

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

Course/Unique number: SW 313/61270
Semester: Fall 2022
Meeting Time: MW 11:00 am-12:30 pm
Meeting Place: SSW 1.214

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Office Hours: Virtual by appointment
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**SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH METHODS
Course Number: SW313**

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to help you gain an understanding of and appreciation for the use of research as a tool for evidence-based and culturally-grounded social work practice. You will be 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. You will also learn how research tools can be misused in ways that support structural inequities and misrepresent issues for people with marginalized identities, including racialized identities, ethnic origin, class, gender, gender identity and expression, culture, sexual orientation, religion, age, physical and mental disabilities, caste, immigration/refugee status, national origin of communities and tribal sovereign status.

The emphasis in the course is on equipping you with the research knowledge and skills you will need to engage in the evidence-based and culturally-grounded practice process in generalist social work practice. You will learn to critically analyze research findings and be an effective consumer of social work research. You will also learn how social work practice influences the research process and the identification of research problems and questions.

Prerequisite: Course credit or concurrent registration for SW 318, Social Work Statistics, or any approved SW 318 substitution.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course you should be able to:

1. Define the process and steps of social work research.
2. Understand the importance of research activities in social work practice and the importance of the partnership between social work researchers and practitioners.
3. Understand how the concepts and lenses of various practice theories including, but not limited to, ecological systems theory, strengths-based perspective, critical race theory,

anti-racism, and anti-oppressive theories with a focus on theories that center racialization using perspectives developed by Black, Indigenous and other scholars of color, can be applied to social work research.

4. Describe how particular values and sensitivity to ethical issues influence social work research.
5. Using a social justice lens, identify policies, behaviors, and beliefs that perpetuate racist and oppressive ideas and actions in research.
6. Demonstrate the following social work research skills:
 - a. Completion of a literature review;
 - b. Formulation of research problems;
 - c. Formulation of research questions and hypotheses;
 - d. Identification of gaps in knowledge;
 - e. Planned use of various research methods (e.g., survey research, single subject design, experimental and quasi-experimental designs, field research, and use of secondary data);
 - f. Planned collection and analysis of research data; and
 - g. Planned use of interpretation of research results.
7. Understand and compare quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research designs.
8. Critically analyze evidenced-based research and apply research findings to social work practice.
9. Critically appraise how social work commitment to equity and social, economic, and racial justice influences and differentiates the social work research process.
10. Explain ethical issues in conducting and using research, as well as the role of the social work values in research and evaluation.
11. Explain the ways in which inequities and assumptions (e.g., racialization, ethnic origin, class, gender, gender identity and expression, culture, sexual orientation, religion, age, physical and mental disabilities, caste, immigration/refugee status, national origin of communities and tribal sovereign status) influence research and the appraisal and use of research to guide practice and policy decisions.
12. Evaluate the ways in which social work practice and interventions influence decision making and trends in research.

III. TEACHING METHODS

Students will be expected to read and review course content prior to their in-person class session. Course content may 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
<p>(1) NIH Human Subjects Certificate (15% of grade) Online training: https://utdirect.utexas.edu/citi/citi_login.WBX</p> <p>Course to be completed: Social/Behavioral Researchers - Basic Course, Basic Required, and Elective Modules.</p> <p>Students may submit an electronic copy (PDF or screen shot of the completion) of their course completion certificate on Canvas under Assignments Section.</p>	15
<p>(2) Quizzes (5 quizzes at 4 points each; 20% of grade) Quizzes are used to provide the professor a sense of student comprehension of material. Students will complete 5 online quizzes by Sunday at 11:59pm the week before they are due. There are 6 quizzes available and the lowest score (or one missed quiz) can be dropped. Quizzes are open book and consist of ten 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.</p>	30
<p>(3) Research Proposal (55% of grade) Submit a 10-15 page paper (excluding title page, references, and appendices) of your Research Proposal.</p> <p>The research Proposal is designed to help you deepen your understanding of the key research concepts covered in the course through practice and application <u>and should include these sections:</u></p> <p>(i) Research questions (*Part 1)—Formulate an answerable research question that will contribute to an evidence based social work practice;</p> <p>(ii) Literature review—Complete a literature review (in peer-reviewed journals) of the chosen problem and critical appraisal of the</p>	

<p>efficacy and effectiveness of the evidence-based practice/service/intervention;</p> <p>(iii) Research design (quasi-experimental or experimental design)—describe the procedures of implementing evidence-based practice/service/intervention; the sample with inclusion/exclusion criteria, planned methods of subject identification, screening, recruitment, and retention; and fidelity monitoring method;</p> <p>(iv) Design and methods of data collection;</p> <p>(v) Anticipated findings and their implication for social work practice, programs, and/or policies;</p> <p>(vi) Anticipated limitations of the study with respect to its research; and</p> <p>(vii) Identify gaps in the literature and suggest areas for additional research.</p> <p>Research Proposal Presentation: Give a five-minute presentation (5-10 slides) of the highlights and key findings (as listed above) of the Research Proposal.</p>	<p>*Part 1 completion points: 5 Draft (bulleted) completion points: 5 Final draft: 35 <u>Presentation: 10</u> Total—55 points</p>
<p>Total Points</p>	<p>100</p>

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 <https://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/behaviorconcerns-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.

v

IX. COURSE SCHEDULE

Week Date Topic Learning Objectives Before class Due

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Week	Date	Topic	Learning Objectives	Do Before Class	Due
1(M)	Aug 22		Syllabus		N/A
1(W)	Aug 24	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 	Read Ch. 1, 2	N/A
2(M)	Aug 29	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. 	Read Ch. 3	N/A
2(W)	Aug 31	Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate the importance of protecting human 	Read Ch. 5	NIH Training Certificate (CITI)

			subjects		
3(M)	Sept 5	LABOR DAY HOLIDAY NO CLASS			
3(W)	Sept 7	Cultural Considerations of Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply Critical Race Theory to research processes and products 	Read Ch. 6	
4(M)	Sept 12	Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess and organize existing research to format a literature review 	Read Ch. 4	N/A
4(W)	Sept 14	Research Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate research questions using theory and existing research 	Read Ch. 7	N/A
5(M)	Sept 19	Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operationalize constructs • Identify validated measurements 	Read Ch. 8, 9, and 10	Quiz 1 Over Ch. 5 The Portrayal of J. Marion Sims
5(W)	Sept 21	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 	Read Ch. 11, 12 Read Ch. 13, 14	N/A
6(M)	Sept 26	Research Design Single Case and Program Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate plan for single subject design in practice • Understand the importance of evaluating programs 	Complete Research question checklist items for class discussion	Quiz 2 Complete Research question checklist items for class discussion
6(W)	Sept 28	How to write a research question Develop research question checklist Class critique of student research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the importance of asking the right question • Create research questions • Understand the importance of 	N/A	

		questions	asking the right question • Create research questions		
7(M)	Oct 3	Data collection: sampling & surveys	• Construct a sampling plan • Develop a survey	Read Ch. 15	Paper (part 1) Research Question Due
7(W)	Oct 5	Data collection: sampling & surveys	• Construct a sampling plan • Develop a survey	Read Ch. 16	N/A
8(M)	Oct 10	Data collection: existing documents	• Identify four methods of using existing data to answer research questions	Read Ch. 17	Quiz 3
8(W)	Oct 12	Qualitative Research	• Articulate plan for qualitative study • Understand qualitative data analysis	Read Ch. 18, 19, 20	N/A
9(M)	Oct 17	Quantitative Analysis	• Interpret research findings	Read Ch. 21	Quiz 4
9(W)	Oct 19	Quantitative Analysis	• Translate research findings for practice and policy	Read Ch. 22	Quiz 5
10(M)	Oct 24	Writing Research Proposals	• Articulate a plan for quantitative study • Translate research findings for practice and policy	Read Ch. 23	N/A
10(W)	Oct 26	No in-person class. Sign up for virtual consultations on Paper draft due at midnight		N/A	Quiz 6
11(M)	Oct 31	No in-person class. Sign up for virtual consultations on Paper draft due at midnight		N/A	Paper (bulleted) draft due by midnight Oct 31
11(W)	Nov 2	In Class:	• Applying	N/A	N/A

		Writing Research Proposals	research knowledge to final proposal		
12(M)	Nov 7	In Class: Writing Research Proposals	• Applying research knowledge to final proposal	N/A	N/A
12(W)	Nov 9	In Class: Writing Research Presentations	• Applying research knowledge to final proposal	N/A	N/A
13(M)	Nov 14	No in-person class. Sign up for virtual consultations on final paper/presentations			
13(W)	Nov 16	No in-person class. Sign up for virtual consultations on final paper/presentations			
14(M)	Nov 21	FALL BREAK/THANKSGIVING -NO CLASS			
14(W)	Nov 23				
15(M)	Nov 28	Guest Speaker	Presenting Research Proposals	N/A	N/A
15(W)	Nov 30	Final Presentations (Presentations 1-9)			(1) Final Paper Due (2) Final Presentation Due
16(M)	Dec 5	Last Day of Class Final Presentations (Presentations 10-18) Class Evaluations			(1) Final Paper Due (2) Final Presentation Due

X. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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