

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
STEVE HICKS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Course Number: SW 313

Unique Number: 61010

Semester: Spring 2021

Class time: M/W 9:30 - 11:00 AM

Teaching Mode: Online, individual consultations available through Zoom

Instructor: Weiwen Zeng, MSSc

Pronouns: he/him/his

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Office Hours: M/W 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM
other times by appointment

SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH METHODS

Course Number: SW313

I. STANDARDIZED COURSE DESCRIPTION

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

Course credit or concurrent registration for SW318 or any approved SW318 substitution is a prerequisite for this course.

II. STANDARDIZED COURSE OBJECTIVES

The goal of the course is to help students develop a basic understanding of the research process.

Upon completion of this course students should be able to:

1. Describe the fundamental steps of scientific inquiry and how they parallel the basic steps of social work practice.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the following basic social work research skills pertinent to the profession: a) formulation of research problems; b) formulation of research questions and hypotheses; c) use of various research methods (e.g., survey research, single subject design, experimental and quasi-experimental designs, field research, and use of secondary data); d) collection and analysis of research data; and e) interpretation of research results.
3. Critically analyze research findings and be effective consumers of, and contributors to, social work research.
4. Illustrate how gender bias or insensitivity to diverse populations can impede effective research and inference.
5. Identify research methods, sampling designs, and measurement techniques which are sensitive to diverse groups, including women, people of color, persons with disabilities, and members of the LGBT community.
6. Discuss the usefulness of social science theory and research methods in social work practice.

7. Explain ethical issues in conducting and using research, as well as the role of the social work values in research and evaluation.
8. Determine feasibility, practicability, and generalizability of research findings.

EPAS Competencies

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

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

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

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

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

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

III. TEACHING METHODS

The primary methods of instruction will be interactive lectures delivered synchronously via Zoom (a few lectures may be asynchronous) with virtual discussions, group/class exercises, and reading assignments. Students are encouraged to meet individually with the instructor to review progress in the course and to ask questions regarding the course content. The instructor is available to meet by appointment and is responsive to emails. Please note that the instructor may communicate frequently about the course via emails or Canvas announcements. You will need to have access to a computer with reliable internet connection to complete this course. To help safeguard the health and safety of yourselves and people around you, please make sure appropriate precautions (social distancing, cleaning your hands, wearing PPE, etc.) are in place when you are indoor or have in-person meetings on the campus.

You are expected to complete assigned readings prior to each class period. You are expected to participate in class. Class attendance is required for successful completion of this course. This course will use an electronic Canvas site. Canvas will be used for turning in assignments, grading, and communication between students, the instructor, and the TA. To reach your class site on Canvas, please go to <http://canvas.utexas.edu> or go to the Social Work web page and click on Canvas. To access the course website, you must have an Internet connection and computer access. You will need a UT EID and password. The Help Desk available through the UT home page (www.utexas.edu/its/help) can assist you with your computer and Canvas questions. Additionally, the Learning Resource Center at the SSW has computers and computer assistance.

IV. REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

Required Text:

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (2014). *Research methods for social work* (8th edition). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Additional Books, Book Chapters and Readings:

American Psychological Association (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Washington, DC.

Electronic copies of additional materials will be posted to Canvas during the semester. Students are responsible for checking the Canvas course site regularly for these.

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)

<https://guides.lib.utexas.edu/sw313> (UT library webpage for this course)

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

<https://www.samhsa.gov/nrepp> (Evidence-based programs and practices)

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/> (Health-related data sources)

V. GRADING AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Requirements	Points
UT Human Subjects Training	5
Mid-term Exam	20
Final Exam	20
EBP Review Paper	15
Research Proposal	20
Final Presentation	5
Class Attendance and Participation	15
Total	100

Description of Each Component

Human Subjects Training Assignment (5 points)

Social Sciences research usually deals with data containing human subjects. All human subjects research conducted at the university level must be approved or considered to be exempt by the 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 (CITI) at <https://research.utexas.edu/ors/human-subjects/training/instructions-for-registering-for-human-subjects-research-training>. You will select the Human Subjects/IRB training and then the Social/Behavioral Researchers course. Upon completion, submit your certificate to Canvas to receive credit.

Due 2/10/2021

Mid-term and Final In Class Exams (20 points each, 40 points in total)

Two multiple-choice/true-false/short answer exams will cover all materials assigned and/or discussed in class this semester. 20 points each, closed book.

Mid-term 3/22/2021

Final 4/28/2021

Group Evidence-Based Practice Review Paper (15 points)

For this paper, 3-4 students will team up as a group 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 XI* below. Since all group members will receive the same points based on the grade of the paper, it is very important for them to work together. Each member of the group will be asked to complete a form provided by the professor that will assess each member’s contribution to the paper. In the case where the workload was unquestionably unbalanced, the instructor may assign a lower grade to an individual. Page limits: 6-8 pages of text, double-spaced.

Due 4/7/2021

Research Proposal (20 points)

Based on your EBP Review Paper, each group of students then submits a 12-15 pages paper (excluding title page, references, and appendices) of your Research Proposal. The research Proposal is designed to help you deepen your understanding of the key research concepts covered in the course through practice and application.

- Formulate an answerable research question that will contribute to an evidence based social work practice;
- Literature review (in peer-reviewed journals) of the chosen problem and critical appraisal of the efficacy and effectiveness of the evidence-based practice/service/intervention;
- Research design (pre-experimental, quasi-experimental or experimental design; description of the procedures of implementing evidence-based practice/service/intervention; sample inclusion/exclusion criteria, planned methods of subject identification, screening, recruitment, and retention; fidelity monitoring method;
- Design and methods of data collection;
- Anticipated findings and their implication for social work practice, programs, and/or policies;
- Anticipated limitations of the study with respect to its research; and
- Identify gaps in the literature and suggest areas for additional research.

Due 5/5/2021

Research Proposal Presentation (5 points)

Give a 10 minutes presentation (8-10 slides) of the highlights and key findings (as listed above) of the Research Proposal, followed by a 5 minutes peer Q&A session.

Due 5/3/2021 & 5/5/2021

Class Attendance and Participation (15 points)

Punctuality and timeliness are important for social work practitioners. Class attendance is expected. This will be determined on attendance in synchronous class meeting times and the quality of participation in class discussion and small group exercises. Establishing a pattern of late arrivals and early departures will negatively affect your grade. The instructor should be notified in advance of any planned absence and as soon as possible in the case of an unforeseen, serious emergency. Attendance will be taken using the Zoom participants list so I suggest you change your Zoom account name to your full name. Otherwise you need to inform me of your Zoom “nickname” so I can link it to you.

Note: With reasons, each student will be allowed to miss 1 class without penalty. After that 1/2 point will be taken off the attendance/participation score for each class missed. Students who miss 9 classes will automatically fail the class.

VI. GRADES

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

VII. CLASS POLICIES

1. Conduct and Civility: Social work students adhere to the Student Standards for Professional Conduct of the NASW Code of Ethics and assume responsibility for their conduct. Scholastic honesty and integrity are consistent with social work values. The instructor will comply with University guidelines regarding scholastic dishonesty, including plagiarism. Social work practitioners respect others; therefore, differences in values, opinions, and feelings of class members and guest speakers will be respected. Students will help create and support a learning environment that does not interfere with the learning of fellow students. When students voice an opinion with which you do not agree, feel free to voice opinions in a civil manner that can enhance the flow of ideas and dialog.

2. Readings and Preparatory Assignments: Students are expected to be active and participate in the learning process, and in an interactive framework between collegiate students and professor. Students are also expected to complete readings and preparatory assignments prior to class. Failure to demonstrate through discussions in class, online, and through assignments that one has comprehended the readings will be considered when assigning the final grade. Students are responsible for the material in the assigned readings whether or not the material is covered in class.

3. Professional Communication and Interactions: Refrain from private conversations during class or other disruptive behavior. Disrespect toward the professor, students, or others is unacceptable and will be handled directly and in the context it occurs. Disrespectful behavior includes overt acts, such as talking over others or making derogatory remarks based on another person's age, race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religious preference, and ability. Moreover, covert acts of disrespect such as sneers, and other facial expressions, excluding class members from classroom tasks, etc. are also unacceptable. Electronic Devices: All communication devices should be turned off or placed on silent mode and put away during class. Unless laptops are required for specific class sessions, students may not use laptops during class without prior permission from the professor. Grade is negatively impacted by student's failure to comply with this policy.

4. Class Attendance Policy: Punctuality and timeliness are important for social work practitioners. Class attendance is expected. Attendance is defined as students' attentive physical presence in class for the entire class. Establishing a pattern of late arrivals and early departures will negatively affect your grade. The instructor should be notified in advance of any planned absence and as soon as possible in the case of an unforeseen, serious emergency. *Each student will be allowed to miss 2 classes without penalty, after that 1 point will be taken off the attendance/participation score for each class missed. Students who miss 9 classes will fail the class.*

5. Assignments and Grades: Assignments should be turned in online via Canvas on the date they are due, barring serious, unforeseen medical illness or family emergencies. Late assignments will be considered when assigning the final grade.

6. Writing Style: The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association Seventh Edition (APA) is the style manual to be used by all students. The manual is available at the library or for purchase at the UT Co-op.

7. Use of Canvas: The professor uses Canvas Web-based course management/collective workspace. An orientation will be given the first day of class. If you do not have a personal computer with personal Internet access, there are computers available for your use at the SW Learning Resource Center (LRC), the Flawn Academic Center, campus and public libraries.

8. Course Modification: To ensure achievement for course objectives, the professor reserves the right to make modifications to any part of this syllabus related to schedule and assignment due dates. Should any modifications be made, students will be notified in class and modifications will be posted to Canvas. Students should check their email frequently. Note that some of the links to documents and videos on the Internet may change. Documents, new links or alternate options will be provided.

VIII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES

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

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

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND CIVILITY IN THE CLASSROOM. The professor expects students to act as professionals in class. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another's opinions. A course brings together a group of diverse individuals with various backgrounds. Students are influenced and shaped by such factors as race, 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. This atmosphere includes working intentionally to recognize and dismantle racism, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism in the classroom. Social Work also deals with complex and controversial issues. These issues may be challenging and uncomfortable, and it would be impossible to offer a substantive classroom experience that did not include potentially difficult conversations relating to challenging issues. In this environment, we will be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometimes we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. Nevertheless, the professor requires that students engage one another with civility, respect, and professionalism.

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

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

Social work students who use social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and other forms of electronic communication (e.g. blogs) must be mindful of how their communication may be perceived by clients, colleagues, faculty, and others. Social work students are expected to make every effort to minimize material which could be considered inappropriate for a professional social worker in training. Because of this, social work students are advised to manage security settings at their most private levels and avoid posting information/photos or using any language that could jeopardize their professional image.

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

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

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

SHARING OF COURSE MATERIALS IS PROHIBITED. No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class unless you have my explicit, written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. It is a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty. I am well aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure in the course.

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

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

CLASS RECORDINGS. Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.

USE OF E-MAIL FOR OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO STUDENTS. Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible for keeping the university informed about a change of e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of

which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

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

TITLE IX REPORTING. In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the University of Texas at Austin is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from discriminatory conduct on the basis of sex <https://titleix.utexas.edu/>. Faculty, field instructors, staff, and/or teaching assistants in their supervisory roles are mandated reporters of incidents of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, stalking, dating violence, or any other forms of sexual misconduct. Students who report such incidents will be informed of University resources. Incidents will be reported to the University's Title IX Coordinator. Further information, including student resources related to Title IX, may also be found at <https://titleix.utexas.edu/>.

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

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 have concerns about their behavioral health, or if they are concerned about the behavioral health of someone else, students may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns. This service is provided through a partnership between the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

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

1. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors in the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
2. If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
3. In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor's instructions.
4. 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.

COVID CAVEATS. To help keep everyone at UT and in our community safe, it is critical that students report COVID-19 symptoms and testing, regardless of test results, to University Health Services, and faculty and staff report to the HealthPoint Occupational Health Program (OHP) as soon as possible. Please see this link to understand what needs to be reported. In addition, to help understand what to do if a fellow student in the class (or the instructor or TA) tests positive for COVID, see this University Health Services link.

IX. COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change)

Week	Date	Topic	Readings/Assignment Due
1	Wednesday 1/20	Introductions, syllabus, and overview	Read syllabus before class
2	Monday 1/25	Why study research? Philosophy Objective and subjective	Read Chapter 1
	Wednesday 1/27	Evidence-based Practice	Read Chapter 2
3	Monday 2/1	Ethics Culturally competent research	Read Chapters 5-6
	Wednesday 2/3	Problem formulation	Read Chapter 7
4	Monday 2/8	Purposes of Research Research Topics Research Questions Literature Review	
	Wednesday 2/10	How to conduct literature review? The use of UT library Guest speaker: Elle Covington, Social Work Librarian	<i>Human Subjects Training due</i>
5	Monday 2/15	Operational definitions Mediation and Moderation The Hypotheses	Read Chapter 8
	Wednesday	Measurement	Read Chapter 10

	2/17	Random and Systematic Error Reliability and True Score Validity	
6	Monday 2/22	Correlation Cause and Effect	Read Chapter 11
	Wednesday 2/24	Cause and Effect (continued) Threats to Internal Validity	
7	Monday 3/1	Discuss EBP Review paper Meeting with each group individually	<i>Submit 1-page Problem Statement that includes an overview of your target problem(s), literature search methods, and inclusion and exclusion criteria before class</i>
	Wednesday 3/3	Research Designs	
8	Monday 3/8	Research Designs Continued: Quasi-Experimental Designs	Read Chapter 12
	Wednesday 3/10	Single-case Evaluation Designs Other Study Designs	Read Chapter 13
9	Monday 3/15	SPRING BREAK **NO CLASS**	
	Wednesday 3/17	SPRING BREAK **NO CLASS**	
10	Monday 3/22	Mid-term review	
	Wednesday 3/24	In Class Mid-term Exam	
11	Monday 3/29	Sampling Survey Research	Read Chapters 15-16
	Wednesday 3/31	Qualitative Methods Guest speaker: TBD	Read Chapters 18-19
12	Monday 4/5	In Class Qualitative Study	Read Chapter 20
	Wednesday	Mixed methods research	Read part of Chapter 4

	4/7	Guest speaker: TBD	<i>EBP Review Paper due</i>
13	Monday 4/12	Hypothesis testing Data Analyses	Read Chapters 21 & 22
	Wednesday 4/14	Program Evaluation	Read Chapter 14 & 17
14	Monday 4/19	Discuss Research proposal Meeting with each group individually	<i>Submit 1-page of Specific Aims and significance before class</i>
	Wednesday 4/21	Writing Research Proposals and Reports	Read Chapter 23
15	Monday 4/26	Final review	
	Wednesday 4/28	In Class Final Exam	
16	Monday 5/3	Final Presentation	
	Wednesday 5/5	Final Presentation	<i>5/5 Research Proposal Due</i>

X. COURSE AND INSTRUCTOR EVALUATIONS

At the end of the course, I will use the standard electronic Course Instructor Survey (eCIS) provided by the University of Texas at Austin. The eCIS 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 eCIS. 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.

XI. DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS AND SUGGESTED FORMATS:

A) Guidelines for the Evidence-Based Practice Review Paper (6-8 pages of 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 evidence-based practice/service/intervention that has the best effects for a chosen problem.**

Title Page (1 point): 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. 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, persons with disabilities, 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.

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/service/intervention process (as described in class and in the required/recommended texts on evidence-based practice/service/intervention). 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.

Description of the *evidence-based practice/service/intervention* that you have identified as having the best effects (1-2 pages; 2 points): *NOTE: – The evidence-based practice/service/intervention may be micro or macro.* In this section, you need to describe the identified evidence-based practice/service/intervention for the described clinical or macro level target problem. For example, if you identified parent training as having the best scientific evidence for child maltreatment, describe the theory base of parent training and other background related to theory development, principles, components, and processes/steps of parent training, and other relevant information (e.g., range of problems and subjects for which parent training 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.

Results (3-4 pages; 7 points): (a) Explain why the chosen practice/service/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 practice/service/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 practice/service/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 one. (b) Provide a systematic summary of the results of the outcome studies that tested the effectiveness of the identified practice/service/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.

NOTE: – **DON'T** just select a practice/service/intervention in advance and then restrict your literature review exclusively to that practice/service/intervention. Instead, review recent outcome studies on whatever practice/service/intervention have been tested for your selected problem, and then select and describe the chosen one based on that review.

References (1 point): You should include a references section that aligns with APA (7th ed.) citation format. 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) Guidelines for the Research Proposal (12-15 pages of text, double-spaced). Please use section headings in your paper:

*Submit a 12-15 page paper (excluding title page, references, and appendices) of your Research Proposal. The Research Proposal is designed to help you **deepen your understanding of the key research concepts covered in the course through practice and application. Include your EBP Review Paper in the Research Proposal. Additionally, add these sections:***

Based on your EBP review, provide a clear overview statement of the problems 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.

Specific Aims (1-2 pages, 4 points)

- 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.

Background and Significance (1-2 pages, 4 points)

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 EBP review 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. Use your EBP review project to synthesize the literature as it relates to issues or subtopics in your proposed project.
- b. Group your references together when they point to a common issue you are discussing.
- c. Point out conflicts in the literature.
- d. Use the results of your EBP review to support the reason your study is necessary.

Methods and Design (3-4 pages, 10 points)

- a. Describe your research design (pre-experimental, quasi-experimental or experimental design; description of the procedures of implementing evidence-based practice/service/intervention; sample inclusion/exclusion criteria, planned methods of subject identification, screening, recruitment, and retention; fidelity monitoring methods.
- b. Methods of data collection.
- c. Anticipated findings and their implication for social work practice, programs, and/or policies.
- d. Anticipated limitations of the study with respect to its research; and
- e. Identify gaps in the literature and suggest areas for additional research.

References (2 points): You should include a references section that aligns with APA (7th ed.) citation format. I anticipate that you will have questions regarding the APA style. I will provide feedback on your references. Please also consult a librarian or use online resources to help you format the references section.

XII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (2014). *Research methods for social work* (8th edition). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

American Psychological Association (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Washington, DC.