

The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work

SW Research Methods

Course Number:	SW 385R	Professor: TA:	Kirk von Sternberg, Ph.D. Jodi Berger Cardoso, M.A.
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Meeting Time: Place:	TH 5:30-8:30 SSW 2.118	Office Hours:	TH 3:30-5:30 and by appointment

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.

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: EBP Review paper; Research Proposal

PB22 Use research evidence to inform practice
 Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
 Assignment: EBP Review paper, Article Critique

EP2.1.10d: Evaluation.

PB41 Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions
 Objectives 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
 Assignment: Papers EBP Review paper, Article Critique, Research Proposal

I. Methods of Instruction

The methods of instruction will be informal lectures (questions and answers are encouraged), class discussions, class exercises, guest presentations, and student presentations.

II. Course Readings

Required Text: Rubin, A. & Babbie, E. (2007). *Research methods for social work* (7th edition), Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole-Thompson Learning.

Required Research Articles and Book Chapters. The professor will provide an on-line link to these readings or provide a hard copy in advance of the assigned reading.

III. Websites relevant to this course

<http://www.campbellcollaboration.org> (meta analysis of the effects of interventions in the social, behavioral, crime and justice, and educational arenas)

<http://www.cochrane.org> (meta analysis of the effects of health and mental health interventions)

http://www.psych.org/psych_pract/treatg/pg/prac_guide.cfm (practice guidelines for psychiatrists for psychiatric/mental/cognitive disorders)

<http://evidencebasedprograms.org>: Social programs that work

IV. Grading and Course Requirements

The final grade for the course will be based on:

1. Class Assignments / Quizzes	6 points
2. EBP Review Paper	15 points
3. Article Critiques/Presentation	15 points
4. Research Proposal	20 points
5. Proposal Presentation	10 points
6. Mid-term Test	30 points
7. UT Human Subjects Training	<u>4 points</u>
	100 points

Accumulated points and 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			

Course Requirements and Grade Assignment

1. Class assignments / quizzes (To assess PB 21, 22, and 41): Class assignments will be based on the assigned readings and will be given by the professor to facilitate the understanding of research methods. Short quizzes will be given at the professor's discretion to help inform the student and the professor about the level of understanding and the pace of the course. There will be 3 class assignments and/or quizzes of which each will be worth 3 points. The lowest grade will not be counted leaving **2 at 3 points each = 6 points**.
2. Two-person evidence-based practice review paper (To assess PB 21, 22, and 41): 10 pages for text only, double-spaced): For this paper, two students are required to team up to conduct a comprehensive literature review that will focus on the question **"What intervention, program, or policy has the best effects for a chosen problem?"** Refer to the guidelines in section VIII. 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 or two

describing the work each member did to produce the paper. In case the work load was questionably unbalanced, the instructor may assign a lower grade to the individual. On the paper due date, each group will have a 5-minute presentation of its work to the class. **(15 points)**

3. Article Critique/presentation (To assess PB 21, 22, and 41): The professor will assign a journal article that reports findings from an experimental or quasi-experimental study. The student will critique the article covering each of the points in the *Journal Critique Guidelines* (see Appendix). Each student will be assigned to a group. The students will present the article critique as a group on the day assigned in the class schedule. **(15 points)**

4. Research Proposal (To assess PB 21, 22, and 41):

- a. For this proposal, four students are required to team up to write a research proposal for an experimental or quasi-experimental study. The study can be designed to test a new social service method, an educational program, a health behavior prevention or intervention program, or evaluate a program to name a few.

The overall purpose of the research proposal is for students to practice writing a rigorous yet feasible, scientifically valid, and relevant research plan. Specific goals of this assignment are to:

- a) Familiarize the student with the research literature and theoretical frameworks on a topic of her/his choice;
- b) Allow the student to generate research questions and hypotheses, select a scientifically solid research design, and describe the methods of data collection and the strategy for analyses that optimally suit the chosen topic, setting, and population. The proposal should be written in the following format. NOTE that sections of the proposal will be due in class on specific days. We may review these sections as a class.

Proposal Format

Specific Aims	1 page
	List succinctly the specific objectives of the research proposed, e.g., to test a stated hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, challenge an existing paradigm or clinical practice, address a critical barrier to progress in the field, evaluate a program or develop new technology. (See format in attached “Research Proposal Outline”)
Background & Significance	1 page
	Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses. Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific

	<p>knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in one or more broad fields.</p> <p>Describe how the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field will be changed if the proposed aims are achieved.</p>
Methods	<p>2-3 pages</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overview of research design 2. Setting 3. Study participants, including the inclusion/exclusion criteria; sample size; recruitment procedures; sampling method 4. Randomization or other assignment method 5. Data collection methods and consent procedures 6. Measures 7. Data Analysis plan

NOTE: The proposal should be Arial 11 font, single spaced.

- b. Draft Proposal: A complete draft of your proposal will be due prior to the final submission. The draft should be in a near final state and will be worth the majority of the points assigned to the proposal. **(15 points)**
- c. Final Proposal: Based on the feedback that the student receives on the draft proposal, the student is required to revise and resubmit a revised proposal for a final grade. *Please submit the draft version with this submission.* **(5 points)**
- d. Proposal Presentation: The student will present the final proposal in class. Each member of the proposal group will take part in the presentation of the proposal to the class. The professor will grade the proposal and the presentation as a group, however, adjustments will be made on an individual basis based on contribution. **(10 points):**

NOTE: Since all the group members will receive the same points based on the grade of the group project, it is very important for all the group members to work together. In case any group member has not done his/her share of responsibilities, the other group members should send the professor a memo detailing the individual's lack of contribution. Upon receipt of such a memo, the instructor may assign a lower grade to the individual.

5. Mid-term Test (To assess PB 21, 22, and 41): There will be one written test in this course consisting of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions. This mid-term test will be an in class closed book test over all of the material covered up to that point. **(30 points)**
6. UT Human Subjects Training (To assess PB 22 and 41): Study the "policies and procedures governing research with human subjects" at the UT-IRB website and take the on-line training and certification course. Proof of certification is required to receive credit. **(4 points):**

V. Class Policies

***Remember that as a Ph.D. student, you are ultimately responsible for your own learning and development. The professor is there to support and facilitate your learning, but you need to take the initiative for your own education.

1. Students are expected to attend class sessions and participate in an **interactive** framework between students and professor. Students are expected to **complete the readings prior to class**, and should be well prepared to participate in discussions. Failure to regularly attend classes and demonstrate through discussions that one has comprehended the readings will be considered in assigning the final grade. Students are to notify the professor if they are going to be absent. Students are responsible for any material missed due to absences.
2. Except in the case of extreme emergencies, and then only with the permission of the professor, **late assignments will not be accepted without penalty.** Students are expected to email all required assignments the evening before the agreed upon due date to the professor. Assignments turned in after the 12:00A.M. deadline will be considered late. If accepted, late assignments will be assessed point penalties at the rate of **5% each day it is late.** If the due date is a problem, then the student should see the professor and negotiate another due date WELL in advance of the due date. Note that the professor will send a reply email when the paper is received; if you do not get a reply, contact the professor immediately. Email is great, but not ALWAYS reliable!
3. Student feedback is welcome. During this course the professor will ask students to provide feedback on their learning in informal as well as formal ways, including through anonymous surveys about how the professor's teaching strategies are helping or hindering student learning. It is very important for the professor to know the students' reactions to what is taking place in class, so students are encouraged to respond to these surveys, ensuring that together the professor and students can create an environment effective for teaching and learning.
4. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback during office hours, by phone, by e-mail, and by appointment if they desire.
5. If students are concerned about their class performance, the professor is more than willing to work with students to help them improve their course grades prior to the end of the semester. **Final grades assigned in the course are not negotiable.**

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.

Use of Blackboard in Class

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

VI. Class Schedule

Date	Description	Readings
Week 1 1/20/11	Introduction to Course: Why study research? Evidence-Based Practice	Required: Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 1 and 2

Week 2 1/27/11	Research Foundations: concepts and definitions; review of basic descriptive statistics <u>Assign Groups</u>	Required: Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 6 Rubin, A. (2007). Improving the teaching of evidence-based practice: introduction to the special issue. <i>Research on Social Work Practice</i> , 17, 541-547
Week 3 2/03/11	Variables, and Operational Definitions; Types of Research; Cause and Effect; The Research Question, Hypotheses	Required: Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 7
Week 4 2/10/11	Human Subjects Training Due Measurement: Random and Systematic Error Reliability and True Score Theory Validity	Required: Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 8 Floyd, L., Sobell, M., Velasquez, M.M., Nettleman, M., Sobell, L., Dolan Mullen, P., von Sternberg, K., Skarpness, B & Nagaranja, J., and the Project Choices Efficacy Study Group (2006). Preventing Alcohol Exposed Pregnancies: A randomized controlled trial. <i>American Journal of Preventive Medicine</i> , 32(1), 1-10.
Week 5 2/17/11	EBP Paper Due <u>Research Designs:</u> Causal Inference Threats to Internal Validity	Required: Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 10 The Project CHOICES Research Group. (2002). Alcohol-exposed pregnancy: Characteristics associated with risk. <i>American Journal of Preventive Medicine</i> , 23(3), 166-173.
Week 6 2/24/11	Proposal Specific Aims Due <u>Research Designs Continued</u> Quasi-Experimental Designs Single-case Evaluation Designs Other Study Designs	Required: Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 11 The Project Choices Intervention Research Group (2003). Alcohol-exposed pregnancies: a study of motivational counseling in community settings. <i>Pediatrics</i> , 111(5), 1131-1141.
Week 7 3/03/11	Proposal Background and Significance Due Guest speaker: A survey design study and introduction to sampling	Required Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 14 and 15
Week 8 3/10/11	Article Critique Due Program Evaluation Quantitative Data Analysis <i>Presentation of Article Critique</i>	Required Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 12 and 20
Week 9 3/17/11	Spring Break	
Week 10 3/24/11	Proposal Methods Due Mid-term Review	Review Chapters and Bring Questions to Class
Week 11 3/31/11	Mid Term	

Week 12 4/07/11	Complete Proposal Draft Due Quantitative Data Analysis <i>Critical appraisal of experimental designs</i>	Required Rubin & Babbie, 21 and 22 Assigned articles
Week 13 4/14/11	Qualitative Research Methods Qualitative Data Analysis <i>Critical appraisal of quasi-experimental designs</i>	Required Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 17 and 18 Assigned articles
Week 14 4/21/11	Research Ethics Cultural Competence	Required Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 4 and 5
Week 15 4/28/11	Presentation of proposal	
Week 16 5/05/11	Final Proposal Due Presentation of proposal	

VII. Course and Instructor Evaluations

At the end of the course, I will use the standard Course Instructor Survey (CIS) provided by the University of Texas at Austin. The CIS offers students a systematic, campus-wide method of evaluating courses and instructors. It also allows instructors to compare their course ratings with averages for their school. The results are also used by the Dean and the School's Executive Committee as one of the aspects of faculty and course evaluation. I hope that every student will complete the CIS. Although important, these evaluations are after the fact. I strongly encourage you to provide input and feedback regarding the course during the semester so that we can together make this course of maximum benefit to your academic pursuit.

VIII. Description of Assignments and Suggested Formats:

a) Guidelines for a Dyadic Evidence-Based Practice Review Paper (10 pages for text, double-spaced; please use section headings in your paper):

The purpose of this paper is to provide students with opportunities to conduct a comprehensive review of literature to identify **the intervention, program, or policy that has the best effects for a chosen problem.**

Title Page: Descriptive title, group members' names, date, and a very brief (one paragraph) synopsis.

Introduction/ Overview of the target problem (1 page; 2 points): Briefly state the purpose of the paper and then provide an overview of the target problem (of a real client or a fictional client or a group of clientele that you make up or a real or made up macro situation) related to social work practice to which the rest of your EBP paper will apply. (Since all of you are or will be in your practicum sites, it would be beneficial for you to choose a problem of the clientele that you are working with or expected to work with as an intern. Please use some statistics regarding the prevalence of the problem.) A brief review of relevant literature related to the problem focusing on its etiology and effects is also necessary. 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, end-of life issues, 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. 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.

Description of the intervention, program, or policy that you have identified as having the best effects (1.5 pages; 3 points): In this section, you need to describe the identified evidence-based intervention for the described clinical or macro level target problem. For example, if you identified motivational interviewing (MI) as having the best scientific evidence for heavy/binge drinking among young adults, describe the theory base of MI and other background related to MI development, principles, components, and processes/steps of MI, and other relevant information on MI (e.g., range of problems and subjects for which MI has been applied). Please remember that the intervention that you selected should have emerged from a review of recently published outcome studies that tested the intervention and systematic reviews (if any) of its effectiveness.

Search methods and criteria (1 page; 2 points): (a) Describe the search strategies that you used to identify possible studies—article data bases, internet search engines, websites, and search terms used. (b) Describe the criteria that you used to select the studies to be included in your paper examining the best scientific evidence supporting its effectiveness for the practice problem in question. These criteria should reflect appropriate implementation of all Steps of the Evidence-Based Practice process (as described in class and in the required/recommended texts on evidence-based practice). Information discussed in the text and in class will show what is meant by the “best” evidence that fits a particular client, problem, or situation.

Results (5 pages; 10 points): (a) Explain why the chosen intervention had the best evidence, and why that evidence was superior to other possible answers that you found in your search (including why the chosen intervention would be feasible to implement and a good fit in light of the characteristics of the client or situation you have described). To discuss the superiority of the chosen intervention, you obviously need to briefly describe other interventions that have been proposed or tested for the selected problem and why they had less or worse evidence than the selected intervention. (b) Provide a systematic summary of the results of the outcome studies that tested the effectiveness of the identified intervention. (Please note that this section is NOT a summary of each outcome study of the identified intervention that you have reviewed, but it should be a synthesis of the studies’ findings.) (c) Discuss the major methodological strengths and/or weaknesses of the key studies you reviewed. 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.

Intervention plan (1.5-2 pages; 3 points): So, given the scientific evidence of effectiveness of the identified intervention, how would you apply/adopt the intervention for your target problem? Explain/justify your intervention plan based on the evidence you have found in your review.

Important – Do **Not** just select an intervention plan in advance and then restrict your literature review exclusively to that intervention. Instead, review recent outcome studies on whatever interventions have been tested for your selected problem, and then select and describe the chosen intervention based on that review.

References:

There is no specific minimum number of studies that you need to review; however, because this is a team project, your literature search should be thorough.

b) RESEARCH PROPOSAL OUTLINE

III. Specific Aims (1 page)

Provide a clear overview statement of the problem you are proposing to study, the specific research question, the purpose or aims of the research and the significance of the study to social work.

- a. State the problem to be studied;
- b. Describe what population will be involved in this study;
- c. State the purpose of the study? What do you hope to find out?
- d. Provide a concise statement of the research question.
- e. Explain rationale for why this is an important issue to study;
- f. State the type of study you are proposing;
- g. Provide concise statement of the aims.

II. Background and Significance (1 page)

A literature review is a description of relevant research on your topic. It 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. When citing literature on your topic, group your references together when they point to a common issue you are discussing. Point out conflicts in the literature. Use the results of the studies you are citing to support the reason your study is necessary.

The significance of your study should include the proposed rationale, current state of knowledge and potential contributions and significance of your research to the field. Critically evaluate existing knowledge, and specifically identify the gaps that the project is intended to fill. Explain why the literature about your research leads you to think this topic needs study. Make sure the significance of the topic is explicitly stated. State how scientific knowledge or clinical practice will be advanced if the aims of the application are achieved. Describe the effect of these studies on the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services or preventative interventions that drive this field.

- a. Perform a review of peer-reviewed articles and book chapters for your literature review.
- b. Use current literature and you must go beyond on-line journals.
- c. Only include literature that is relevant to your research question.
- d. Synthesize the literature as it relates to issues or subtopics in your proposed project.
- e. Group your references together when they point to a common issue you are discussing.
- f. Point out conflicts in the literature.
- g. Use the results of the studies you are citing to support the reason your study is necessary.

III Methods (2-3 pages)

Use this section to describe how you plan to carry out the research. Develop and describe the study design you outlined in your Specific Aims. The methodology for the study you design should contain a high degree of internal 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".

Sub-Headings:

Research Design

Identify and describe the specific research design

Setting

Describe the setting and how it will provide the sample population of interest

Sample

Describe the sampling procedure, how the recruitment and selection process will occur, and consent process

- a. Identify the subject pool
- b. State your inclusion and exclusion criteria
- c. Provide projected number of recruited subjects (n=).
- d. Provide power analysis using G Power 3 <http://www.psych.uni-duesseldorf.de/abteilungen/aap/gpower3/download-and-register>

Procedures

In this section you will describe the process of implementing your study. What, exactly, will you DO? (Be extremely specific!)

Recruitment

- a. What will your recruitment procedures look like
- b. Describe your consent process

Intervention

Describe the intervention or program being studied. Describe the control or comparison condition that will be used. What will or do subjects in this condition receive?

Measurement

- a. Identify your dependent variable(s)
 - name of the variable
 - describe how you are operationally defining it
 - identify specifically how it is measured (question, scale, standardized measure, etc.)
 - identify the level of measurement (dichotomous, categorical, continuous)
- b. Identify your independent variable(s)
 - name of the variable
 - describe how you are operationally defining it
 - identify specifically how it is measured (question, scale, standardized measure, etc.)
 - describe level of measurement (dichotomous, categorical, continuous)

Analyses

Describe the analytic procedure that you will use for your primary outcomes and any secondary outcomes.

Limitations

- b. Discuss the potential limitations of the study (sampling, ethical, political issues)
- c. You MUST discuss issues of internal and external validity.

III. References

Provide references using APA Fifth edition format

c) JOURNAL CRITIQUE GUIDELINES

This assignment is to be 4 pages double spaced

NOTE: For sections II – V: *describe each subheading as reported by the authors, not your critique*

Critique must address the following, in this order, and following these subheadings:

I. Citation of article you are critiquing – full citation in APA format.

II. Rationale & Purpose

- a. What is the rationale for the study?
- b. What in the literature has created an interest in the subject? Is there a gap, or a need?
- c. What is the stated or implied research question(s) and/or hypotheses?
- d. What do the researchers intend to accomplish?
- e. Is the study important to social work? Explain.

III. Method and General Procedures

- a. Design: name the type of design
- b. Sample: name type, number (n=?), recruitment and selection criteria
- c. Procedures: describe what the participants were required to do
- d. Dependent variable(s): describe how operationalized/measured
- e. Independent variables(s): describe how operationalized/measured

IV. Results

- a. Findings: what were the core/overall results? What were the significant relationships between/among variables?
- b. Name at least one statistical test used

V. Conclusions

Briefly describe the authors' conclusions

NOTE: *This section is YOUR CRITIQUE of the study*

V. Critical analysis / Discussion

- a. Assess the merits of the justification for the study.
- b. Assess the quality and relevance of the theoretical framework and the literature review.
- c. Describe implications of the study.
- d. Assess the strengths and limitations of the study with respect to its research design; sampling procedures, size of the sample, measures, reliability and validity of the measurement; data collection methods, method of analysis, and implications.
- e. Assess the internal validity of the study by addressing each of the threats to validity. How much faith can we put in the findings?
- f. Describe what you see as strengths of this study
- g. Describe what you see as limitations of the study
- h. Offer at least two suggestions for methodological changes that could have been done to make this study more scientifically sound
- i. Is there valid knowledge to be gained from this study?