steps of scientific inquiry and how they parallel the basic steps of social work practice; **(PB 21 and 22)**
- 2) Demonstrate an understanding of the following basic social work research skills pertinent to the profession: a) formulation of research problems, b) formulation of research questions and hypotheses, c) use of various research methods (e.g., survey research, single subject design, experimental and quasi-experimental designs, field research, and use of secondary data), d) collection and analysis of research data, and e) interpretation of research results; **(PB 21, 22, 41)**
- 3) Critically analyze research findings and be effective consumers of, and contributors to, social work research; **(PB 22 and 41)**

- 4) Illustrate how gender bias or insensitivity to diverse populations can impede effective research and inference; **(PB 41)**
- 5) Identify research methods, sampling designs, and measurement techniques which are sensitive to diverse groups, including women, people of color, persons with disabilities, and members of the LGBT community; **(PB 41)**
- 6) Discuss the usefulness of social science theory and research methods in social work practice; **(PB22)**
- 7) Explain ethical issues in conducting and using research, as well as the role of the social work values in research and evaluation; **(PB 41)**
- 8) Determine feasibility, practicability, and generalizability of research findings. **(PB 41)**

The 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, we engage in ongoing curriculum assessment to demonstrate compliance with CSWE’s Education Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Several required courses in our curriculum are part of this ongoing assessment, including this course. Below is a list of the specific Educational Policies (EP) and Practice Behaviors (PB) that are addressed in this course. The complete EPAS can be found in your Student Handbook.

EP 2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.

PB 21 Use practice experiences to inform scientific inquiry. Objectives 1, 2. Assignment: Research Lecture Paper, Research Design Project.

PB 22 Use research evidence to inform practice. Objectives 1, 2, 3, 6. Assignment: Weekly Quiz, Research Design Project

EP 2.1.10d Evaluation

PB41 Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions. Objectives 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8. Assignment: Weekly Quiz, Research Lecture Paper, Research Design Project

VIII. COURSE SCHEDULE

Please note that the instructor may make modifications to the syllabus (i.e. readings or assignments) during the semester. Any revised versions of the syllabus will be uploaded to and available on Canvas.

Readings for each week are to be completed before class on Monday of each week.

Week	Day / Dates	Topics	Readings
1	Wednesday 8/24/2016	Introduction	Syllabus

2	Monday 8/29/16 Wednesday 8/31/2016	Topic: Why Study Research? Conducting online literature reviews. Deciding on a research topic.	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 1
3	Monday 9/5/2016 Wednesday 9/7/2016	Topic: Evidence-Based Practice. Monday: UT CLOSED HAPPY LABOR DAY! Wednesday: Due: Human Subjects Training (upload to Canvas before start of class)	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 2
4	Monday 9/12/2016 Wednesday 9/14/2016	Topic: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods of Inquiry. Factors Influencing the Research Process. Monday: Quiz #1 (in class) Wednesday: continued from Monday	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 3 & Ch. 4
5	Monday 9/19/2016 Wednesday 9/21/2016	Topic: Ethical Issues in Social Work Research. Culturally Competent Research. Monday: Quiz #2 (in class) Wednesday: Due: Research Project: Topic choice and development of research question. (upload to Canvas before start of class)	Rubin & Babbie, Ch.5 & Ch. 6
6	Monday 9/26/2016 Wednesday 9/28/2016	Topic: Problem Formulation. Measurement in Quantitative and Qualitative Inquiry. Monday: Quiz #3 (in class) Wednesday: continued from Monday	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 7 & Ch. 8

7	Monday 10/3/2016 Wednesday 10/5/2016	Topic: Quantitative and Qualitative Measurement Instruments. Surveys. Monday: Quiz #4 (in class) Wednesday: continued from Monday	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 9 & Ch. 10
8	Monday 10/10/2016 Wednesday 10/12/2016	Topic: Sampling: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches. Monday: Quiz #5 (in class) Wednesday: Due: Research Project: Review of empirical literature. (upload to Canvas before start of class)	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 11
9	Monday 10/17/2016 Wednesday 10/19/2016	Topic: Experiments and Quasi Experiments. Monday: Quiz #6 (in class) Wednesday: continued from Monday	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 12
10	Monday 10/24/2016 Wednesday 10/26/2016	Topic: Single-Case Evaluation Designs. Monday: Quiz #7 (in class) Wednesday: continued from Monday	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 13
11	Monday 10/31/2016 Wednesday 11/2/2016	Topic: Program Evaluation. Monday: Quiz #8 (in class) Wednesday: continued from Monday	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 14

12	Monday 11/7/2016 Wednesday 11/9/2016	Topic: Additional Methods in Qualitative Inquiry. Monday: Quiz #9 (in class) Wednesday: Due: Research Project: Methodology and Sampling. (upload to Canvas before start of class)	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 15
13	Monday 11/14/2016 Wednesday 11/16/2016	Topic: Analyzing Available Records: Quantitative and Qualitative Methods. Monday: Quiz #10 (in class) Wednesday: Due: Research Lecture Paper. Students are encouraged to submit this paper earlier depending on when the lecture of their choice is held. (latest time to upload to Canvas is before the start of this class)	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 16
14	Monday 11/21/2016 Wednesday 11/23/2016	Topic: Quantitative Data Analysis. Monday: Quiz #11 (in class) Wednesday: UT CLOSED HAPPY THANKSGIVING	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 17
15	Monday 11/28/2016 Wednesday 11/30/2016	Topic: Qualitative Data Analysis. Monday: Quiz #12 (in class) Wednesday: continued from Monday	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 18
16	Monday 12/5/2016	Topic: Course Wrap-Up and evaluations. Monday: LAST DAY OF CLASS Due: Research Project: Final Paper. (upload to Canvas before start of class)	No readings.