

**The University of Texas at Austin
Steve Hicks School of Social Work**

Course Number: SW 385R	Professor: Kirk von Sternberg, Ph.D.
Unique Number: 61250	Email: vonsternberg@mail.utexas.edu
Semester: Spring 2021	Office: JHH 1.228
Meeting Time: Wednesday 5:30-8:30pm	Phone: Cell: (512) 779-3313
Meeting Place: On-Line	Office Hours: W: 3:30-5:30pm or by appt

Social Work Research Methods

- I. Standardized Course Description:** This Foundation course is designed to help students gain an understanding of and appreciation for the use of research as a tool for professional evidence-based practice. Students are introduced to the concepts and skills underlying a systematic approach to social work research, including: basic research terminology; the scientific method in social work; the value of research in social work; research ethics and the social work value base; problem formulation and conceptualization; measurement; research designs to evaluate programs and practice; sampling; alternative quantitative and qualitative data gathering; analytic techniques; and preparation and use of research reports. The emphasis in the course is on equipping students with the research knowledge and skills they'll need to engage in the evidence-based practice process at all levels of social work practice. As part of that process, they will learn how to critically appraise sources of scientific evidence and how the criteria for that appraisal will vary depending upon the purpose of the research.
- II. Standardized Course Objectives:** Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. Formulate answerable evidence-based practice research questions;
 2. Efficiently conduct advanced searches of electronic bibliographic databases and other sources to find evidence bearing on evidence-based practice research questions;
 3. Critically appraise sources of scientific evidence and explain how the criteria for that appraisal will vary depending upon the purpose of the research;
 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;
 5. Design evaluations as part of evidence-based practice.
 6. Explain how both qualitative and quantitative research processes apply in evidence-based practice;
 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;
 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.

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.
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;
11. Describe how particular values and sensitivity to ethical issues influence the conduction of research;
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;
13. Critically appraise how social work commitment to equity and social justice influences and differentiates the social work research process.

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. 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.

IV. Course Readings

Required Text: Rubin, A. & Babbie, E. (2007). *Research methods for social work* (7th or 8th 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.

V. 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.samhsa.gov/nrepp> (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration national registry of evidence-based practices and programs)

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

VI. Grading Scale and Course Requirements

GRADING SCALE

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

The final grade for the course will be based on:

1. Reading Quizzes	10 points
2. EBP Review Paper	20 points
3. Research Proposal	25 points
4. Proposal Presentation	10 points
5. Mid-term Test	30 points
6. UT Human Subjects Training	3 points
7. Class Participation	<u>2 points</u>
	100 points

Course Requirements and Grade Assignment

1. Reading quizzes (To assess Competency 4.1, 4.2, 4.3): Short reading quizzes will be given via Canvas for most assigned chapter readings to help inform the professor about the reading and comprehension of the student. The quizzes will

also help the professor determine the appropriate pace for the course. Reading quizzes will be made available on Wednesdays immediately after class and can be submitted any time before 5:30pm on the following Tuesdays (i.e. the day prior to class in which that chapter will be covered). These quizzes will contain 10 questions that address the core concepts of the assigned chapter reading, and while it is allowed and encouraged to use the textbook during the quiz, students must *read* the chapter *prior* to beginning the quiz. Each quiz will have a 15-minute time limit, so even with the book open, students will not do well on the quiz if they have not already read the chapter. There will be 6 quizzes of which each will be worth 2 points. We will drop the lowest grade quiz so you will be graded on 5 quizzes at 2 points each for a total of **10 points**.

2. Group evidence-based practice review paper (To assess Competency 4.1, 4.2, 4.3): 7-10 pages of text, double-spaced): For this paper, a group of 4 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.A. 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 work load was unquestionably unbalanced, the instructor may assign a lower grade to an individual. **(20 points)**
3. Research Proposal (To assess Competency 4.1, 4.2, 4.3):
 - a. For this proposal, four students will team up to write a research proposal for a study to answer a student generated research question. The study must be approved by the instructor. 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 possibilities.

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 the student’s 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 (See format in attached VIIB, “Research Proposal Outline”)

Specific Aims	<p style="text-align: center;">1 page</p> <p>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.</p>
Background & Significance	<p style="text-align: center;">1 page</p> <p>Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses.</p> <p>Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific 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 style="text-align: center;">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. **(20 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 or on poster to invited faculty and students. Each member of the proposal group will take part in the presentation of the proposal. The professor will grade the proposal and the presentation as a group, however, adjustments may 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 instructor will address the issue with the student and may assign a lower grade for that individual.

4. Mid-term Test (To assess Competency 4.1, 4.2, 4.3): 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)**
5. UT Human Subjects Training (To assess Competency 4.1, 4.2, 4.3): 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. **(3 points)**:

VII. Class Policies

***Remember that as an MSSW 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 read the assigned readings will be considered in your 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 10:00 P.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.**
6. In this class the professor uses Canvas—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://canvas.utexas.edu/> —to distribute course materials, to post grades, to submit assignments, and to give students online quizzes and surveys. Students can find support in using Canvas at the ITS Help Desk by calling 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Please plan accordingly.

VIII. University Policies

COVID-19 RELATED INFORMATION. The University's policies and practices related to the pandemic may be accessed at: <https://protect.utexas.edu/>

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: <https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/academicintegrity.php>.

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.

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 <https://it.utexas.edu/policies/university-electronic-mail-student-notification-policy>.

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 <https://safety.utexas.edu/behavior-concerns-advice-line>.

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

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors in the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor's instructions.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you are given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

IX. Class Schedule

Date	Description	Assignments/Readings
Week 1 1/20/21	Introduction to Course: Why study research? Objective/Subjective Evidence-Based Practice	Required Reading: Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 1 and 2 Quiz 1
Week 2 1/27/21	Quiz 1 Due Research Foundations: concepts and definitions; review of basic descriptive statistics <u>Assign Groups</u>	Required Reading: 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 Assignment: <i>EBP paper</i> <i>Human Subjects Training</i> <u>Quiz 2</u>
Week 3 2/03/21	Quiz 2 Due Variables, and Operational Definitions; Types of Research; Cause and Effect; The Research Question, Hypotheses	Required Reading: Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 7 and Ch. 8 The Project CHOICES Research Group. (2002). Alcohol-exposed pregnancy: Characteristics associated with risk. <i>American Journal of Preventive Medicine</i> , 23(3), 166-173. Assignment: <i>Complete Human Subjects Training</i> <u>Quiz 3</u>
Week 4 2/10/21	Quiz 3 Due <i>Human Subjects Training Due</i> Measurement: Random and Systematic Error Reliability and True Score Validity	Required Reading: Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 10 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. Assignment: <i>Proposal Specific Aims</i> <u>Quiz 4</u>

Week 5 2/17/21	Quiz 4 Due <u>Research Designs:</u> Causal Inference Threats to Internal Validity	Required Reading: Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 11 and Ch. 12 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. Assignment: <i>Quiz 5</i>
Week 6 2/24/21	Quiz 5 Due <i>Proposal Specific Aims Due</i> <u>Research Designs</u> <u>Continued:</u> Quasi-Experimental Designs Single-case Evaluation Designs Other Study Designs	Required Reading: Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 14 and 15 Assignment: <i>Proposal Background and Significance</i>
Week 7 3/03/21	Sampling Survey Design	Required Reading: Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 13 Assignment: Quiz 6
Week 8 3/10/21	Quiz 6 Due <i>Proposal Background and Significance Due</i> Program Evaluation Quantitative Data Analysis	Required Reading: Assignment: <i>Proposal Methods</i>
Week 9 3/17/21	Spring Break	
Week 10 3/24/21	<i>EBP Paper Due</i> Mid-term Review	Review Chapters and Bring Questions to Class
Week 11 3/31/21	Mid Term	

Week 12 4/07/21	Quantitative Data Analysis <i>Critical appraisal of experimental designs</i>	Required Reading: Rubin & Babbie, 21 and 22
Week 13 4/14/21	<i>Proposal Methods Due</i> Qualitative Research Methods Qualitative Data Analysis <i>Critical appraisal of quasi-experimental designs</i>	Required Reading: Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 17 and 18 Magana, S.M. (2000). Mental retardation research methods in Latino communities. <i>Mental Retardation</i> 38(4), 303-315.
Week 14 4/21/21	<i>Complete Proposal Draft Due</i> Research and Diverse populations	Required Reading: Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 4 and 5
Week 15 4/28/21	Presentation of proposal	
Week 16 5/05/21	<i>Final Proposal Due</i> Presentation of proposal	

Due Dates for Assignments:

Quiz 1	01/27/21
Quiz 2	02/03/21
Quiz 3	02/10/21
Human Subjects Training	02/10/21
Quiz 4	02/17/21
Quiz 5	02/24/21
Proposal Specific Aims	02/24/21
Quiz 6	03/10/21
Proposal Background and Significance	03/10/21
EBP Paper	03/17/21
Proposal Methods	04/14/21
Complete Proposal Draft	04/21/21
Proposal Presentation	04/28/21 – 05/05/21
Final Proposal	05/05/21

Note: the due dates for all assignments except the human subjects training are the day before class to be submitted via email by 10PM.

X. 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.

XI. Description of Assignments and Suggested Formats:

A) Guidelines for the Evidence-Based Practice Review Paper (7-10 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 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.

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.

Description of the *intervention, program, or policy* that you have identified as having the best effects (1-2 pages; 2 points): *NOTE: – The intervention, program, or policy may be micro or macro.* 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.

Results (3-4 pages; 7 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 (1-2 pages; 2 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.

NOTE: – 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

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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 scientific rigor. If your study is attempting to examine a cause and effect relationship, you will need to address threats to internal validity. 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/them
 - 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/them
 - 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.

4. Limitations

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

5. References

Provide references using APA Sixth edition format