

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

Course/Unique number: SW 313/61370

Semester: Fall 2021

Meeting Time: TTh 2:00pm-3:30pm

Meeting Place: SSW 2.132

Instructors: Monica Faulkner, Ph.D

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SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH METHODS

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

III. TEACHING METHODS

This class will be split into two cohorts. Each week, cohort A will attend class on Tuesday and cohort B will attend class on Thursday. Students will be expected to read and review course content for that week prior to their in-person class session. Course content will include text readings, supplemental readings, pre-recorded lectures, podcasts and/or videos. In-class activities will include group discussion, group activities and dedicated time to working through the research proposal assignment.

IV. REQUIRED TEXT AND MATERIALS

a. Books

Rubin, A. & Babbie, E.R. (2017). *Research Methods for Social Work* (9th ed.). Cengage.

b. Additional materials

Additional materials listed in the course schedule and bibliography are available on UT Canvas. Several multimedia resources have been selected to complement the textbook including podcasts, TedTalks and brief video presentations.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignment	Possible points
<u>NIH Human Subjects Certificate (15% of grade)</u>	15
Online training: https://utdirect.utexas.edu/citi/citi_login.WBX	
Course to be completed: Social/Behavioral Researchers - Basic Course, Required	

and Elective Modules. Students may submit an electronic copy (PDF or screen shot of the completion) of their course completion certificate on Canvas.

Quizzes (10 quizzes at 3 points each; 30% of grade) 30

Quizzes are used to provide the professor a sense of student comprehension of material. Students will complete 10 online quizzes by Sunday at 11:59pm each week. There are 11 quizzes available and the lowest score (or one missed quiz) can be dropped. Quizzes are open book and consist of ten randomly selected questions from a database of questions. Students may retake the quiz as many times as needed to achieve their desired grade before the due date on Sunday at 11:59pm.

Research Proposal (55% of grade)

Submit a 10-15 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.

- 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 (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.

Research Proposal Presentation:

Give a five-minute presentation (5-10 slides) of the highlights and key findings (as listed above) of the Research Proposal.

	Part 1 completion points	5
	Draft completion points	5
	Final draft	35
	Presentation	10
		100

VI. Grades

Grades are assigned based on the standard rubric listed below.

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. Class Attendance. Any class material missed due to a class absence is the students' sole responsibility.
2. Class participation. Students are expected to complete the readings prior to class, and should be well prepared to participate in discussions and experiential learning assignments. Failure to demonstrate through discussions that one has completed the readings will be considered in assigning the class participation grade.
3. General assignment requirements. Students should follow specific instructions for each assignment. In general, references/sources used in papers must be in APA 7th edition format and be academic/scholarly sources. If questions about the credibility of a reference arise, consult with the instructor. The instructor is also available by email to answer questions about assignments. Students should submit questions or requests for clarifications at least 24 hours before an assignment is due. If an assignment is due in less than 24 hours, the instructor cannot guarantee a timely response.
4. Assignment due dates. Students will be penalized for late assignments by subtracting 5% of the potential points for the assignment for each calendar day that an assignment is late. UT does not allow Incompletes (grade of X) to provide additional time to complete assignment. Students will be informed of any changes in assignments, due dates, and other class content. If an assignment is due on a date the student cannot attend class or during a time when a student is having difficulties printing a paper, papers may be emailed to the professor by the start of that day's class.
5. Use of technology in class. Students are encouraged to bring laptops to use in class. However, computers should only be used for taking notes or relevant in class activities. Any inappropriate use of computers for emailing or internet usage is not permitted. Professional conduct includes respectful and meaningful efforts to participate in group projects. Use of laptops, phones and similar electronic devices in class is prohibited except for use during approved times.

VIII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES

1. *COVID-19 related information*. The University's policies and practices related to the pandemic may be accessed at: <https://protect.utexas.edu/>
2. *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.
3. *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/>.
4. *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.
5. *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/>.
6. *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.

7. *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/>.
8. *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.
9. *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.

10. *Use of email 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>.
11. *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.
12. *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/>.
13. *Campus carry policy.* The University’s policy on campus carry may be found here: <https://campuscarry.utexas.edu>.
14. *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.
15. *Behavior concerns and COVID-19 advice line (BCCAL).* 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 and COVID-19 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>. The Behavior Concerns and COVID-19 Advice Line has been expanded to support The University of Texas at Austin community during the COVID-19 pandemic. By calling 512-232-5050 - Option 2 for COVID-19, students, faculty and staff can be assisted in English and Spanish with COVID-19 support.

16. 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. COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topic	Learning Objectives	Before class	Due
1	8/25 Thurs			• Syllabus	
2	8/31 Tues	Research in SW EBP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how research is part of social work practice • Describe the process of using evidence-based practice in social work 	<u>Read</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 1, Ch. 2 • (Faulkner & Parrish, 2018) <u>Listen/watch</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Podcast: (Singer, 2011) • Guest lecture • Lecture: research in SW • Lecture: EBP 	Quiz 1
	9/2 Thurs				
3	9/7 Tues	Research process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiate the purposes of qualitative and quantitative methods. • Describe the role of theory in social work research. • Formulate research questions using theory and existing research • Assess and organize existing research to 	<u>Read</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch.3, 4, 7 <u>Listen/watch</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest lecture • Lecture: qual v. quan • Lecture: problem to theory to research question • Lecture: Lit Review • Podcast: (Linder, 2016a) 	Quiz 2
	9/9 Thurs				

Week	Date	Topic	Learning Objectives	Before class	Due
			format a literature review		
4	9/14 Tues	Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate the importance of protecting human subjects 	<u>Read</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 5 • (Spettel & White, 2011) • (Brandon et al., 2005) <u>Listen/watch</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest lecture • Podcast: (Linder, 2019b) • Lecture: Ethics • Lecture: Lit Review 	Quiz 3 NIH training certificate due
	9/16 Thurs				
5	9/21 Tues	Cultural considerations of research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply Critical Race Theory to research processes and products 	<u>Read</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 6 • (Daftary, 2020) • (Cimpian, 2017) <u>Listen/watch</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest lecture • Lecture: CRT informed methods • Lecture: CRT informed results 	Quiz 4
	9/23 Thurs				
6	9/28 Tues	Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operationalize constructs • Identify validated measurements 	<u>Read</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 8,9,10 <u>Listen/watch</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest lecture • Podcast: (Singer, 2008) • Lecture: What is real? • Lecture: Identifying measures 	Quiz 5
	9/30 Thurs				
7	10/5 Tues	Research design: experimental & quasi-experimental designs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiate between experimental and quasi-experimental designs • Appraise research designs in terms of their threats to validity 	<u>Read</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 11, 12 <u>Listen</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Podcast: (Singer, 2013) 	Quiz 6 Paper- Part 1 due
	10/7 Thurs				
8	10/12 Tues	Research design: single		<u>Read</u>	Quiz 7

Week	Date	Topic	Learning Objectives	Before class	Due
	10/14 Thurs	case & program evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate plan for single subject design in practice • Understand the importance of evaluating programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 13, 14 <u>Listen/watch</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest lecture • Podcast: (Bakk, 2020) • Podcast:(Syms, 2019) • Lecture: Program eval 101 • Lecture: Logic models 	
9	10/19 Tues 10/21 Thurs	Data collection: sampling & surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct a sampling plan • Develop a survey 	<u>Read</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch.15, 16 <u>Listen</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest lecture • Podcast: (Linder, 2016b) • Lecture: Surveys • Lecture: Sampling 	Quiz 8
10	10/26 Tues 10/28 Thurs	Data collection: existing documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify four methods of using existing data to answer research questions 	<u>Read</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 17 <u>Listen</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest lecture • Podcast: (Linder, 2019a) • Video: (Edin, 2016) • Video: (Edin, 2015) 	Quiz 9
11	11/2 Tues 11/4 Thurs	Qualitative research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate plan for qualitative study • Understand qualitative data analysis 	<u>Read</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 18, 19, 20 • (Brown, n.d.) <u>Listen/watch</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TedTalk:(Brown, 2010) • Lecture: qualitative approaches • Lecture: conducting focus groups/interviews 	Quiz 10
12	11/9 Tues 11/11 Thurs	Quantitative analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret research findings • Translate research findings for practice and policy 	<u>Read</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 21, 22 • (Teater, 2017) <u>Listen/watch</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest lecture • TedTalk: (Goldacre, 2011) • Lecture: Translating research • Lecture: What to look for in stats 	Quiz 11 Paper draft due
13	11/16 Tues 11/18 Thurs	Paper consults- no in person class, sign up for time for virtual consult			

Week	Date	Topic	Learning Objectives	Before class	Due
14	11/23 Tues	No Class			
	11/25 Thurs				
15	11/30 Tues	Presentations			Final paper due
	12/2 Thurs				Presentation due

X. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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