

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

Course Number:	SW 385R	Instructor:	P. Cody
Unique Number:	61120	Email:	triciacody@austin.utexas.edu
Semester:	Spring 2025	Office:	JHH 1.202 or via Zoom
Meeting Time and Place:	Thursday 5:30pm – 8:30pm Room: MEZ 1.216	Office Phone:	512-413-6405 (cell)
		Office Hours:	Thursday, 4:30pm – 5:30pm Other times by appointment

Research Methods

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to prepare students to critically examine and understand research processes and methods in social work, with the focus on consuming and analyzing research at all levels of social work practice. Three lecture hours a week for one semester. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in social work, or graduate standing and consent of instructor or the graduate adviser.

I. STANDARDIZED COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, students are introduced to concepts and skills underlying a systematic approach to social work research, including the following: basic research terminology, the scientific method in social work, the value of research in social work, research ethics, problem formulation and conceptualization, measurement, research designs to evaluate programs and practice, sampling, and preparation and use of research proposals. Students will learn to critically analyze and utilize research methods, outcomes, and impacts using an antiracist, anti-oppressive approach and develop the skills to integrate this knowledge into all aspects of social work practice. Course content will focus on the bidirectional ways in which research and systems can influence, reflect, and perpetuate inequitable access to social services and disparate opportunities for communities marginalized by those systems. Students will learn how to critically evaluate sources of scientific evidence and how the criteria for that appraisal will vary depending upon the purpose of the research. Students will also gain the research knowledge and skills they will need to engage in consuming and critically analyzing research at all levels of social work practice, as well as developing the ability to articulate and share research findings with a broad audience, including diverse stakeholders.

II. STANDARDIZED COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Define basic qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research concepts, including but not limited to sampling, measurement, design, ethics, and evaluation.
2. Explain how to apply qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research methodologies in evidence-based practice.
3. Identify and demonstrate tenets of inclusive research, including the value of lived experience, researcher-practitioner-participant partnerships, translational nature of research, policy, and practice, and the importance of accessibility and public impact.
4. Demonstrate the skills to identify and conceptualize practice problems that can benefit from research, efficiently conduct literature searches, develop a foundation of knowledge, identify prior research done on a topic, identify gaps and challenges in available research, and create a research plan that can address practice problems.
5. Examine and critically appraise measurement tools using an antiracist and anti-oppressive lens, including an understanding of historical influences.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of how research methodology has and continues to result in harm to marginalized, vulnerable, and oppressed groups of people, and begin to identify implementation strategies for prevention, interruption, and mitigation.
7. Gain an understanding of how research can promote social justice and empower underserved individuals, groups, and communities.
8. Engage in critical self-reflection (i.e., understanding one's own biases, power differentials, and social inequalities) and self-correction when conducting research in a political climate where the findings can impact larger political structures, systems, and contexts.
9. Critically appraise how a commitment to equity, social justice, and awareness of cultural context for diverse clients and constituencies influence 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

Behavior 4a. Apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs.
Behavior 4b. Identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work.

III. TEACHING METHODS

The primary methods of instruction are interactive lectures (students are encouraged to ask questions and make comments), class discussions, group/class exercises, and reading assignments. Students are encouraged to meet individually with the instructor to review their progress in the course and to ask questions regarding the course content and the social work profession. The instructor is available to meet by appointment and is responsive to emails. Students are expected to come to all classes having completed all reading assignments, being prepared to discuss the reading material, and being able to participate in the class activities by sharing your thoughts, views and questions.

IV. REQUIRED TEXT AND MATERIALS

Required Text: Rubin & Babbie (2017). *Essential Research Methods for Social Work*, 9th Edition. Cengage Learning.

Recommended Text: Holosko, M. J., & Thyer, B. A. (2011). *Pocket glossary for commonly used research terms*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignment	Points
<p>Human Subjects Training (submit certification on Canvas) Instructions: https://research.utexas.edu/ors/human-subjects/for-researchers/training/instructions-for-registering-for-human-subjects-research-training/ Link to Human Subjects Training: https://utdirect.utexas.edu/citi/citi_login.WBX Course to be completed: Basic Human Subjects -Social & Behavioral Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research Course 1 (9 modules) • Social/Behavioral Researchers (5 modules) 	15
<p>Quiz: To assess EPAS Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice, one in-class (open book/notes) quiz will be given.</p>	10
<p>Three Research Article Critiques – In class activity Articles will be posted on Canvas to select from for this critique. Assignment outline will be provided in class. Students will read the selected article and respond to 2-3 questions via an electronic survey. Group discussion to follow survey submission.</p>	30
<p>Research Proposal Project Groups of 2-3 students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Group assignment and Research Question Development</i> (5 points): group assignments will be made by interest areas. • <i>Review of empirical literature and research questions</i> (15 points): This should include a minimum of 7 recent, empirical studies published in peer reviewed journals. • <i>Class presentation and peer feedback</i> (15 points): Each group will present their research question, key findings from their literature review as well as an outline of how they would design a study to answer their research question. 	35
<p>Class Participation and Attendance Students are expected to attend class and participate in activities and discussion.</p>	10

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

Students are asked to bring their laptops or tablets to class to allow participation in electronic polling and discussion. Laptops or tablets *should not* be used for non-class related activities during class. Please keep cell phones on silent and only have access to them for emergencies.

All classroom discussions will be conducted with respect and professional conduct. Students are expected to engage in their own learning process by participating in class discussion and course assignments.

One unexcused absence is allowed during the semester. Please notify the instructor about classes that you will late for or using your unexcused absence.

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

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.

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://disability.utexas.edu/>. 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 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>.

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 professor in writing during 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

Date	Topic	Assignment Due	Readings
1/16	Introduction Ch. 1: Why Study Research	--	Syllabus Ch. 1
1/23	Ch. 2: Evidence Based Practice Ch. 3: Factors Influencing the Research Process Ch. 4: Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methods of Inquiry	Research Design Project – group assignments	Ch. 2, 3, & 4
1/30	Ch. 5: The Ethics and Politics of Social Work Research Ch. 6: Culturally Competent Research	Human Subjects Training Due	Ch. 5 & 6
2/6	Ch. 7: Problem Formulation Ch. 8: Conceptualization of Quantitative and Qualitative Inquiry	Research Questions Due	Ch. 7 and 8
2/13	Ch. 9: Measurement Ch. 10: Constructing Measurement Instruments	Research Article Critique One (in class)	Ch. 9 & 10
2/20	Ch. 11: Causal Inference and Experimental Design Ch. 12: Quasi-Experimental Design	--	Ch. 11 & 12
2/27	Ch. 13: Single Case Evaluation Design	--	Ch. 13
3/6	Ch. 14: Program Evaluation	Research Article Critique Two (in class)	Ch. 14
3/13	Ch. 15: Sampling	Review of empirical literature Due	Ch. 15
3/20	SPRING BREAK		
3/27	Ch. 16: Survey Research Ch. 17: Analyzing Existing Data: Quantitative and Qualitative Methods	--	Ch. 16 & 17
4/3	Ch. 18: Qualitative Research: General Principles Ch. 19: Qualitative Research: Specific Methods Ch. 20: Qualitative Data Analysis	Research Article Critique Three (in class)	Ch. 18, 19, & 20
4/10	In class – presentation development and peer support	In class peer feedback	--
4/17	Ch. 21: Descriptive Data Analysis Ch. 22: Inferential Data Analysis Ch. 23: Writing Research Proposals and Reports	Quiz – in class, open book/notes	Ch. 21, 22, & 23
4/24	Last Day of Class	Literature Review – final submission Class presentation peer feedback	--

X. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Holosko, M. J., & Thyer, B. A. (2011). *Pocket glossary for commonly used research terms*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rubin & Babbie (2017). *Essential Research Methods for Social Work*, 9th Edition. Cengage Learning.