



University of Central Florida
School of Social Work

SOW 5404.0002 – Social Work Research

Instructor: Eileen Mazur Abel
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Office Hours: : M 4-6:30 pm; T 11-1:30
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Term: Fall, 20089
Class Day: Thursday
Meeting Time: 10:30-1:20
Class Location:
Credit Hours: 3

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Study of quantitative and qualitative methods of building knowledge for social work and the ethical use of research in professional practice.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the term, students will be able to:

1. Understand social work research as an integral part of evidenced-based social work practice.
2. Explain the research function in micro, mezzo, and macro practice.
3. Understand social work research as a scientific approach.
4. Discuss the specific stages of the social work research process: (i.e., Formulation of practice questions and hypotheses, Sampling, Data Collection, Processing of data, Interpretation of statistical results and testing of hypotheses, and Report writing.
5. Explore the social and economic justice implications of implementing and interpreting research.
6. Utilize the research designs for social work practice.
7. Understand the uses of a computerized statistical program (SPSS) for data analysis in social work research.
8. Discuss beginning level strategies for qualitative data analysis.
9. Conduct social research (quantitative/qualitative and descriptive/explanatory) related to community-based clinical practice.
10. Understand, critically evaluate and make use of the research findings of others.
11. Discuss the ethical and political issues, and sensitivity of studying the populations of diversity (women, racial and cultural minorities, gays and lesbians, handicapped, elderly, poor) incorporating the principles of the human subjects review process, and how it relates to social work research.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Rubin, A. & Babbie, E. (2007). *Essential research methods for social work*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
(Available UCF Bookstore) <http://www.bookstore.ucf.edu>

Rubin, A. (2007). *Statistics for evidence-based practice and evaluation*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
(Available UCF Bookstore) <http://www.bookstore.ucf.edu>

Cournoyer, B.R. (2004). *The evidence-based social work skills book*. Boston: Pearson. (Available UCF Bookstore). <http://bookstore.ucf.edu>

REQUIRED JOURNAL ARTICLE READINGS: These are listed in the course schedule for each week. Locate full-text versions of the articles by searching the electronic databases at the UCF Library. <http://library.ucf.edu>

LIBRARY RESOURCES

The UCF Libraries has a full array of paper and electronic resources available for students and their research needs.

Students will be expected to utilize UCF library resources to search library databases for required readings.

The following web sites which can help students find information, navigate through databases and learn how to use the library:

1. Library Instruction sessions - <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Instruction>
2. Library Research Tutorials - <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Instruction/LIToursTutorials.asp>
3. Streaming videos - <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Videos/Default.asp>
4. Research Guides - <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Guides/>
5. Ask a Librarian service - <http://library.ucf.edu/Ask/>
6. Consult with the librarian familiar with Social Work—Mr. Hal Mendolsohn

In addition to paper copies of books and journals, UCF students have the ability to access a vast selection of journals and books in electronic format while on or off campus. The web address to the library's catalog is <http://library.ucf.edu/>. The Ask A Librarian service provides students the ability to contact a library professional either by phone, on-line chat or email, and ask for assistance on "how to" locate, research, and obtain library materials. The web address for Ask A Librarian is <http://library.ucf.edu/Ask/>. A series of streaming videos, showing students how to search for a book or journal article, has been developed and are available at <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Videos/Default.asp>. Research Guides for different majors, that list books, journals, databases, and web sites have been developed and are available in electronic format at <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Guides/>. Another service to help students conduct library research is called Research Consultation. After a student has conducted his/her research and is in need of additional information, s/he can work with a librarian to locate material with the help of his/her expert searching capabilities. To set-up a Research Consultation, students can either come into the library and sign-up at the Reference Desk or call the library Reference Office at 407-823-5880. Finally, students are always encouraged to visit the library and ask a Reference Librarian how best to conduct one's research. If a student has a simple question on how to locate either a book or journal title, the UCF Reference Libraries are happy to provide this type of service too.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Assignment guidelines and other course handouts are available through www.webct.ucf.edu

Nuremberg Code <http://ohsr.od.nih.gov/guidelines/nuremberg.html>

NASW Code of Ethics <http://www.naswdc.org/pubs/code/default.asp>

UCF Institutional Review Board <http://www.research.ucf.edu/Compliance/irb.html>

The following web sites provide additional information about APA style:

<http://www.uwc.ucf.edu>

<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocAPA.html>

<http://www.apastyle.org/elecref.html>

<http://www.lib.duke.edu/libguide/citing.htm>

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/ssw/write/handouts.html>

ASSIGNMENTS AND POINTS

1. **Examinations:** There will be a mid-term and final written examination. The exam questions will be taken from the materials covered in the class and assigned readings. The exam may have any combination of true/false, multiple choice, matching, or brief essay questions.

2. **Evidence-Based Question/Search Exercise:** Students will review 3 chapters of the Cournoyer text book and practice developing a clinical practice effectiveness question and search strategy. This question and search strategy will form the basis for developing your research analysis and critique paper. Guidelines will be provided by the instructor.
3. **Research Analysis and Critique Paper:** To help achieve the course objectives, each student is required to write an analysis of a research-based article that is directly related to community-based clinical practice. The paper should not exceed 5 pages and must be double spaced type-written/word-processed with a minimum of 12 point font. APA style guidelines (5th Edition) must be followed. The guidelines and other specifics for the research assignment will be provided and discussed in class.
4. **SPSS/PC Exercise and Qualitative Data Analysis Exercise:** There will one SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) exercise and students are expected to prepare for and participate in the exercise. Advance preparation for the in-class qualitative analysis exercise will be required. Guidelines for the exercise will be distributed in class.
5. **Literature Review:** To help achieve the course objectives, each student is required to write a literature review that is directly related to community-based clinical practice. The paper should not exceed 5 pages and must be double spaced type-written/word-processed with a minimum of 12 point font. APA style guidelines (5th Edition) must be followed. The guidelines and other specifics for the research assignment will be provided and discussed in class.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Grade Point</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Evidence-Based Question/Search Exercise	5 points	October 1
Mid-term Exam	20 points	October 15th
Research Analysis and Critique Paper	20 points	October 22 th
Outline and Article for Literature Review Paper	Part of Lit Review	November 5st
Qualitative Research Exercise (in class)	5 points	November 12th
Literature Review Paper	20 points	November 19 th
SPSS/PC Exercise (in class)	5 points	November 19 th
Final Exam	25 points	December 3rd
	<u>Total = 100 Points</u>	

GRADING SCALE

A	95 – 100	B-	80 - 83	D+	67 - 69
A-	90 – 94	C+	77 - 79	D	64 - 66
B+	87 – 89	C	74 - 76	D-	60 - 63
B	84 – 86	C-	70 - 73	F	59 or less

POLICIES

In addition to the information below, the student should become familiar with School of Social Work Student Handbook and The Golden Rule Handbook for UCF Students. All polices included in these handbooks apply to this class.

Modification of Syllabus

This syllabus may be modified at the discretion of the instructor. Changes will be discussed with students in class and/or via email. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the student's email address is current in eCommunity.

Cell phones, pagers and recorders

- Students are asked to turn off cell phones and beepers during class sessions.
- Permission to audiotape a class meeting(s) must be obtained from the instructor in advance.
- While the use of laptops is convenient for students to take class notes, it is expected that students WILL NOT engage in other laptop activities during class time that may include: internet activities, reading and responding to email, balancing a checkbook, etc. If this should occur, the instructor reserves the right to request that the student not use a laptop during class.

Classroom Decorum

- Side conversations are discouraged because they distract the class.
- The instructor expects students to respect the culture, values, beliefs and rights of their classmates. During class sessions, alternate points of view are encouraged and should be received by others with respect. Students should feel free to express their opinions and to refer to relevant personal situations without fear of disapproval or disrespect; however, the classroom is not the place where students should indulge in personal venting or support seeking.

Attendance and Participation

Student attendance and participation are integral parts of this course. Students are expected to attend each class, arrive on time, and remain for the duration of the class. Students are also expected to assume responsibility for their own learning and to actively involve themselves in class discussions and exercises. Students must be prepared for class (i.e., complete readings and other assignments *prior* to class). Make-up exams are given **ONLY** in extreme circumstances. These circumstances include exceptional health EMERGENCIES (that require that the student bring in medical documentation), and the make up exam will be an essay exam. Out-of-town vacations, trips, mild illness (such as a cold), and other similar circumstances do not qualify as extreme. The instructor reserves the option to provide a make up exam in hers or his absence.

Students who miss three (3) or more absences regardless of the reason may have their final grade lowered by one letter grade. The only exception to this is if the student has a **documented** extraordinary circumstance (student hospitalization; severe illness; death in the family; car accident) preventing the student from coming to class. In that case, the student must present written documentation to the instructor.

Attendance during Finals Week: It is University policy that all classes MUST meet for either a final exam or a class session.

Written Assignments

Effective written communication skills are essential to professional social work practice. Thus, students are expected to present their ideas clearly and properly and to adhere to accepted standards of writing. *Grammar, punctuation, and spelling are to be correct in all written materials submitted and will be considered in grading written assignments.*

All written assignments must be typed in a 12-font print, and all margins must be one inch. The cover page of a paper is not considered a page of text. Work not conforming to these standards or demonstrating serious deficiencies in common English usage may be returned with out a grade. When references are required, they must be in the APA documentation style.

Students are encouraged to use the University Writing Center (UWC) for assistance in preparing written assignments. The UWC is located in MOD 608 (near the Communications Building). UWC staff may be reached at (407) 823-2197 or <http://www.uwc.ucf.edu/>.

Late Assignments

All assignments must be turned in to the instructor at the beginning of the class period, delivered to the instructor's mailbox *before class starts on the due date, and or submitted to the Turnitin.com system before the assigned time and date. For assignments turned in to the School of Social Work Office it is the student's responsibility to see to it that her or his assignment is stamped with the date by the social work staff member who then places the assignment in the instructor's mailbox.* No assignments will be accepted by fax or email unless the instructor has given explicit prior approval. *Late assignments will lose a full letter grade for each day that they are late unless the student gained prior approval from the instructor.* No assignment will be accepted after the last day of class. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with the instructor regarding late assignments.

Incomplete Grades

An "Incomplete" is only recorded in exceptional circumstances and in keeping with the School and University policies. Individual arrangements must be made with the instructor for the completion of the course requirements, but in no case will the due date extend beyond the end of the following semester. Students who experience chronic medical or personal problems that prevent them from attending class regularly are encouraged to review policies relating to securing a leave of absence from their university studies.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism

Plagiarism and Cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment may result in an "F" for that assignment and may also lead to an "F" for the entire course and referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. (See the UCF Golden Rule for further information.) It is assumed that students will adhere to the academic creed of the University and will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. Please do not ask for your grade to be changed without just cause or to bend or break rules for one person that will not apply to everyone.

Turnitin.com

The instructor reserves the option to use (turnitin.com); an online system which can determine if work has been copied from another source. You will be expected to submit all assignments in both hard copy and electronic format. For a more detailed look at this process, please visit: <http://www.turnitin.com>.

Disability Access Statement

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource Center Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the instructor. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the instructor to request them.

THE UCF CREED

Integrity, scholarship, community, creativity, and excellence are the core values that guide our conduct, performance, and decisions.

- Integrity:** I will practice and defend academic and personal honesty.
- Scholarship:** I will cherish and honor learning as a fundamental purpose of my membership in the UCF community.
- Community:** I will promote an open and supportive campus environment by respecting the rights and contributions of every individual.
- Creativity:** I will use my talents to enrich the human experience.
- Excellence:** I will strive toward the highest standards of performance in any endeavor I undertake.

COURSE OUTLINE & SCHEDULE

Sessions 1 –An Introduction to Inquiry (8-27)

Unit Learning Objectives

1. Define and illustrate errors in human inquiry.
2. Understand the foundations of Social Science.
3. Identify the motivations for doing Social Work Research.
4. Understand deductive and inductive theory constructions.
5. Understand prejudice and stereotyping in human inquiry.

Content

1. Human inquiry
2. Foundations of social science
3. Motivations for social work research
4. Scientific theory and social work practice models
5. Deductive theory construction
6. Inductive theory construction

Text Reading: Rubin & Babbie, Ch 1, 2, & 3
Rubin, Ch 1

Session 2 - The Ethics and Politics of Social Work Research (9-3)

Unit Learning Objectives

1. Understand the issues of ethical controversies and cultural sensitivity in Social Work Research
2. Understand NASW Code of Ethics
3. Understand the Political issues of Social Work Research
4. Identify and discuss political and ethical issues in some of the researches on population at risk
5. Address the Human Subjects Review Process and protection for human subjects

Content

1. Human diversity and Social Work Research
2. Ethical issues and controversies in social work research
3. NASW Code of Ethics and the politics of social work research
4. The Guidelines for Human Subjects of School of Social Work and UCF Committee

Text Reading: Rubin & Babbie, Ch 4 & 5

Web Reading: Nuremberg Code

NASW Code of Ethics <http://www.naswdc.org/pubs/code/default.asp>

UCF Institutional Review Board <http://www.research.ucf.edu/Compliance/irb.html>

Session 3 - Problem Formulation, Conceptualization, Operationalization and Measurement (9-10)

Unit Learning Objectives

1. Understand the Social Work Research process
2. Identify research topics related to social stress, support, shared responsibility, social functioning, empowerment, social/economic justice.
3. Explain the purposes of research and develop a problem statement, research questions and hypothesis.

Content

1. Phases of the research process
2. Culturally competent problem formulation
3. Research purposes
4. Develop the conceptual framework for research questions: the Literature Review
5. Conceptual explication.
6. Operational definitions.

Text Reading: Rubin & Babbie, Ch 6 & 7
Rubin, Appendix A

Session 4 – Problem Formulation, Conceptualization, Operationalization and Measurement (9-17)
(continued from session 3)

Unit Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this Unit, the student should be able to:

1. Explain the logic of conceptualization and its relationship to measurement.
2. Define and give examples of dimensions and indicators.
3. Distinguish conceptualization from operationalization.
4. Understand and use the four levels of measurement
5. Understand descriptive statistics

Content

1. Levels of measurement, measurement validity.
2. Coding
3. Review of descriptive univariate analysis
4. Relationships among variables
5. Measures of association and selecting a test of statistical significance

Text Reading: Rubin & Babbie, Ch 8 & 9
Rubin, pp. 7-12; Ch 2 & 3

Session 5 - Introduction to Evidence-Based Social Work (9-24)

Unit Learning Objectives

1. Explain the purposes of research and develop a problem statement, research questions and hypothesis.
2. Understand, critically evaluate and make use of the research findings of others.

Content

1. Overview and purpose of the research process
2. Parts of the Research Paper
3. Human diversity issues in research
4. Evidence-based questioning and searching
5. Writing social work research reports

Text Reading: Cournoyer, Ch 1, 2, 3

Evidence-Based Practice Exercise Due Session 6 –October 1

Session 6 and Session 7 – Data Collection and Survey Research (10-1; 10-98)

Unit Learning Objectives

1. Understand the guidelines for asking questions
2. Discuss the pros and cons of using closed-ended and open-ended questions
3. Construct questionnaires, composite measures
4. Understand mail surveys and the building of self-administered questionnaires
5. Review the principles and problems that can occur with survey research

Content

1. Guidelines for asking questions
2. Questionnaire construction with composite measures
3. Some prominent scaling (e.g., Guttman, Likert, Thurstone)

4. Cultural sensitivity issues in constructing questionnaires
5. Self-administered questionnaire and cover Letter
6. Personal interviews and the role of the interviewer
7. Telephone surveys and electronic mail survey
8. Human diversity and ethical issues with survey research methods

Text Reading: Rubin & Babbie, Ch 10

Rubin, Appendix F; Ch 4, 5

Required Journal Article Reading:

1. Ejaz, F.K. (2000). The influence of religious and personal values on nursing home residents' attitudes toward life sustaining treatments. *Social Work in Health Care, 32*(2), 23-39. (cross-sectional survey)
2. Jagannathan, R. & Camasso, M.J. (2006). Public assistance workers' confidence in welfare-to-work programs and the clients they serve. *Administration in Social Work, 30*(1), 7-32. (mixed-methods survey questionnaire with in-depth structured interviews).

Session 8- Sampling, Descriptive Statistics and Mid-Term Exam Review (10-15)

Unit Learning Objectives:

1. Understand descriptive statistics
2. Conduct univariate analysis and subgroup comparisons
3. Discuss sampling concepts, terminology, types and problems

Content

1. Explain probability sampling theory
2. Understand the types of probability sampling and non-probability sampling
3. Discuss the problems of sampling

Text Reading: Rubin & Babbie, Ch 11

Rubin, Appendix F; Ch 6, 7, 9

Session 9 - Midterm Exam (10-22)

Sessions 10 Causal Inference and Group Designs (10-29)

Unit Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the components and variations within experimental designs
2. Explain sampling method for experiments
3. Understand and identify the factors that influence internal and external validity
4. Discuss "natural" experiments and its implications for research

Content

1. Pre-experimental, experimental and quasi-experimental designs
2. Internal validity and External validity
3. Experimental and quasi-experimental designs
4. Ethical issues in experiments and the use of control groups and randomization

Text Reading: Rubin & Babbie, Ch 12

Rubin, Ch 8, 10; p. 187-193

Cournoyer, Ch 4

Required Journal Article Reading:

1. Harris, M.B., & Franklin, C. G. (2003). Effects of a cognitive-behavioral school-based group intervention with Mexican American pregnant and parenting adolescents. *Social Work Research, 27*(2), 71-83. (randomized trial).
2. Springer, D.W., Lynch, C. & Rubin, A. (2000). Effects of a solution-focused mutual aid group for Hispanic children of incarcerated parents. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 17*(6), 431-442. (quasi-experimental, pre-test/post-test non-equivalent comparison group).
3. Morrison Tonkins, S.A. & Lambert, M.J. (1996). A treatment outcome study of bereavement groups for children. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 13*(1), 3-21. (pre-test/post-test within group, wait list control with multiple outcome measures).

4. Auslander, W. , Haire-Joshu, D., Houston, C., Williams, J.H. & Krebill, H. (2000). The short-term impact of a health promotion program for low-income African-American women. *Research on Social Work Practice, 10*(1), 78-97. (intervention evaluation; experimental design with process evaluation).

Outline and Article for Literature Review Paper Due October 29

Session 11 – Program Evaluation and Single-Case Evaluation Designs (11-5)

Unit Learning Objectives:

1. Explain the research function in both micro and macro practice.
2. Utilize the research designs for social work practice.
3. Conduct social research (quantitative/qualitative and descriptive/explanatory) related to community-based clinical practice.
4. Discuss the ethical and political issues, and sensitivity of studying the populations of diversity (women, racial and cultural minorities, gays and lesbians, handicapped, elderly, poor) incorporating the principles of the human subjects review process, and how it relates to social work research.

Content

1. Single-case designs to evaluate clinical practice.
2. Process evaluation
3. Program evaluation designs
4. Practical aspects of agency-based research

**Text Reading: Rubin & Babbie, Ch 13 & 14
Rubin, Ch 18**

Required Journal Article Reading:

Whitfield, G.W. (1999). Validation school social work: an evaluation of a cognitive-behavioral approach to reduce school violence. *Research on Social Work Practice, 9*(4), 399-426.

Qualitative methods exercise distributed for review during Session 11-5

Session 12 - Qualitative Research Methods (11-12)

Unit Learning Objective

1. Identify topics appropriate to Qualitative research
2. Describe and understand the various roles of the observer and sampling in qualitative research
3. Understand how to ask questions and how to record observations
4. Be able to analyze data and to draw conclusions
5. Be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research

Content

1. Topics appropriate and the roles of the observer.
2. Sampling, asking questions, recording observations, coding, data processing and analysis, and, drawing conclusions.
3. The strengths and limitations of qualitative research
4. Human diversity and cultural sensitivity issues with qualitative research

Text Reading: : Rubin & Babbie, Ch 15 & 18

Required Journal Article Reading:

Brooks, F., Zugazaga, C., Wolk, J. & Adams, M.A. (2005). Resident perceptions of housing, neighborhood, and economic conditions after relocation from public housing undergoing HOPE VI redevelopment. *Research on Social Work Practice, 15*(6), 481-490. (mixed-methods, posttest only design with two data points).

Henry, D.L. (2001). Resilient children: What they tell us about coping with maltreatment. *Social Work Health and Mental Health, 34*(3/4), 283-298. (grounded theory)

Qualitative Research Exercise Due: To be used as part of a class exercise.

Session 13 – (11-19)

Quantitative Research Methods (continued) and Review for Final Exam (11-19)

Unit Learning Objectives:

1. Discuss bivariate and multivariate analysis
2. Discuss the chance of a rival hypothesis
3. Understand measures of association and explain statistical significance

Content

1. Chance as a rival hypothesis
2. Statistical significance (Probability, One-Tailed and Two-Tailed Tests, Type 1 and Type II Errors)
3. Measures of association and selecting a test of statistical significance
4. Statistical power analysis, t-tests, ANOVA, regression.

SPSS class exercise. Exam review

Text Reading: Rubin & Babbie, Ch 16 & 17

Rubin, Ch 11, 12, 14, 15; pp. 187-193

Literature Review Paper Due 11-19

Session 15– Thanksgiving Holiday----No Class Session

FINAL EXAM: 10:30am-12:50pm Thursday December 3rd

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- Dziegielewski, S.F. & Ricks, J.L. (2000). Adult Day Programs for Elderly who are Mentally Impaired and Measurement of Caregiver Satisfaction. *Activities, Adaptation and Aging*, 24, No 4, 51-64.
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