

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

Course Number: SW 313

Instructor: C. Cubbin, Ph.D.

Unique Number: 61610

Email: ccubbin@austin.utexas.edu

Semester: Fall 2011

Phone: 232-8374

Meeting Time: M/W 9:30am-11:00am

Office: SWB 3.130M

Meeting Place: SWB Room 2.122

Office Hours: M/W 11:00am-12:00pm
Or by appointment

TA: Paula Yuma

TA Email: pjyuma@gmail.com

**SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH METHODS
(BSW Program Required Course)**

I. Standardized Course Description

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

II. Standardized Course Objectives

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

1. Describe the basic steps of scientific inquiry and how they parallel the basic steps of social work practice **(PB 21 and 22);**
2. Demonstrate an understanding of basic social work research skills pertinent to the profession of social work: 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 gays and lesbians; **(PB 41)**
6. Discuss the usefulness of social science theory and research methods in social work practice; **(PB 22)**
7. Explain ethical issues in conducting and using research and the role of the social work values base 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 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

PB 21 Use practice experiences to inform scientific inquiry

Objectives 1, 2

Assignment: exams, quizzes

PB 22 Use research evidence to inform practice

Objectives 1, 2, 3, 6

Assignment: exams, quizzes, research presentation assignment

EP2.1.10d Evaluation

PB41 Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions

Objectives 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8

Assignment: exams, quizzes, human subjects training assignment, research presentation assignment

III. Teaching Methods

The primary means of instruction are interactive lectures (i.e., students are encouraged to ask questions and make comments), in-class exercises, guest speakers who will discuss their research, quizzes and exams, and experiential assignments.

IV. Required Readings

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. *Essential research methods for social work*. Second Edition. Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole. Available at the University Coop.

2 copies of the text will be available to check out in the Learning Resource Center (LRC).

Assigned readings and other materials such as additional readings or homework assignments are expected to be completed before each class. Additional readings shall be posted on Blackboard or can be directly accessed on the UT Library Web site.

V. Course Requirements

Your grade for this course will be based on two examinations, quizzes, & 2 writing assignments. Students are strongly encouraged to attend all class meetings.

Exam #1	25%
Exam #2	25%
Quizzes (Given at the beginning of most class sessions)	20%
Human Subjects Training Assignment	10%
Research Presentation Assignment	10%
Class participation and attendance	10%

Course requirements and grade assignment (based on 100 points):

Exam #1: The first exam is worth 25% of your grade. This closed-book exam will consist of a combination of some or all of the following types of questions: multiple-choice, true/false, matching, and short answer. This exam will cover information from both assigned readings and in-class presentations/discussions up to this class day.

Exam #2: The second exam will be given on the last day of class and is worth 25% of your grade. This closed-book exam will consist of a combination of some or all of the following types of questions: multiple-choice, true/false, matching, and short answer. This exam will not be comprehensive, and will cover the material from the required class readings and in-class presentations/discussions after the midterm.

Quizzes: Completion of the required readings before class is essential to maximize student participation and learning. To encourage these readings, **a quiz will be given at the beginning of most class sessions.** Each quiz will have five questions and be worth 5 points. The overall percentage of correct answers across all but two quizzes will account for 20% of the course grade. The two lowest quizzes will be dropped from this calculation. Regardless of the reason for absences or tardiness, any quizzes that are missed will be included among the two dropped quizzes. If more than two quizzes are missed (regardless of the reason), those additional quizzes will be included (with a score of zero) in the overall calculation. Attendance for guest lectures will count toward a 5-point quiz.

Human Subjects Training Assignment: Social Sciences research usually deals with data containing human subjects. Due to the sensitivity issue, all human subjects research (including but not limited to recruitment) conducted at the university level must be approved by the school Institutional Review Board (IRB) before commencing. The major goals of the IRB are to minimize the risk to human subjects (beneficence); ensure all subjects consent and are fully informed about the research and any risks (autonomy); and promote equity in human subjects research (justice). Therefore, this course requires students to take the human subjects protection course (all four sections of the training) at www.utexas.edu/research/rsc/humansubjects/training/index.html Upon completion, hand in (1) the certificate, and (2) a typed, double-spaced 11-point font 500 word summary paper on major points discussed in the human subjects training. Your paper will be graded on the quality of writing (organization, clarity, grammar) and the quality of the ideas (expression of thought, depth of thought, analytic perspective) presented. This assignment is worth 10% of your grade.

Research Presentation Assignment: To complete this assignment, attend an on-campus **research** lecture, symposium, colloquium, or “brown bag” talk offered by the School of Social Work, Women’s Studies, African American Studies, Population Research Center, LBJ School of Public Affairs, psychology department, sociology department, or other academic department on campus. The lecture can be about any subject as long as the speaker presents original, empirical human subjects research s/he conducted and an academic department sponsors the presentation. The instructor will help you identify presentations to attend. Write a typed, double-spaced 11-point font 750 word description and analysis of the presentation. Include the subject matter, research questions or hypotheses, research methods, and conclusions the speaker presented, your critique of the work, and issues the audience raised. **Be sure to relate your discussion to the material that has been**

covered in class by directly referring to research concepts. For example, if you are discussing the presenter's hypothesis, you should consider discussing whether it meets the criteria for a good hypothesis. Or, if you are discussing sampling, identify the type of sampling used, the sample's representativeness, and other important qualities of the sample. You will not be able to cover everything about the presentation in 750 words, so after summarizing the basic idea of the presenter's research, focus on a few points. Your paper will be graded on the quality of writing (organization, clarity, grammar) and the quality of the ideas (expression of thought, depth of thought, analytic perspective) presented. When you submit your paper, include a copy of the announcement for the lecture on a separate sheet. This assignment is worth 10% of your grade.

Class participation and attendance will be worth 10% of your grade.

No extra credit assignments will be given. Final grades are not negotiable.

VI. Grading Criteria

GRADING SCALE

100 - 94 = A

93 - 90 = A-

89 - 87 = B+

86 - 84 = B

83 - 80 = B-

79 - 77 = C+

76 - 74 = C

73 - 70 = C-

69 - 67 = D+

66 - 64 = D

63 - 60 = D-

59 and below = F

VII. Class Policies

Attendance and Participation

Students are expected to attend all classes, be prepared for each session by reading the materials assigned for that date **before** coming to class, and participate in class discussions, exercises, etc. Learning is also facilitated by respectful communications among all parties.

Makeup Tests

Only in the case of illness or other **unforeseen** emergencies will make-up tests be given. Please notify the instructor of the situation as soon as it is reasonably possible. The format of makeup tests is at the discretion of the instructor and may be limited to essay questions.

Late Assignments

Barring documented emergencies, assignments are to be submitted on time. Three points per day (including weekends) will be deducted from the grade for each day the assignment is late, starting with assignments not turned in by the start of class at 9:30 a.m. Assignments turned in electronically will not be accepted except at the instructor's discretion.

Incompletes

Only in documented emergency situations will a grade of X (incomplete) be assigned for the course. If an incomplete grade should be assigned, there will be a written agreement with the instructor about when and how the work will be completed.

APA Style

The referencing style of the American Psychological Association (APA) is to be used for all written assignments. If you are not familiar with this style, a handout is available at the Student Services desk.

Blackboard

The Blackboard site available for this class will be used for e-mail, posting grades, posting readings, and other functions. Class e-mail rosters are a component of these sites. Students who do not want their names included in these electronic rosters must restrict their directory information in the Office of the Registrar, Main Building, Room 1. For information on restricting directory information see: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gi00-01/app/appc09.html>.

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 like 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.

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://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/>).

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.

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>.

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’re given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

I look forward to a productive term.

VIII. Course Schedule

Date	Topic(s)	Required Reading
Week 1 8/24/11 (W)	Introduction to the course/review syllabus	
Week 2 8/29/11 (M)	Why should social workers understand and use research? Philosophy and theory in science and research Evidence-based Practice (EBP)	Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 1, “Why Study Research?” Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 2, “Evidence-Based Practice”

8/31/11 (W)	Evidence-based Practice (EBP), continued	Gambrill E. (2010). Evidence-Informed Practice: Antidote to Propaganda in the Helping Professions? <i>Research on Social Work Practice</i> ; 20:302-320. (Available on Blackboard) Pignotti and Thyer (2009). Use of Novel Unsupported and Empirically Supported Therapies by Licensed Clinical Social Workers: An Exploratory Study. (Available on Blackboard)
Week 3 9/5/11 (M)	LABOR DAY – NO CLASS	
9/7/11 (W)	Research purposes	Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 3, “Factors Influencing the Research Process” Jenson, et al. (2008). Advances and Challenges in Developing Research Capacity in Social Work. (Available on Blackboard)
Week 4 9/12/11 (M)	Selecting a research topic and developing a research question	Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 4, “Reviewing Literature and Developing Research Questions” Pollack C, Chideya S, Cubbin C, et al (2007). Should health studies measure wealth: A systematic review. (Available on Blackboard)
9/14/11 (W)	Formulating a good hypothesis and defining variables of interest **Human Subjects Training Assignment Due	Rubin & Babbie Chapter 5, “Conceptualization in Quantitative and Qualitative Inquiry”
Week 5 9/19/11 (M)	Measurement error, reliability, validity	Rubin & Babbie Chapter 6, “Measurement in Quantitative and Qualitative Inquiry”
9/21/11 (W)	Instrument development and appraisal, interviewing	Rubin & Babbie Chapter 7, “Quantitative and Qualitative Measurement Instruments” Rubin, A., & Parrish, D. (2010). Development and validation of the EBP Process Assessment Scale: Preliminary Findings. (Available on Blackboard)
Week 6 9/26/11 (M)	Survey research	Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 8, “Surveys”
9/28/11 (W)	Probability sampling	Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 9, “Sampling: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches”

Week 7 10/3/11 (M)	Sampling methods	Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 9, continued, "Sampling: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches"
10/5/11 (W)	Review for midterm (Chapters 1-9)	Review all materials
Week 8 10/10/11 (M)	MIDTERM	
10/12/11 (W)	Causality, study design, internal and external validity	Rubin & Babbie Chapter 10, "Experiments and Quasi-Experiments" Project Choices article (Available on Blackboard)
Week 9 10/17/11 (M)	Single-case evaluation designs	Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 11, "Single-Case Evaluation Designs"
10/19/11 (W)	In Class Article Critiques: Single-case evaluation designs	Please read the following articles and come to class ready to share your critique on the following research studies that used single-case designs. (All are available on Blackboard) Taber, "Cognitive behavior modification treatment of an aggressive 11-year old boy" Wolfe, et al., "Intensive Behavioral Parent Training for a Child Abusive Mother" Ronen, T. & Rosenbaum, M. (2001). "Helping Children to Help Themselves: A Case Study of Enuresis and Nail Biting."
Week 10 10/24/11 (M)	Purpose, politics, pitfalls, planning	Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 12, "Program Evaluation" Hopson, L. M. & Holleran Steiker, L. K. (2008). Methodology for Evaluating an Adaptation of Evidence-based Drug Abuse Prevention in Alternative Schools. (Available on Blackboard)
10/26/11 (W)	Qualitative research methods	Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 13, "Additional Methods in Qualitative Inquiry"
Week 11 10/31/11 (M)	Guest lecture – Dr. Holly Bell, PhD Research Scientist, UT School of Social Work	Class attendance will count for a full 5-point quiz.
11/2/11 (W)	Data analysis	Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 14, "Analyzing Available Records: Quantitative and Qualitative Methods"
Week 12 11/7/11 (M)	Research ethics	Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 15, "Ethical Issues in Social Work Research"
11/9/11 (W)	Culturally competent research issues	Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 16, "Culturally Competent Research"

		Kleinman, A. (2004) Culture and depression. (Available on Blackboard)
Week 13 11/14/11 (M)	Quantitative Data Analysis	Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 17, "Quantitative Data Analysis"
11/16/11 (W)	Wrap up any unfinished business	
Week 14 11/21/11 (M)	<i>Guest lecture – Dr. Jane Maxwell, PhD Research Scientist, UT School of Social Work</i>	Class attendance will count for a full 5-point quiz.
11/23/11 (W)	<i>**Research Presentation Assignment Due</i> NO CLASS – HAPPY THANKSGIVING	
Week 15 11/28/11 (M)	Review for final exam (Chapters 10-17)	Review all materials
11/30/11 (W)	FINAL EXAM	