

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK  
QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS I**

<b>Course Number:</b>	SW388R1	<b>Instructor's name:</b>	Catherine Cubbin, PhD (she/her)
<b>Unique Number:</b>	61085	<b>Office Number:</b>	WWH 222
<b>Semester:</b>	Fall 2024	<b>Office Phone:</b>	512-232-0625
<b>Meeting Time:</b>	Tues 9:00am-12:00pm	<b>Office Hours:</b>	By appointment
<b>Meeting Place:</b>	WWH 418	<b>Instructor's email:</b>	ccubbin@austin.utexas.edu

## **I. STANDARDIZED COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This is the first of three required research methods courses for social work doctoral students. This course introduces students to the basic elements and process of quantitative research design in the social sciences, with particular attention to social work research. Topics include philosophy of knowledge, ethics, problem formulation, measurement, experimental and quasi-experimental research designs, sampling, and secondary data analysis. Students will gain experience in critically appraising published studies of quantitative research designs, develop their own research study using a publicly available dataset, and prepare a publication-quality write up of their study design.

## **II. STANDARDIZED COURSE OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this course, students should:

1. Gain knowledge of aspects of epistemology relevant to the social sciences, especially social work;
2. Gain knowledge of the language of research in order to use research terminology precisely and accurately;
3. Know the elements and phases of research;
4. Be able to evaluate the quality of research done by others;
5. Gain facility in designing research and conducting descriptive data analysis with a nationally representative dataset;
6. Gain knowledge of tools useful in planning, conducting, and reporting the results of research such as data collection instruments and publication formats;
7. Gain knowledge of the type of writing needed to describe research designs and report findings;
8. Be familiar with standards for the ethical conduct of research, including human subjects protection, and their relationship to the social work value base;
9. Gain competence in considering gender and race/ethnicity in all phases of research, from problem formulation to measurement, reporting, and interpreting results;
10. Understand the impact of political and other ideological forces on social work research.

## **III. TEACHING METHODS**

This course is designed to include a variety of teaching and learning methodologies to achieve the course objectives. These methods intentionally draw on diverse pedagogical approaches to be inclusive of a variety of learning styles; activities may include lectures & group discussions, guest lectures, in-class & at-home exercises, readings, short videos, group activities, and class discussions of the assigned readings. This course encourages students to engage in new ways of critical thinking that may be represented by the readings, instructor, and classmates from diverse backgrounds. Students will be expected to have done the

assigned reading before class and to actively participate in class. Some of the major assignments will follow principles of “ungrading,” whereby you will have multiple opportunities to submit materials after receiving feedback from me and your peers, and you will have opportunities to provide your own grades with a reflection.

Some ungrading resources can be found here:

<https://atl.web.baylor.edu/teaching-guides/assessing-student-learning-and-teaching/ungrading>

<https://www.jessestommel.com/ungrading-an-faq/>

<https://citls.lafayette.edu/what-is-ungrading/>

And here:

Ungrading: Why Rating Students Undermines Learning (and What to Do Instead) (Teaching and Learning in Higher Education)

Part of: Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (15 books) | by Alfie Kohn and Susan D. Blum | Dec 1, 2020

#### **IV. REQUIRED TEXT AND MATERIALS** (Students are responsible for the material in the assigned readings whether or not the material is discussed in class.)

##### **Required text:**

Rubin, A. & Babbie, E. (2010, 2013, 2016). *Research methods for social work*, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, or 9<sup>th</sup> edition, Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole. The 10<sup>th</sup> edition has recently become available and I am in the process of obtaining a copy for my review. The earlier editions are more affordable, however, and are perfectly fine for our purposes.

**Required articles:** These will be available on the course Canvas site. Additional articles may be posted during the semester.

##### **Websites that are relevant to this course**

<https://www.campbellcollaboration.org/>

(meta analysis of the effects of interventions in the social, behavioral, crime and justice, and educational arenas)

<http://www.cochranelibrary.com>

(meta analysis of the effects of health and mental health interventions)

<http://evidencebasedprograms.org>

(Social programs that work)

<https://www.samhsa.gov/resource-search/ebp>

(Evidence-based programs and practices)

<https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/web/pages/ICPSR/index.html>

(Data sources)

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/>

(Health-related data sources)

<http://www.cdc.gov/>

(Health-related data sources)

#### **V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Course requirements and grade assignment:** Two exams (30%), one research paper (30%), human subjects assignment (5%), survey design assignment (15%), journal club assignment (5%), op-ed assignment (5%), and class participation/attendance (10%). Students will be able to demonstrate competency in different ways as reflected in the course assignments, including exams, written assignments, and oral assignments).

1. Two multiple-choice/true-false/short answer exams will cover all materials assigned in class this semester. (15 points each, 30 points total), closed/open book: 10/1, 12/3.
2. Journal article (30 points): The student will write a draft of the Introduction and Methods sections for a *potentially* publishable journal article that you may choose to continue to work on after the semester. The article will develop a research question(s) based on a thorough literature review of a relevant social work topic using secondary data analysis of an existing dataset. The sections of the article will be between 1,800-2,000 words. Additional details will be provided during class. The first draft will be worth 22 points (due 11/26, noon), and the final draft will be worth 8 points (due 12/10, noon), based on responses to feedback the student receives on the first draft. Additional details will be provided during class.
3. Human Subjects training assignment (5 points): Social Sciences research usually deals with data containing human subjects. All human subjects research conducted at the university level must be approved or considered to be exempt by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) before commencing. The major goals of the IRB are to minimize the risk to human subjects (beneficence); ensure all subjects consent and are fully informed about the research and any risks (autonomy); and promote equity in human subjects research (justice). Therefore, this course requires students to take the human subjects protection course (CITI) at <https://research.utexas.edu/resources/human-subjects/training-and-other-resources>. You will select the Human Subjects/IRB training and then the Social/Behavioral Researchers course. Upon completion, upload the certificate (due 9/17) to receive credit.
4. Survey design assignment (15 points): You will develop a brief, self-administered paper questionnaire (approximately 30 questions) that would allow you to test a social work research question. You will need to specify the research question, the independent, dependent, and control variables, and at least one moderating variable in a memo to the instructor, as well as the sample population. Keep in mind ordering, format, and generic guidelines for asking questions discussed in your text. Be sure to include at least one question using a Likert scale, at least one contingency question, and at least one scale. Also, you will incorporate a cover letter based on guidelines discussed in your text and in class to motivate response. On Tuesday, 10/15, you will complete/review the questionnaire(s) developed by another student(s) and provide constructive feedback. You will then revise the questionnaire based on the feedback, including the instructor's, and submit it on, on Tuesday, 10/22. Additional details will be provided during class.
5. Journal club assignment (5 points): Students will be expected to present critical overviews of assigned readings and lead the discussions of them. Further guidelines will be given in class. The dates are 9/17, 9/24, 10/8, 10/22, 11/5, 11/12, and 11/19.
6. Op-ed assignment (5 points): Students will be given a brief training on writing op-eds for print/on-line media, after which they will each draft and edit an op-ed based on their own research interests (due 11/5).
7. Class attendance/participation (10 points): You are expected to learn from interacting with the other

students in the class. Thus, students are expected to attend ALL classes and to arrive on time. Students who miss class without medical documentation during the semester and/or show up late will lose points (see Religious Holiday policy below). Leaving class early will be counted as an absence unless the student provides a reasonable cause for doing so in advance (i.e., before the day of class) and receives the professor's permission. Students are expected to do assigned readings before the class time and actively participate in class discussions and group exercises.

## VI. GRADES

[No A+]		87.0 to 89.999	B+	77.0 to 79.999	C+	67.0 to 69.999	D+
94.0 and Above	A	84.0 to 86.999	B	74.0 to 76.999	C*	64.0 to 66.999	D
90.0 to 93.999	A-	80.0 to 83.999	B-	70.0 to 73.999	C-	60.0 to 63.999	D-
				<i>*minimum to pass course</i>		Below 60.0	F

## VII. CLASS POLICIES

**Late Assignments:** Except in the case of emergencies, and only with the permission of the professor, late assignments will not be accepted without penalty. If the due date is a problem, then the student must contact the professor and negotiate another due date at least **48 hours PRIOR** to the date specified in the course syllabus. I understand that conflicts in your schedule may arise for a variety of reasons; in the interest of your learning, I would rather you turn in something late that is of higher quality because you had more time to work on it than turn in something on time but is not your best work. It will be up to the instructor's discretion, however, if a later requested due date is approved. Time management is an important skill to learn, and late assignment requests are expected to be very rare.

## VIII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES

**Attendance and Academic Behavior.** At the University of Texas at Austin, regular attendance at all class meetings is expected. Instructors are responsible for implementing an attendance policy and must notify students of any special attendance requirements. See more information at <https://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/academic-policies-and-procedures/attendance/>. Furthermore, students are expected to abide by the Standards for Social Work Education (available at <https://socialwork.utexas.edu/student-resources/bsw/policies-and-procedures/>). The student shows potential for responsible and accountable behavior by being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, attending class regularly, observing deadlines, completing assignments on time, and keeping appointments or making appropriate arrangements.

**Religious Holy Days.** A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable period after the absence. A reasonable accommodation does not include substantial modification to academic standards, or adjustments of requirements essential to any program of instruction. Students and instructors who have questions or concerns about academic accommodations for religious observance or religious beliefs may contact the Center for Access and Restorative Engagement at <https://community.utexas.edu/care/>. The University does not maintain a list of religious holy days.

**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.

**Policy on Academic Integrity.** Students who violate University rules on academic 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 academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at:

<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct>.

**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.

**University Electronic Mail Student Notification.** Electronic mail (email), like postal mail, is a mechanism for official University communication to students. The University will exercise the right to send email communications to all students, and the University will expect that email communications will be received and read in a timely manner. 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>.

## **Steve Hicks School of Social Work Policies**

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**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.

**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.

**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 and Mental Health 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.

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## **Resources, Prevention of Discrimination, and Safety**

**Disability Accommodation Statement.** If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations please contact Disability and Access (D&A). You may refer to D&A's website for contact and more information: <https://community.utexas.edu/disability/>. If you are already registered with D&A, please deliver your Accommodation Letter to me as early as possible in the semester so we can discuss your approved accommodations and how they apply in my class.

**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.

**Covid-19 Related Information.** The University's policies and practices related to the pandemic may be accessed at: <https://protect.utexas.edu/>

**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/>.

**Title IX Accommodations for Those Pregnant, Nursing and Parenting.** Pregnant, nursing and parenting students, faculty, and staff are eligible for accommodations through the Title IX Office that support equal access to education and work and prevent discrimination. Students may reach out to the Title IX Office for help with accommodations to make up missed classes, complete missed coursework, keep them safe in the classroom, apply for leaves of absence, receive priority registration and other related support. Faculty and staff, including undergraduate students who work on campus and graduate student employees, may reach out for assistance with job or schedule restructuring and obtaining modified or additional work equipment. Visit the [Title IX pregnancy and parenting resource page](#) for more information or contact the [Title IX Support and Resources team](#) connect with a Case Manager.

**Campus Carry Policy.** The University's policy on campus carry may be found here: <https://campuscarry.utexas.edu>.

**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.

**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.** In covering each topic, the course will examine methodological issues specific to diversity (primarily with populations that vary according to class, race, ethnicity, nativity, gender, and/or geography). Depending on the pace, we may need to shift content around. We will also begin most classes with updates on the progress of your Journal Article assignment. Homework assignments will be due by class the following week (e.g., what is listed for 8/27 will be due by class on 9/3). The Readings that are listed for each class day are expected to be completed before class that same day.

Date	Description	Text (7 <sup>th</sup> edition)/Readings	Text (8 <sup>th</sup> /9 <sup>th</sup> editions)
Week 1 8/27	Introduction to course Philosophy and Theory  <i>Journal article assignment distributed</i>  <i>HW: Watch/Listen Episode 4: "How the Bad Blood Started" NYT 1619 Podcast</i>  <i>HW: Pseudoscience</i>	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 1, 2, and 3 Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, Chapter 1 (2008) Garcia, Lopez, and Velez (2018) Faye Carter & Hurtado (2007)	Ch. 1, 2, 3
Week 2 9/3	Ethics Culturally “competent” research  <i>Journal club assignment distributed/select dates</i>  <i>HW: Data documentation take-home exercise</i>	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 4 and 5  Villarosa (2019) Saini (2019) Gelfand (2018) Fischman (2010)	Ch. 5, 6

Date	Description	Text (7 <sup>th</sup> edition)/Readings	Text (8 <sup>th</sup> /9 <sup>th</sup> editions)
Week 3 9/10	Problem formulation Conceptualization and operationalization  <i>HW: Literature review</i>  <b>Research paper topic paragraph due</b>	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 6 and 7  Baron and Kenny (1986)	Ch. 7, 8
Week 4 9/17	Measurement Constructing measurement instruments  Journal Club 1*  <b>Human Subjects assignment due</b>	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 8 and 9  *Rubin and Parrish (2011) *Weiss and Berger (2006)	Ch. 9, 10
Week 5 9/24	Causal inference Experimental designs Quasi-experimental designs  Journal Club 2*	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 10 and 11 Greco (2018)  *Project Choices (2002) *Project Choices (2003) *Floyd (2006)	Ch. 11, 12
Week 6 10/1	<b>Exam #1 (9-11am)</b>  <i>11:15-11:45:            Survey design homework assignment distributed</i>  <i>Cleaning datasets</i>		
Week 7 10/8	Sampling Survey Research  Journal Club 3*	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 14 and 15 Krieger (1997)  *Braveman (2014) *Braveman et al. (2005)	Ch. 15, 16
Week 8 10/15	Weighting in survey research  Critique of survey design assignment – <b>first draft due</b>		
Week 9 10/22	Program evaluation  Journal Club 4*	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 13 Williams (2001) Bailey (2017)	Ch. 14

Date	Description	Text (7 <sup>th</sup> edition)/Readings	Text (8 <sup>th</sup> /9 <sup>th</sup> editions)
	<b>Final draft of survey design assignment due</b>	*Malat (2018) *Hughes (2013)	
Week 10 10/29	Scientific Writing Writing Op-Eds training Interpreting tables Table shells training		
Week 11 11/5	Secondary data analysis  Journal Club 5*  <i>HW: Budget exercise</i>  <b>Op-ed assignment due</b>	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 16 Diez Roux (2010)  *Eligon & Gebeloff (2016) *Margerison-Zilko et al. (2015)	Ch. 17
Week 12 11/12	Budgeting exercise Submitting and revising articles for peer review  Journal Club #6*	Branas (2009)  *Journal club articles to be assigned	
Week 13 11/19	Journal Club #7*  Lab time to work on research papers	*Journal club articles to be assigned	
Week 14 11/26	<b>No class – Fall Break</b>  <b>First draft of research paper due</b>		
Week 15 12/3	<b>Exam #2 (9-11am)</b>  11:15-11:45: Course debrief		

**Final draft of research paper due 12/10 at noon**