

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK  
MSSW Social Work Research Methods**

<b>Course Number:</b> SW 385R	<b>Instructor:</b> Amanda N. Barczyk, PhD, MSW
<b>Unique Number:</b> 92050	<b>Semester:</b> Summer 2015
<b>Class Time:</b> Tuesday & Thursday 5:30-8:00pm	<b>Class Location:</b> SW 2.112
<b>Office Hours:</b> Thursday's 4:30-5:30pm and by appointment	<b>Office Location:</b> 3.104A Adjunct Faculty Office
<b>Instructor Email:</b> abarczyk@utexas.edu	<b>Instructor Number:</b> (512) 324-0000 ext. 87637

**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; **(PB22)**
2. Efficiently conduct advanced searches of electronic bibliographic databases and other sources to find evidence bearing on evidence-based practice research questions; **(PB22)**
3. Critically appraise sources of scientific evidence and explain how the criteria for that appraisal will vary depending upon the purpose of the research; **(PB22 & PB41)**
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; **(PB22)**
5. Design evaluations as part of evidence-based practice. **(PB21 & PB41)**
6. Explain how both qualitative and quantitative research processes apply in evidence-based practice; **(PB22 & PB41)**
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; **(PB22 & PB41)**
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. **(PB22 & PB41)**
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. **(PB22 & PB41)**
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; **(PB22 & PB41)**

11. Describe how particular values and sensitivity to ethical issues influence the conducting of research; **(PB21, PB22 & PB41)**
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; **(PB21, PB22 & PB41)**
13. Critically appraise how social work commitment to equity and social justice influences and differentiates the social work research process. **(PB21)**

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 assessed in this course. The complete EPAS can be optioned from your Student Handbook.

**EP2.1.6: Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.**

**PB21** Use practice experiences to inform scientific inquiry

Objectives 5, 11, 12, 13

Assignment: Papers #1 and #2

**PB22** Use research evidence to inform practice

Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

Assignment: Paper #1

**EP2.1.10d: Evaluation.**

**PB41** Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions

Objectives 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

Assignment: Papers #1 and #2, Exams

**III. Teaching Methods**

This course is designed to include a variety of teaching methodologies to achieve the expectation of student mastery of evidence-based advanced practice skill competencies as a practitioner-researcher. Learning activities will include readings, writing assignments, discussions, lectures, presentations, and in-class group and individual experiential activities.

**IV. Required Text**

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E.R. (2014). *Research methods for social work* (8th ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Wadsworth, Inc.

[http://www.coursesmart.com/9781285173467?\\_professorview=false&\\_hdv=6.8](http://www.coursesmart.com/9781285173467?_professorview=false&_hdv=6.8)

Readings are outlined in the course schedule

**V. Class Policies**

**Use of CANVAS for Additional Required Class Documents**

In this class the professor uses CANVAS—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://courses.utexas.edu>—to distribute course materials and communicate online. Students can find support in using CANVAS at the ITS Help Desk by calling 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Please plan accordingly.

**Respectful Discussion**

Active and scholarly discussions are expected and welcome. Students are responsible for treating others with courtesy and respect and should promote group cohesion in an effort to create a safe learning environment. Students are expected to listen to the concerns and opinions of others with openness and provide suggestions.

### **Attendance and Participation**

It is important for social work practitioners to be punctual in both meeting deadlines and in attendance. Thus, students are expected to attend all class sessions, if at all possible, and participate in an **interactive** framework between students and professor. Students are permitted **one** excused absence. Medical documentation will be required to avoid losing class assignment grade points for more than one absence. Students are to notify the professor if they are going to be absent. **Students are responsible for any material missed due to absences.** In addition, students are expected to **complete the readings prior to class** and should be well prepared to participate in discussions.

### **Makeup Exams**

Only in the case of **documented** illness or other unforeseen emergencies, and then only with the permission of the professor, will make-up exams be given. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor either prior or within 24 hours of the missed exam. The format of makeup exams is at the discretion of the instructor and may be limited to essay questions.

### **Late Assignments**

Barring documented illness or other unforeseen emergencies, and then only with the permission of the professor, assignments are to be submitted on time. **No late assignments will be accepted.**

### **Language, Grammar, and Organization**

Assignments should be turned in with no errors in spelling, punctuation, or grammar. The format of the assignments should follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). You can access a copy of the APA manual from the libraries on campus or access information about APA style from the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>. If you are unfamiliar (or need a refresher) with APA style, you can also complete a free on-line tutorial: <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx>.

### **Course and Instructor Evaluation**

Student feedback is always welcome. Students are encouraged to provide feedback by phone, by e-mail, or by appointment with the instructor. Students will have two formal opportunities to evaluate the quality of the course and instruction. Mid-way through the course students will be asked to provide an anonymous evaluation about the first half of the course and any suggestions for improving content, delivery, or discussion. The second evaluation will occur at the end of the course, utilizing the format provided by the University.

## **VI. University Notices and 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 in Class**

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. We will not, nor should we, always agree with one another. In this environment we should be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometime we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. However, the professor does require that students engage one another with respect and professionalism.

### **Classroom Civility**

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 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.

### **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 instructor. The instructor 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 can contact a service provider of their choosing, including the UT Counseling Center at 512-471-3515 or online at [www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/](http://www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/).

### **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 Class Materials**

The materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, exams, quizzes, and homework assignments are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized copying of the class materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary actions being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of class materials without the specific, express approval of the instructor 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 includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of sharing those materials with 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). Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

### **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, an examination, a work assignment, or a 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. All faculty, instructors, and staff who supervise students are required to relay student reports of alleged sex discrimination, sexual harassment, including sexual violence or sexual misconduct, experienced by a student to the University Title IX office and an assistant or associate dean of the school. Further information including student resources related to Title IX may be found at <https://www.utexas.edu/student-affairs/policies/title-ix>.

### **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 FERPA regulations as well. Discussions with individuals outside of the educational context are 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 to keep the university informed about changes to their 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>.

*\*Not all issues can be handled appropriately on email. Students that wish to discuss concerns about their performance, grades, an assignment, or other more complex matters need to attend the instructor’s office hours or make an appointment.*

### **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 among 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 of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered 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.

## **VII. Grading**

### **Course Grades**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>
Class Assignments	50 points
Midterm	50 points
Paper # 1: Evidence-Based Practice Review	100 points
Presentation of Paper # 2: Research Proposal	25 points
Paper # 2: Research Proposal	150 points
Final Exam	50 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>425 points</b>

\*\*There is also the potential for 10 points of EXTRA CREDIT for students who complete the Human Subjects Research Training by June 18<sup>th</sup>\*\*

### **Grading Scale**

The grading scale for this course is as follows:

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

A Range= 100 – 90 points Superior work: The assignment significantly exceeds expectations listed in the syllabus. Student exceeds what is required in the assignment and demonstrates a high level of in-depth critical thinking and analysis (i.e., writing is coherent, ideas synthesized and logical, discussion well developed).

B Range = 89 – 80 points Good Work: The assignment meets all the requirements and demonstrates evidence of in-depth critical thinking and analysis.

C Range = 79 – 70 points Average Work: The assignment meets the requirements or has minor gaps, but lacks evidence of in-depth critical thinking and analysis. Remember, a C- (73 points) or lower is noted as a course failure and will require re-taking the course.

D and F Range = 69 and below Poor/failing Work: The assignment has important gaps, both in terms of not meeting the requirements and lacking in-depth critical thinking and analysis.

Grading of all written assignments will take into account the quality of the writing, as well as the content. The American Psychological Association (APA) 6<sup>th</sup> edition format must be used to format citations and references. Written material should be carefully proof read and errors (punctuation, typographical, spelling) corrected. Good writing requires an iterative process for quality to improve. It is strongly encouraged that you to read your paper several times and, if possible, have someone else proof read it. Graduate writing assistance is available. Please note that you will not earn credit for MSSW courses if your final grade falls below a 'C'. You must earn a 'C' or higher for credit to be given for the course.

## IX. COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic and Assignments	Readings
<b>Class 1</b> June 4	Introductions	Syllabus Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 24
<b>Class 2</b> June 9	Why Study Research?  Comparing Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods of Inquiry	Rubin & Babbie, Chapters 1 and 4
<b>Class 3</b> June 11	Evidence-Based Practice	Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 2
<b>Class 4</b> June 16	Philosophy and Theory in Social Work Research  Problem Formulation	Rubin & Babbie, Chapters 3 and 7
<b>Class 5</b> June 18	Conceptualization in Quantitative and Qualitative Inquiry  Measurement  Constructing Measurement Instruments  <b>Human Participants Protection Education for Research Teams Extra Credit Due</b>	Rubin & Babbie, Chapters 8-10

<b>Class 6</b> June 23	Causal Inference and Experimental Designs Quasi-Experimental Designs	Rubin & Babbie, Chapters 11-12
<b>Class 7</b> June 25	<b>Midterm Exam on Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12</b>	
<b>Class 8</b> June 30	Single-Case Evaluation Designs <b>Paper # 1: Evidence-Based Practice Review Due</b>	Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 13
<b>Class 9</b> July 2	Sampling Survey Research	Rubin & Babbie, Chapters 15-16
<b>Class 10</b> July 7	The Ethics and Politics of Social Work Research Culturally Competent Research	Rubin & Babbie, Chapters 5-6
<b>Class 11</b> July 9	Quantitative Data Analysis Inferential Data Analysis	Rubin & Babbie, Chapters 21-23
<b>Class 12</b> July 14	Qualitative Research: General Principles Qualitative Research: Specific Methods Qualitative Data Analysis	Rubin & Babbie, Chapters 18-20
<b>Class 13</b> July 16	Program Evaluation	Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 14
<b>Class 14</b> July 21	<b>Presentation of Research Proposal Due</b>	TBD
<b>Class 15</b> July 23	<b>Final Exam on Chapters 5, 6, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23</b>	
<b>Class 16</b> July 28	<b>Paper # 2: Research Proposal Due</b>	TBD

### VIII. Course Requirements:

#### ***\*\*EXTRA CREDIT\*\* Human Subjects Research Training (10 points)***

Students may complete the University of Texas “Human Subjects Research Training” and submit a Certificate of Completion to the professor in class **no later than June 18<sup>th</sup>** to receive 10 points extra credit. To complete the online training, go to the following UT Office of Research Support website: <http://www.utexas.edu/research/rsc/training/index.php>

In Step 7, you should select the “Social/Behavioral Research Course.”

As stated in Step 8, “To receive credit you must complete *all* of the *required* modules and *one* of the *elective modules* with an average quiz score of 80.” For the purposes of this class you should complete the elective module entitled “Students in Research (ID: 1321)”

Upon completion of the required IRB Human Subjects Training modules and elective module hand in the certificate of completion or go to the “My Reports” tab and print the page so that your name, ID number, and scores for all modules are visible.

### **Exams (50 points each): Midterm Exam June 25<sup>th</sup> & Final Exam July 23<sup>rd</sup>**

There will be two in-class, closed book exams. A class session is allotted for each exam. The exams will contain a combination of some or all of the following types of questions: true/false, matching, multiple choice, and short essay. The exams will cover materials from assigned readings, lectures, class discussions, and in-class activities. The Midterm Exam will cover the first half of the semester and Final Exam will cover the second half of the semester.

### **Class Assignments (50 points)**

There will be 11 class assignments worth 5 points each. These assignments will include things like short responses to themes from the assigned readings, in-class group activities, and in-class research critiques. There is no make-up for missed class assignments nor will class assignments be taken by email, the student must be present in the class to receive credit. The assignments will not be announced prior to class. Students will receive a completion grade of “full credit” (☑) or “no credit” (NC). Students will be able to drop their lowest grade (this enables each student to have one excused absence for the semester).

### **Paper # 1: Evidence-Based Practice Review (100 Points): Due June 30<sup>th</sup>**

For this paper, two students are required to team up to conduct a comprehensive literature review. The literature review needs to focus on the question “**Which intervention is most effective in addressing the chosen problem, as measured by specific outcomes?**” Typically, this paper is at least 10 pages double-spaced, not counting the reference list or appendices. Since both group members will receive the same points based on the grade of the paper, it is very important for them to work together. Each dyad must attach a paragraph as an appendix at the end of the paper that describes the work each person did to produce the paper. In case the work load was questionably unbalanced, the instructor may assign a lower grade to the individual.

The paper should reflect appropriate implementation of all Steps of the Evidence-Based Practice process (as described in class and in the text on evidence-based practice). This paper should be based the best scientific evidence. Information discussed in the text and in class will be used to identify what is meant by the “best” evidence that fits a particular client, problem, or situation. There are no specific numbers of studies that you need to review; however, because this is a team project, your literature search is expected to be very thorough.

Begin this assignment by reviewing recent outcome studies on whatever interventions have been tested for your selected problem. Next, select and describe the findings of studies evaluating your chosen intervention based on the literature review you conducted. This assignment is meant to be a more ‘real-life’ strategy for finding an appropriate EBP for a particular client problem, rather than an assignment to find a well-researched intervention and then determining the problem that it aims to address. This assignment is meant to help you learn the process of researching EBPs to meet client needs.

The paper must include the following components:

#### **Title Page**

Include a descriptive title, names of all group members, and the date the assignment is due.

#### **Description of Target Problem (15 points):**

Begin the paper with an overview of the target problem related to social work practice to which the rest of your EBP paper will apply. Use literature to support your ideas concerning the definition of the problem, severity of the problem, prevalence of the problem, and the population to whom the problem applies. Be comprehensive in your review of the problem area and the population effected by this problem. You can’t

cite “too much” nor “too often.” Remember, ideas from others must be recognized as such; if you don’t cite and recognize the authors of ideas, it is plagiarism.

A few examples of problems might be: abusive parents (prevention or treatment), traumatized children or adults, war veterans with PTSD, welfare reform, community development, family preservation, substance abuse, homelessness, depression among nursing home residents, preventing hospitalization among individuals with chronic brain disorders, coping with death and dying, marital problems, runaways, school dropout, HIV/AIDS prevention, caregiver burden, and many more – these are just some illustrations to help you consider what you may want to choose. **Important** – these are NOT just clinical examples, but can be developed from a more macro perspective. For instance, regarding abusive parents, an agency administrator may need to decide what programs to implement in her agency. Likewise, a community organizer might need to choose a community development strategy that has the best chance to succeed.

### **Literature Review Strategy (5 points)**

Describe the process of how you went about searching the literature. For example, what databases you used, what keywords you used, what types of search strategies (top-down and/or bottom-up) and internet search engines, websites, abstracts, etc. you used.

### **Literature Review of Intervention (50 points total for section)**

This is the largest section of the paper and must include a wide variety of literature to support the use of the Evidence-Based Practice Intervention. This section is not simply a summarization of a few studies; the literature must be synthesized as it relates to issues or subtopics in your proposed study. Use of subheadings increases readability and thus are required in this section.

- **Description of Intervention:** Briefly describe the intervention you found effective in reducing or ameliorating the problem area you’ve chosen. The intervention you select should emerge from a review of recently published outcome studies and systematic reviews (if any). Make sure you have found articles that address the effectiveness of the interventions that have been tested in the past for your selected problem area and focus on your population of interest.
- **Effectiveness of Chosen Intervention:** Provide a review of the empirical literature that provides evidence for the effectiveness of your chosen intervention in reducing or ameliorating the problem area you’ve chosen. Synthesize the literature in terms of the outcomes, do not simply describe one article then describe the next then describe the next. The intervention you select should have the best scientific evidence supporting the effectiveness for the practice problem in question. Synthesis should also include describing the various factors that might be associated with your primary target problem and what the findings of the research show in relation to these factors. For example, if your target problem is PTSD, discussing factors such as depression and substance in relation to PTSD would be useful. Make sure you are choosing factors that you find in the literature on your intervention studies, not just making up ones you think are interesting. Let the literature guide you in determining what you will be discussing.
- **Discussion of Why Intervention was Chosen:** Provide rationale as to why this intervention was chosen: did it have the best evidence, and why was that evidence superior to other possible choices that you found in your literature search (including why the chosen intervention would be feasible to implement and a good fit in light of the characteristics of the client problem or situation you have described). Briefly describe the major methodological strengths and/or weaknesses of the key studies you reviewed as a rationale for choosing your intervention. Justify why your chosen intervention is the strongest in terms of evidence you have found in your review of the literature. Remember to set this choice not only in the context of literature reviewed, but the problem area you are focused on. Show that you can distinguish those studies that are sufficiently sound methodologically to guide practice from those whose methodological

weaknesses imply the need for more rigorous research before evidence-based practice implications are warranted.

### **Appendix A: Literature Review Matrix of Chosen Intervention (20 points)**

A Literature Review Matrix is a tool used to organize your thoughts and ensure you are systematically reviewing literature on your topic. While this is an appendix of your paper, it is worth a substantial amount of points and should be completed with precision. All articles you reviewed that focused on **your chosen intervention** should be included in the Literature Review Matrix whether or not they were included in your final paper. You do **NOT** need to include articles that focused on other interventions you reviewed even though reviewing other articles in the same systematic manner is expected. The following columns should be included in your Literature Review Matrix:

- **Author(s):** Provide the name of the author(s) of the study in following format – Last name, First Initial, Middle Initial (if reported) (e.g, Rubin, A. & Babbie, E.R.)
- **Title:** Provide the title of the article
- **Year:** Provide the year the article was published
- **Journal:** Provide the name of the journal that published the article
- **Sample:** Describe key elements including the sample size, age range, gender, ethnicity, etc.
- **Study Design:** Describe the design of the study (e.g., randomized control trial, pretest-posttest design, case control design, etc.)
- **Outcomes:** List the outcomes of interest in this study (e.g., depression, hopelessness, post-traumatic stress symptoms, etc.)
- **Measurements:** List the measurements/tools/instruments that were used to collect the data
- **Results:** Briefly summarize the findings of the study (e.g., participants who received CBT had a significant decrease in depression after the intervention compared to those who did not participate, participation in the support group resulted in a higher graduation rate when compared to youth who did not participate, knowledge about sexually transmitted infections was significantly higher for participants in the intervention group (75% correct on knowledge test) compared to the control group (15% correct on knowledge test).
- **Comments:** Provide notes for yourself regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the article (e.g., ethnically diverse group, no gender differences found, small sample size, generalizability high due to diversity of sample, utilized a brief measure for depression that was reliable, etc.). Not all articles are required to have notes but this will assist you when you use the matrix to write your final paper.

Note: To avoid formatting issues, the Literature Review Matrix should be completed in a separate word or excel document, printed out, and stapled to the rest of your assignment. Page numbers are not required for this appendix.

### **Appendix B: Division of Labor**

Summarize in a BRIEF paragraph the work each person in your dyad contributed to the paper. Make it clear what the role of each was in developing the ideas, searching literature and writing the paper.

### **Overall Presentation (10 points)**

Writing style, clarity, grammar, APA formatting, and the number of references cited will be assessed contribute to your final grade.

### **Presentation of Research Proposal (25 points): July 21<sup>st</sup>**

In addition to the Research Proposal paper described in detail below, each dyad will be required to prepare a 10 minute power point presentation of their work to the class (DO NOT read from your paper during the presentation). This presentation will be graded in and by itself. The presentation should be focused on the research methods section of the research proposal so that the professor can provide feedback to improve the dyad's research proposal before the dyad submits the final version a week later. Each group member should participate in the presentation of their research proposal. Students will receive the same grade for the presentation but the grade will reflect equality of contribution during the presentation.

### **Paper # 2: Research Proposal (150 points): Due July 28<sup>th</sup>**

The same two students who worked together on Paper #1 will complete this assignment together. Typically, papers average 15-20 double-spaced pages, not counting the reference list or appendices. Since both group members will receive the same points based on the grade of the paper, it is very important for them to work together. Each dyad must attach a paragraph as an appendix at the end of the paper that describes the work each person did to produce the paper. In case the work load was questionably unbalanced, the instructor may assign a lower grade to the individual.

**\*\*PLEASE USE ALL THE FOLLOWING HEADINGS FOR THE FINAL PAPER\*\***

- I. Introduction**
  - a. Description of Target Problem**
  - b. Research Question and Purpose**
- II. Theoretical Framework**
- III. Review of Literature on [Insert Name of Intervention]**
- IV. Research Methods**
  - a. Design**
  - b. Sample**
  - c. Procedures**
  - d. Measurement**
  - e. Instrumentation**
  - f. Data analysis**
- V. Human Subjects**
- VI. Limitations**
- VII. Conclusions**
- VIII. References**
- IX. Appendix A: Division of Labor**

- I. Introduction**
  - a. Description of Target Problem (10 points)**

Provide a clear statement of the problem you are proposing to study. Introduce the problem area that will be the focus of your proposed study. All content must be cited from the literature; opinion is not appropriate here. This section should be a modification of the "Description of Target Problem" section you wrote for Paper #1. Be sure to incorporate all feedback given by your instructor into the final version of this section.
  - b. Research Question and Purpose**

Include the purpose of the research and the significance of the study to social work. This section must conclude with a research question containing the attributes of a good research question as defined by the book and in class.

## II. Theoretical Framework (15 points)

- a. Identify and discuss one substantive theory that can be utilized in your proposed project, either to support use of the intervention OR in relation to the problem area. The theory must have a name and the developer of the theory must be identified. Describe the theory in detail and include discussion of at least 3 concepts that the developers of the theory have specified. This typically requires 1-2 pages.
- b. Describe how this theory and its concepts provide a framework for understanding the problem area or interventions that you'll examine in your proposed study. Describe how the theory ties into your proposed study. This typically requires at least 1 page. Remember, therapy is NOT theory – find a theory that acts as the foundation or underpinning of the therapy you are testing OR find a theory that explains the problem behavior or is a foundation for the problem area you are evaluating.

## III. Review of Literature on [Insert Name of Intervention] (25 points)

- a. A literature review is a description of relevant research concerning the intervention you have chosen. This section should be a modification of the “Literature Review of Intervention” section from Paper #1. Be sure to incorporate all feedback given by your instructor into the final version of this section. This section gives you the chance to revise your previous sections in Paper # 1 and provide a suitable synthesis of the literature.
- b. Conclude this section with a paragraph or two that tie sections I, II, III together and gives a brief summary of the intervention you will choose to focus on as your experimental condition. This section provides a means of concluding why you are choosing the specific intervention (“Literature Review of Intervention” section from Paper #1) and gives a means of introducing your study (the detail you'll describe in the Methods section of this paper). Also, use the results of the studies you are citing to support the reason your study is necessary and why this intervention study would be useful in further understanding the effectiveness of your identified intervention.

## IV. Research Methods

Develop and describe a true experimental study that evaluates your intervention addressing the problem area described in previous sections above. The methodology for the study you design should contain a high degree of internal/external validity and scientific rigor. Most threats to internal validity should be controlled, and reasonable efforts should be made to minimize measurement bias. This proposal should provide a concise enough description on how the study is to be conducted so that readers would be able to conduct the study themselves from your description. Remember to write this paper in future tense, i.e. “will do.”

### a. Research Design (5 points)

Identify and describe the specific research design – if it is “classic experimental design, call it that (or whatever name the design is called). Provide further description by using notation (e.g. R O X O) plus narrative description of the design strategy you will employ for your proposed study. Don't forget to describe each part of the design: whether random assignment, when measures will be done, how long intervention will last, which intervention is experimental and which is control, etc.

### b. Sample (15 points)

Address the following topics in this section:

- i. Describe the sampling procedure (what type of sampling – probably or non-probability type (name it), how selection of participants will occur, and specify your inclusion and exclusion criteria
- ii. Describe how you would recruit participants, who helps you get names to contact, and how is this done in an ethical manner? If specific types of individual are to be recruited (such as those with the problem you are targeting), make sure

you utilize a “screening tool” to determine if possible participants meet your chosen ‘inclusion’ criteria.

- iii. Describe the informed consent process and content of informed consent/assent (you don’t have to create a consent form, just describe how and when it would be done, and what would be included in the consent/assent)
- iv. Describe issues of compensation for participants – how much, when receive, for what activities are they compensated
- v. Identify the study site (where you will find your subjects). Doesn’t have to be so specific that you name the location, but suggest where (state/city?) the project would be carried out and the type of facility or agency you will partner with to conduct the study.
- vi. Provide projected number of participants (from formula) with description of how the sample will be identified, and how the population (N) was determined. Cite all sources of where information came from (i.e. census, websites, etc.) and show the calculation of sample size (n).
- vii. Describe any specific difficulties you anticipate might occur in recruiting participants

**c. Procedures (15 points)**

- i. Describe the process of implementing your study – start this section with what happens AFTER the participants who have agreed to be in the study, completed informed consent procedures, etc. What, exactly, will you DO? (Be extremely specific! Make sure someone could actually follow what you are describing that must be done).
- ii. Describe when measures will be conducted – pretest, posttest, any follow-ups.
- iii. Describe the process of the intervention as well – how the intervention is actually delivered, number of sessions, content of sessions, focus of intervention strategies, etc. This is largest part of this section and requires that you include as much detail as possible in terms of what the clinician does in the context of therapeutic intervention. This section is different from ‘lit review’ of interventions in that ‘lit review’ discusses literature supporting use of the intervention and this section discussion HOW the intervention is delivered to clients.
- iv. Describe how you will keep track of participants after they have completed posttest. Describe how you will track them for follow-up testing – how do you plan to decrease attrition?

**d. Measurement (20 points)**

- i. Cite the PRIMARY source for each measure, if you didn’t develop it yourself – DO NOT cite the measures book. The examples of items from scales or any self-developed question must look like the participant would see it if they were asked to complete your measurement instrument. Don’t just describe the variable; show how the participant would actually see it on the pre or post test.
- ii. Ideal measures are multifaceted and composite scales (continuous measure); include simple ones only if there is strong rationale for you to do so. Measures should be easy for anyone to see why you chose them, as they measure concepts in your research question or as described an independent variables in your “target problem” and “interventions” sections.
- iii. Remember we always measure many, many variables in every study; however, for this paper you are being asked to demonstrate the BEST variables that would be included in your study, based on answering your research question. Everyone measures demographics, so choose more important variables for your paper to show your expertise in choosing variables that actually measure components of

your research question and variables related to your dependent question. We can assume that demographics will be measured, so choose other, more complex variables to demonstrate your knowledge.

**1. Specify 2 dependent variables** (or 2 ways to measure one dependent variable)

From your Research Question, what is the DV or outcome your study is trying to change? This section must include the following for both DVs:

- a. Name of the variable
- b. Describe how you are operationally defining it
- c. Provide rationale for why this specific measure is included in the study
- d. Describe specifically how it is measured - include the actual question if it is a self-developed one; include an example of 4-5 items from the scale, if using a standardized measure, etc.
- e. Identify the level of measurement (dichotomous, categorical, continuous) for each variable. Remember scales are made up of individual items/questions that may be coded categorical, but when the scale is used as a composite measure, it is summed and the total score for the variable is continuous.

If you are using a SCREENING tool to identify your sample, you may use that screener as one of your DVs (please label it as such) and then identify another as the DV that will be used in pre, post, follow-up measurements time points.

**2. Specify 5 independent variables**

From your Research Question, what are at least 5 IVs that will likely have an effect on the dependent variable in your study? This section must include the following for each independent variable:

- a. Name of the variable
- b. Describe how you are operationally defining it
- c. Provide rationale for why this specific measure is included in the study
- d. Describe specifically how it is measured - include the actual question if it is a self-developed one or include an example of 4-5 items if from a standardized scale
- e. Identify the level of measurement (dichotomous, categorical, continuous) for each variable. Remember scales are made up of individual items/questions that may be coded categorical, but when the scale is used as a composite measure, it is summed and the total score for the variable is continuous.

Make sure one of these IVs is a way to measure your intervention (number of sessions, fidelity of delivery of interventions, etc).

**e. Instrumentation** (10 points)

Describe one additional variable that is measured by a standardized research instrument; this is one additional variable to the 7 included above. This section must include the following:

- i. variable name,
- ii. description of the scale to measure that variable,
- iii. rationale for why this specific measure is included in the study
- iv. the populations with whom the instrument has been tested and norms for its use,
- v. scoring methods,

- vi. specify reliability and validity of the instrument (using appropriate statistical terms)
- vii. you must cite the developers of the scale (primary reference for the scale itself, not where you found it).
- viii. full copy of the entire scale must be included within this section (must be embedded in the document NOT included as a separate file).

**f. Data Analysis (5 points)**

Describe one statistic that could be used to answer the research question posed. Using the PowerPoint presentations from class and any other useful sources, describe the appropriate statistical test that could be used to test your research question. Provide only a brief paragraph to describe the variables being used and a brief description of what the statistical test is and what it is supposed to test.

**V. Human Subjects/ Ethical Considerations (10 points)**

Describe the unique procedures that must be taken to protect your specific participants. Do not discuss the consent form or how you will get consent, but identify areas of potential harm to your population and specific measures that you would have to carry out to ameliorate them. What unique issues must be dealt with in working with the specific population of your study? Again, address the SPECIFIC human subjects' issues that are unique to the participants of your study, not just general human subjects' issues that should have been discussed in the Sampling section.

**VI. Limitations (5 points)**

Discuss the potential limitations of the study. May discuss issues of sampling, ethical challenges, political issues, but MUST address issues associated with internal and external validity.

**VII. Conclusion (5 points)**

Include a final conclusion section that summarizes the entire study and what next steps might be, implications for future research and suggestions for how findings might impact practice. This section is relatively short; approximately ONE paragraph to summarize and draw implications of what the contribution might be of your study to the field of social work. Don't pretend that you've completed the study. Suggest only what you think might be useful if this study was actually done and how it might help social workers.

**VIII. References & Overall presentation of the information (10 points)**

Organization, clarity of argument and statements, grammar and punctuation, proper APA formatting for references and in-text citations, professional language and presentation of information, and all areas described in sections above being addressed.

**IX. Appendix A: Division of Labor**

Summarize in a BRIEF paragraph the work each person in your dyad contributed to the paper. Make it clear what the role of each was in developing the ideas, searching literature and writing the paper.