

**UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA LAS VEGAS  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

SW 416: Social Work Research I  
Fall 2016

Time: 5:30 – 8:20 pm Thursday  
Room: GUA 3217

Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Office: GUA \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: 895- \_\_\_\_\_ (O)  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Office Hours: 1:00 – 2:00 pm Monday  
4:00 – 5:00 pm Tuesday  
1:00 – 4:00 pm Thursday  
and by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

SW 416 Social Work Research I is the first course of the BSW Research Sequence. This course helps students understand the role and importance of research in the field of social work and social welfare. It provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to become an effective consumer of research, as well as a beginning producer of research. Specifically, this course teaches students the relevance of research to practice; ethics of social work research; basic concepts and terminology in research methodology; the basic steps needed to design and conduct a research project, particularly in problem formulation, literature review, hypothesis formulation, research design and sampling, and data collection; and descriptive statistics. It also emphasizes the needs of minorities and diverse populations and research issues involving these groups. (SW 426 will emphasize data analyses; SPSS; inferential statistics; discussion/conclusion/information dissemination; and single-subject designs and program evaluations.)

**COURSE RATIONALE**

One of the UNLV BSW program goals is to educate students to demonstrate the basic knowledge and skills in social research and statistics for the evaluation of professional practice at all system levels. In addition, students should learn to conduct ethical research with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. SW 416 and 426 help to fulfill this BSW program goal. SW 416 provides students with basic research concepts, knowledge, and skills, and prepares them to become effective research consumers and beginning producers. (Continuing from SW 416, SW 426 introduces students to data collection skills; inferential statistics; computer skills and application of SPSS; and data analyses. Further, SW 426 helps students learn how to systematically evaluate their own practice at all system levels.)

**PROGRAM COMPETENCIES**

The program competencies for the B.S.W. program flow from the mission, goals, and objectives of the School of Social Work and reflect the standards of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)—Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS):

1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.
2. Engage diversity and difference in practice.
3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.
4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.
5. Engage in policy practice.
6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

### **COURSE COMPETENCIES AND PRACTICE BEHAVIORS:**

In the Research Sequence, course competencies place an emphasis on engaging in practice-informed research and research-informed practice (for SW416 and SW426, more for SW416), and evaluating practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (for SW416 and SW426, more for SW426). The course material, instruction, and assignments will allow students the opportunity to achieve the following competency(ies):

#### **2.1.4: Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.**

- Use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research (Measures: Class discussion, midterm and final exams, final paper)
- Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings (Measures: Class discussion, midterm and final exams, final paper)
- Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery (Measures: Class discussion).

#### **2.1.9: Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.**

- Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes (Measures: Class discussion, midterm and final exams, final paper)
- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes (Measures: Class discussion, midterm and final exams, final paper)
- Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes (Measures: Class discussion, midterm and final exams, final paper)
- Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels (Measures: Class discussion).

**Academic Misconduct**—Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV's function as an educational institution.

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. See the *Student Academic Misconduct Policy* (approved December 9, 2005) located at: <https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/student-conduct>.

**Copyright**—The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves **with** and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. **You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws.** Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright>.

**Disability Resource Center (DRC)**—The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A 143, <http://drc.unlv.edu/>, 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. If you feel that you have a disability, please make an appointment with a Disabilities Specialist at the DRC to discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to the instructor during office hours so that you may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach the instructor in front of others to discuss your accommodation needs.

**Religious Holidays Policy**—Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor **within the first 14 calendar days of the course for fall and spring courses (excepting modular courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for summer and modular courses**, of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit: <http://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531>.

**Transparency in Learning and Teaching**—The University encourages application of

**the transparency method of constructing assignments for student success. Please see these two links for further information:**

**<https://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning>**

**<https://www.unlv.edu/provost/transparency>**

**Incomplete Grades**—The grade of I—Incomplete—can be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session but for reason(s) beyond the student’s control, and acceptable to the instructor, cannot complete the last part of the course, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. The incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester for undergraduate courses. Graduate students receiving “I” grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course requirements are not completed within the time indicated, a grade of F will be recorded and the GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete do not register for the course but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the I grade.

**Tutoring and Coaching**—The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring, academic success coaching and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, visit <http://www.unlv.edu/asc> or call 702-895-3177. The ASC building is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of the SSC (ASC Coaching Spot). Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library and College of Engineering TEB second floor.

**UNLV Writing Center**—One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 702-895-3908. The student’s Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. More information can be found at: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>.

**Rebelmail**—By policy, faculty and staff should e-mail students’ Rebelmail accounts only. Rebelmail is UNLV’s official e-mail system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication such as information about deadlines, major campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the university. Students’ e-mail prefixes are listed on class rosters. The suffix is always [@unlv.nevada.edu](mailto:@unlv.nevada.edu). **Emailing within WebCampus is acceptable.**

**Final Examinations**—The University requires that final exams given at the end of a course occur at the time and on the day specified in the final exam schedule. See the schedule at: <http://www.unlv.edu/registrar/calendars>.

**LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES**

To prepare the required papers for this class, you need to access various databases to search for relevant literature (books and articles). Some of the important databases are PsycINFO, Medline (PubMed), Social Work Abstract, and so forth. Please contact Ms. Susie Skarl, social work librarian, at [susie.skarl@unlv.edu](mailto:susie.skarl@unlv.edu) or 702-895-2141.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK**

Yegidis, B.L., Weinbach, R.W., & Myers, L.L. (2012). *Research methods for social workers*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

<i>Session</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Reading</i>
			<i>Corresponding Course Objectives</i>
			<i>Corresponding Measurements</i>

**INTRODUCTION**

1	Sep. 1	Overview of course Research’s relevance to practice Theory and concepts Deductive vs. inductive thinking Steps in a research study	Y, W. & M, Ch. 1 Objectives: 1, 4, 9  Measures: Midterm, Final Exam, Group Project Part I and Part II Papers
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**PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION**

2	Sep. 8	Ethics, politics, and factors of race/gender/cultural diversity in research	Y, W, & M, Ch.2 Objectives: 1, 4, 9  Measures: Midterm, Final Exam Group Project Part II Paper
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3	Sep. 15	Problem refinement: literature review Research goal development Hypotheses formulation	Y, W, & M, Ch. 3,4,5 Objectives: 4, 9 Measures: Midterm, Final Exam Group Project Part I Paper
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**MEASUREMENT OF VARIABLES**

4	Sep. 22	Independent and dependent variables Operationalization of variables,	Y, W, & M, Ch. 10 Objectives: 4, 9
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		Nominal/ordinal/interval/ratio level of measurement	Measures: Midterm, Final Exam, Group Project Part I Paper
5 & 6	Sep. 29 Oct. 6	Validity and reliability	Y, W, & M, Ch. 10 Objectives: 4, 9 Measures: Midterm, Final Exam, Group Project Part I Paper
		Scale/Questionnaire Construction	Y, W, & M, Ch. 12 Measures: Midterm, Final Exam, Group Project Part I Paper

### **SAMPLING**

7	Oct. 13	Population Sampling units and elements Sampling frame Sampling methods	Y, W, & M, Ch. 9  Measures: Final Exam, Group Project Part II Paper
8	Oct. 20	(Midterm Exam: covers sessions 1 through 7)	
9	Oct. 27	Probability and non-probability approaches	Y, W, & M, Ch. 9 Objectives: 4, 9 Measures: Final Exam, Group Project Part II Paper

(Group Project Part I Paper due)

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

10	Nov. 3	Exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory study Quantitative and qualitative approaches Survey design	Y, W, & M, Ch.6, 7, & 8, 11  Measures: Final Exam, Group Project Part II Paper
11	Nov. 10	Experimental design: True and quasi-experimental design Internal validity & external validity	Y, W, & M, Ch. 6  Measures: Final Exam, Group Project Part II Paper

12 Nov. 17 Qualitative research methods

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

Nov. 24 (Thanksgiving Recess)

13 Dec. 1 Data Analysis Y, W, & M, Ch.13, 14  
Statistical procedures W & G, Ch. 1, 2, 3  
Descriptive statistics Objectives: 4, 9  
SPSS Measures: Final Exam

14 Dec. 8 Review (Study Week)  
(Group Project Part II Paper due)

Dec. 15 (Final Exam, GUA 3217)

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Grades will be determined based on the following:

1. Attendance and Participation (10 points)
  2. Midterm Exam (26 points)
  3. Group Project Part I Paper (12 points)
  4. Group Project Part II Paper (12 points)
  5. Final Exam (40 points)
- 100 points

### **Grading Scale**

94-100 points = A  
90-93 points = A-  
87-89 points = B+  
83-86 points = B  
80-82 points = B-  
77-79 points = C+  
73-76 points = C  
70-72 points = C-  
67-69 points = D+  
63-66 points = D  
60-62 points = D-  
59 or less points=F

### **Posting Grades**

Students will receive their grades for each assignment/exam individually in class or via telephone or email upon request.

### **Midterm and Final Exams**

There is one midterm and one final exam during this semester. The midterm and final exam will cover material presented in class. The midterm covers sessions one through seven and includes 26 multiple-choice items (one point each). The final exam covers sessions one through fourteen and includes 40 multiple-choice items (one point each).

### **Group Project**

Five students should form a small group to conduct its project. Each group can use assigned lab time, and other time agreed to by the members, to discuss and complete the project. The instructor will be available for consultation.

The group project is to develop a research proposal. The research proposal should include:

- Part I:
  - A. Statement of problem
  - B. Literature review
  - C. Hypothesis and operationalization of variables
  
- Part II:
  - D. Research methodology
    - 1. Research design
    - 2. Sampling plan
    - 3. Data collection methods
  - E. Ethical considerations

The second semester (SW 426) research proposal should include:

- Part III:
  - F. Data analyses
    - 1. Statistical procedures planned
    - 2. Discussions of possible research results
    - 3. Implications to social work practice, policy, and research

As shown above, the research proposal is divided into three parts. Each group should submit the part I paper on October 27, and the part II paper on December 8. The length of each paper should be four to five double-spaced, typed pages (excluding reference pages).

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