

University of North Dakota
Department of Social Work
COURSE SYLLABUS SWK 331
(Social Work Research Methods)
Spring 2007
1-1:50, MWF, Gillette 303

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I. Standard Syllabus Information

Course Description

SWK 331 Social Work Research Methods. 3 credits. Prerequisite or corequisite: SWK 255. Research methods for social work practice and evaluation of practice. F, S

Relationship Between This and Other Courses

SWK 331 builds on content from SWK 255 (Introduction to Social Work) regarding the social work profession and the role of research in social work. Content from SWK 255 related to social work values and ethics, social and economic justice, and diversity help prepare the student to conduct ethical and culturally sensitive research.

SWK 331 provides students with an understanding of basic research design and quantitative research methods. Qualitative methods are covered in the other required research course, SWK 431 (Qualitative Social Work Research). In SWK 331, students also gain and apply skills related to the critical evaluation of research.

SWK 331 provides students with foundational knowledge and skills necessary to understand and undertake practice evaluation in practice courses, field placements, and in entry-level practice settings.

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of SWK 331, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the ability to think critically when reviewing research and in the design of quantitative research.
2. Understand the application of the ethical mandates of NASW for social work research and the social worker's responsibility to institutional review boards.
3. Understand issues related to undertaking research with diverse populations.
4. Understand the forms and mechanisms of bias and oppression in research, and demonstrate familiarity with methods and techniques to minimize those influences.
5. This objective number applies to other courses and to field.
6. Use research to inform generalist practice.
7. Understand basic research design and the interaction between theory and research.
8. This objective number applies to other courses and to field.
9. Demonstrate an understanding of approaches to quantitative research and the manner in which they inform entry-level social work practice and evaluation.

10. Demonstrate an ability to use communication in a professional manner to obtain and disseminate information throughout the research and evaluation process.
11. This objective number applies to other classes and to field.
12. This objective number applies to other classes and to field.

Classroom Policies

Important classroom policies are available in their entirety at web sites listed here.

Class Attendance and Participation

Students are expected to participate in all course learning opportunities. <http://www.und.edu/dept/registrar/catalogs/catalog/ugdept/more.htm>. Faculty will inform students of course expectations, including grading criteria, during the first week of class.

Non-Discrimination

There shall be no discrimination against persons because of race, religion, age, creed, color, sex, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, veteran's status or political belief or affiliation, and equal opportunity and access to facilities shall be available to all. <http://sos.und.edu/csl>

Disability Statement

If you have emergency medical information to share with me, if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, or if you need accommodations in this course because of a disability, please make an appointment with me. My office location is 301C Gillette Hall and hours are by appointment. If you plan to request disability accommodations, you are expected to register with the Disability Support Services (DSS) office (190 McCannel Hall, 777-3425 v/tty).

<http://www.und.edu/dept/dss/>

Grievance

Student grievances are pursued through the [College of Education and Human Development Grievance Procedure](#) or <http://www.und.edu/dept/csl/appendix-ii.htm>

Scholastic Dishonesty

Students are expected to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and the Code of Student Life, including avoiding cheating, plagiarism, and collusion.

<http://www.und.edu/dept/csl/section-3.htm>

II. Course Outline

Required Text

Royce, D. (1999). *Research methods in social work*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers

Supplemental Readings

CITI Course in the protection of human research subjects. History and ethics. From the IRB training manual.

Milgram, S. (1963). Behavioral study of obedience. *Journal of abnormal and social psychology*, 67(4),371-378.

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (2005). *Research methods for social work* (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thompson Learning.

Assignments for the Course

Quizzes (20 points each): There will be four brief quizzes throughout the semester. Each quiz will be multiple choice. Quizzes will be open book and open notes. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

Content summary areas (each worth 25 pts): For the majority of the content discussed in class, students will be required to turn in a 2-4 page summary of each of the major course content areas and provide examples using your topic. These summaries will be based on course lecture, textbook readings and supplemental text. These assignments are due when lecture begins and will not be accepted outside of class hours. The due dates of these assignments will be announced in class. The specific guidelines for the summaries will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard. However, for the most part, these summaries will need to address the three points mentioned below.

General guidelines for the content summaries.

1. a summary of the content area (10 points)
2. an application of the content area to your topic (10 points)
3. How your understanding of the content advances your understanding of the social work profession (5 points)

Content Areas:

1. Ways of knowing
2. Ethical Issues
3. Understanding Variable/Levels of Measurement
4. Choosing a topic/Writing a research question/Writing a hypothesis
5. Measurements
6. Different Designs (Single subject, Pre-experimental, experiment, Quasi, experimental)
7. Sampling
8. Culturally competent research
9. Program Evaluation

Group Work Assignments (total 132 points):

1. Topic Choice Assignment (5 points): The group will need to turn in a paragraph that answers the following
 10. What is the broad topic your group wishes to study?
 11. What specific aspects of the topic does your group wish to study?
 12. Why is understanding those topics important to understanding the population at large?
2. Literature Review Assignment (36 points): The group as a whole will need to identify 3 articles that address their topic. The articles must be from peer review journals. For each

article the group will turn in a 2 page paper addressing the following questions.

- a. Who are (is) the author(s)?
 - b. What is the date of publication?
 - c. What is the title of the article?
 - d. Where was the article published?
 - e. What is the purpose of the study?
 - f. What variables did they look at?
 - g. What were the major findings of the study?
 - h. What were the limitations of the study?
3. Literature Review Assignment Part 2 (10 points): The group will work together to turn in a 1-2 page paper that addresses the following:
- a. What was the most important thing you learned from conducting your literature search
 - b. What did you find frustrating?
 - c. How was searching for professional literature different from going into a search engine such as google?
 - d. Did you discover it was necessary to narrow down your research topic? How did you do this?
 - e. Did you see any patterns or themes in the literature? What were they?
4. Identify the variables (10 points)
- a. Identify the variables that the group wishes to investigate.
 - b. Provide a nominal definition and an operational definition
 - c. Identify the independent variable(s) and dependent variable
5. Development of a research question and hypothesis (5 points)
- a. The group as a whole will need to develop a research question that addresses their chosen topic.
 - b. The group will offer a testable hypothesis. The group will need to identify the independent and dependent variables in the hypothesis.
6. Data collection/Instrumentation (20 points): the group as a whole will need to identify a method of measurement that collects data so that the research hypothesis can be tested. In a one page paper the group will address:
- a. What is the concept that is to be measured
 - b. What does the response set consist of
 - c. Create 10 questions to use in your measure
 - d. Discuss how you will address issues of reliability and validity with your instrument
7. Design choice assignment (20 points)
- a. For each design category (pre-experimental, experimental, quasi experimental and single subject) the group will choose one specific design. The group will describe how they will apply the designs to their topic. The group will write a paragraph for each design.
8. Sampling assignment (16 points)
- a. For all types of non probability and probability sampling the group will provide an example of how subjects can be sampled using each type of nonprobability and probability sampling. The types of sampling are simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling, snowball sampling, availability sampling, purposive sampling, and quota sampling)
9. Analysis (5 points)
- a. The group will pick a method of analysis in which to examine their topic. The group will turn in a paragraph that addresses how the analysis will be used and

- why this choice of analysis is appropriate for examining their research questions
10. Relevance to profession (5 points): The group will turn in a paragraph that addresses the relevance of their research to their profession.

Individual Assignment: Research Proposal (50 points): The students will be asked to turn in a research proposal at the end of the semester. This research proposal will be based on your group topic. The research proposal will be written in APA style and should be between 8-10 pages in length. The research proposal should follow the outline below:

1. Introduction
 - a. Description of problem
 - b. Statement of research question and hypothesis
 - c. Significance of problem and rationale for studying it
2. Literature Review
 - a. Identify relevant studies that address or fail to address your topic
 - b. Theoretical and historical perspectives
 - c. Identified gaps in literature
 - d. Reiteration of purpose of study (restate your research question and hypothesis)
3. Methodology (a paragraph should be used to address each area listed below)
 - a. Identification and definition of independent and dependent variables
 - b. Research design
 - c. Data collection procedures
 - d. Description of instrumentation
 - i. Include your list of questions
 - ii. Address how you plan to assure reliability and validity with your measure
 - e. Sampling design
 - f. Data Analysis
4. Conclusions
 - a. What do you hope to find
 - b. What is the relevance of proving your hypothesis within your profession
5. References

Class Participation (10 points): Using the clicker response system you will be asked to respond to questions about the content. The clickers will allow for me (and only me) to keep track of who responds. By using the clickers, I will be able to gauge your understanding of the content. You must respond to a minimum of 80% of the questions over the course of the semester to receive full credit for class participation. If you respond to 60-79% of the questions you will receive 8 points, while 40-59% will receive 5 points, while 20-39% will receive 3 points and below 19% will receive no points.

Final exam (100 points): A comprehensive final exam will be given on the day of the scheduled final. You must take the final.

Course Grading/Evaluation

Assignments		Point value
Quizzes (3 @ 20 points apiece)		60
Content summary areas (9 @ 25 points apiece)		225
Group work		132
Research Proposal		50
Class Participation		10
Final Exam		100
Total		577
Percentage	Letter Grade	
90-100	A	
80-89	B	
70-79	C	
60-69	D	
59 or below	F	

III. Course Schedule

Course Schedule: The course schedule is subject to change with notice.

Date:	Content	Readings	Due dates
1/10	Introduction/What is this course is about/ Assigning groups	Royse Chapter 1	
1/12	Ways of Knowing	Lecture notes	
1/15	No class		
1/17	Ways of Knowing	Lecture notes	Identify a group topic/
1/19	Ethical Concerns in research	Chapter 3/Handout: NASW code of ethics 5.02 research and evaluation/handout from IRB training on ethical issues	Topic choice assignment due
1/22	Ethical Concerns in research	Chapter 3/Handout: NASW code of ethics 5.02 research and evaluation/handout from IRB training on ethical issues	Content summary #1
1/24	Ethical Concerns in research	Chapter 3/Handout: NASW code of ethics 5.02 research and evaluation/handout from IRB training on ethical issues	
1/26	The way research proceeds/choosing a topic	Chapter 2	
1/29	The way research proceeds/choosing a topic	Chapter 2	

1/31	Guest Lecturer: Victor Lieberman	Chapter 2	Content summary 2
2/2	Developing a literature Review	Chapter 2	
2/5	Developing a literature review		
2/7	No class (use the time to work on the literature review assignments)		
2/9	Variables	Chapter 2 , p.281-286	Literature Review Assignment Part 1 and 2 Due
2/12	Variables	Chapter 2 , p.281-286	
2/14	Variables/ Quiz 1	Chapter 2 , p.281-286	Identify the variables
2/16	Developing a research question and hypothesis	Chapter 2, lecture notes	
2/19	No class		
2/21	Developing a research question and hypothesis	Chapter 2, lecture notes	
2/23	Developing a research question and hypothesis	Chapter 2, lecture notes	Development of a research question and hypothesis
2/26	Measurement	Chapter 6,7,8	
2/28	Measurement	Chapter 6,7,8	
3/2	Measurement	Chapter 6,7,8	Content summary 3
3/5	Measurement	Chapter 6,7,8	
3/7	Measurement	Chapter 6,7,8	Data collection/Instrumentation
3/9	Quiz 2		Content summary 4
3/12	No class		
3/14	No class		
3/16	No class		
3/19	Types of Design	Chapter 4,5	
3/21	Types of Design	Chapter 4	
3/23	Types of Design	Chapter 4	
3/26	Types of design	Chapter 4	Content summary 5/Design choice
3/28	Threats to validity	Chapter 4	
3/30	Threats to validity	Chapter 4	
4/2	Sampling	Chapter 8 pgs 189-198	
4/4	Sampling	Chapter 8 pgs 189-198	Content summary 6
4/6	No class		
4/9	No class		
4/11	Sampling	Chapter 8 pgs 189-198	
4/13	Sampling	Chapter 8 pgs 189-198	Sampling assignment
4/16	Quiz 3		
4/18	Collecting Data	Lecture Notes	
4/20	Collecting Data	Lecture Notes	Content summary 7
4/23	Data Analysis	Chapter 12	
4/25	Data Analysis	Chapter 12	Analysis/relevance
4/27	Culturally Competent research	Lecture Notes	

4/30	Program Evaluation	Chapter 11	
5/2	Quiz 4		Content Summary 8
5/4	Review for the final		Content summary #9/ Individual research proposal
Finals			

IV. Course Objectives, Tasks to Meet Objectives, and Method of Measurement

Course Objectives	Tasks to Meet Objectives	Method of Measurement
1. Demonstrate the ability to think critically when reviewing research and in the design of quantitative research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz/final questions that focus on the ability to think critically about choosing methods such as sampling, research design, writing survey questions, and hypotheses • Clicker Response questions that focus on reviewing the parts of a research design • Work in groups to discuss parts of the research proposal • In class exercises on the different topics such as critiquing research questions, sampling designs, and choices of group designs, single subject designs • In class exercises where students need to identify types of sampling, designs, threats to internal validity • Final exam is cumulative covering the range of topics discuss in class • Content area summaries covering the range of topics discussed in class (see content area assignment above) • Royse Chapter 2 (The way research proceeds) With specific attention to the way research proceeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grading of quizzes • Class participation credit • Instructor feedback • Final exam score • Content area grade
2. Understand the application of the ethical mandates of NASW for social work research and the social worker's responsibility to institutional review boards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content area summary on ethical research • Lecture on ethical considerations • Quiz/final questions on ethics • Work in groups to discuss the ethics of certain research scenarios (Milgram study, Zimbardo Study, the restaurant letter study, the Tuskegee Study) • Royse chapter 3 (Ethical Thinking and Research) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content area grade • Quiz grade • Final exam • Clicker questions • Research proposal assignment

<p>3. Understand issues related to undertaking research with diverse populations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content area summary on ethics • Content area summary on culturally competent research • Lecture on culturally competent research (focus on culturally specific language, consider population when collecting data) • Work in groups to develop research proposal outlines that focus on diverse populations • Quiz/final questions about ethics and the representation of diverse populations in research • Royse Chapter 6 (Understanding and using research instruments), Chapter 7 (Developing data collection instruments: Scales and Questionnaires), Chapter 8 (Survey Research) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content area grade • Quiz grade • Final exam • Clicker questions • Research proposal grade
<p>4. Understand the forms and mechanisms of bias and oppression in research, and demonstrate familiarity with methods and techniques to minimize those influences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content area summary on designs • Lecture on social justice • Readings on the Tuskegee Syphilis study from IRB training on ethical issues • Readings on death of a normal volunteer from IRB training on ethical issues • Longres and Scanlon article “Social Justice and the Research Curriculum” • Content area summary on ethics • Content area summary on culturally competent research • Topic proposal part 3 (identifying research articles that relate to diverse populations and how those populations were represented) • Work in groups to develop research proposal outline where social and economic justice is reflected while working with different populations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content area grade • Quiz grades • Final exam • Clicker questions • Research proposal grade
<p>5. This objective applies to other classes and field.</p>		
<p>6. Use research to inform generalist practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture on informing practice • Lecture on evidence based practice • Lecture on how research proceeds 	<p>Quiz grades Content area grade Final exam Clicker questions Research proposal grade</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in groups to discuss how research proposal is applicable to social work practice • Royse Chapter 3 (Ethical Thinking and Research) • Research proposal summary on conclusions for social work profession/practice 	
7. Understand basic research design and the interaction between theory and research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture on the role theory plays in research • Content area summary on way research proceeds • Royse Chapter 1 (Introduction) Chapter 2 (The way research proceeds) 	<p>Quiz grade Content area grade Final exam Clicker questions</p>
8. This objective number applies to other classes and to field.		
9. Demonstrate an understanding of approaches to quantitative research and the manner in which they inform entry level social work practice and evaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permeates all lectures • Lectures on design, measurement, evaluation • Royse Chapter 1 (introduction), Chapter 2 (the way research proceeds), Chapter 4 (Single Systems Design), Chapter 5 (Research Design for Group comparison), Chapter 6 (Understanding and using research instruments), Chapter 8 (Survey Research), Chapter 12 (Data Analysis) • Research proposal assignment 	<p>Content area summary grades Quiz grade Final exam Clicker question Research proposal assignment</p>
10. Demonstrate an ability to use communication in a professional manner to obtain and disseminate information throughout the research and evaluation process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in groups to discuss parts of the research proposal • Content area summaries • Royse Chapter 2 (the way research proceed), Chapter 13 (Professional Writing: Proposals, Research Reports, and Journal Articles). 	<p>Content area grades Class participation grades Research proposal grade</p>
11. This objective number applies to other classes and to field.		
12. This objective applies to other classes and to field.		

V. Bibliography

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