

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA LAS VEGAS
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
SW 716: Social Work Research Methods I
Fall 2016

Time: 8:30 – 11:20 am Tuesday
Room: GUA 3217
Professor:
Office:
Email:
Office Hours:

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The foundation research sequence includes SW 716 and SW 726. SW 716 is the first course in the sequence; it emphasizes the importance of integration of research and practice and introduces students to the basic design and implementation of a research study. This course helps students develop scientific thinking, understand basic concepts related to research, and experience the basic steps of designing and conducting a research project. SW 716 covers problem identification, literature review, hypothesis development, general research design, sampling, ethical considerations, and basic statistics. The course includes both quantitative and qualitative research methods. It also emphasizes the needs of minorities and diverse populations and research issues involved with them. (SW 726 covers specific research designs, data collection, statistical methods and data analyses, SPSS, and final report writing.)

COURSE RATIONALE

In order to provide efficient and effective services to individuals, groups, and communities, social workers need to utilize existing research results, as well as generate new research results. SW 716 lays the foundation for students, acquainting them with scientific/objective thinking and providing them with the necessary research method knowledge and skills to become both effective consumers and producers of research.

PROGRAM COMPETENCIES

The program competencies for the M.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 SW716 and SW726, more for SW716), and evaluating practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (for SW716 and SW726, more for SW726). The course material, instruction, and assignments will allow students the opportunity to achieve the following competency(ies):

#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).

#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).

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.

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>.

There is to be no use of laptops, cell phones, or any other audio/visual/electronic technologies by students during class periods without specific approval by the instructor. Also, per NSHE policy, there is to be no audio/videotaping in the classroom without instructor approval or accommodations determined by the Disability Resource Center.

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>.

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 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. 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 or 702-895-2141.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (2014). *Research methods for social work*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning.

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS

Pan, M.L. (2013). *Preparing literature reviews*. Los Angeles, CA: Pyczak Publishing.

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.	Aug. 30	Overview of SWK 716 Research's relevance to practice Scientific thinking Evidence-based practice Deductive vs. inductive reasoning Theory and concepts Steps in a research study	Rubin & Babbie, Ch.1, 2, 3, 4 Objectives: 1, 4, 9 Measures: Midterm Exam, Final Exam, Project Part I
PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION			
2.	Sep. 6	Ethical issues in social work research Politics and factors of race/ gender/cultural diversity in research	R & B, Ch. 5, 6 Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4 Measures: Midterm Exam, Final Exam, Project Part II
3.	Sep. 13	Problem refinement: literature review Research goal development Hypotheses formulation Independent and dependent variables	R & B, Ch. 7, 8 Pan, Ch. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 Objectives: 4, 9 Measures: Midterm Exam, Final Exam, Project Part I

MEASUREMENT OF VARIABLES

4.	Sep. 20	Operationalization of variables Nominal/ordinal/interval/ratio level of measurement	R & B, Ch. 8, 9, 10 Objectives: 4, 9 Measures: Midterm Exam, Final Exam, Project Part I
5 & 6.	Sept. 27 Oct. 4	Validity and Reliability Constructing measurement instruments	R & B, Ch. 8, 9, 10 Objectives: 4, 9 Measures: Midterm Exam, Final Exam, Project Part I

SAMPLING

7 & 8.	Oct. 11 & 18	Population Sampling units and elements Sampling frame Sampling methods Probability and Non-probability Approaches	R & B, Ch. 15 Objectives: 4, 9 Measures: Midterm Exam, Final Exam, Project Part II
9.	Oct. 25	(Midterm Exam)	

RESEARCH DESIGN

10, 11, 12,& 13 12, Nov. 1, 8, 15, & 22	Introduction of various research designs	R&B Ch. 10, 11, 13, 16
	(Project Part I due on Nov. 8)	
	Quantitative and Qualitative approaches Exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory study Survey designs Experimental designs: True and quasi-experimental designs Internal validity & external validity Secondary analysis Meta-analysis	R&B Ch. 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18 Pan, Ch. 15, 16 Silverman, Ch 1, 2 Royse, Thyer, Padgett & Logan Ch. 1, 2 Objectives: 4, 9 Measures: Final Exam & Project Part II

14. Nov. 29	Qualitative Research	R&B, Ch. 18, 19, 20 Silverman, Ch. 3, 4, 5, 8, 9 Objectives: 4, 9 Measures: Final Exam
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DATA ANALYSIS

<p>Overview of statistical procedures</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Descriptive statistics</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Inferential statistics</p> <p>Computer applications: SPSS 22.0</p>	<p>L & F Ch. 2, 3, 4</p> <p>George&Mallery, Ch 1-5</p> <p>R&B, Ch. 21, 22, 23</p> <p>Objectives: 4, 9</p> <p>Measures: Final Exam</p> <p>G & M, Ch 6,7</p> <p>Handouts</p> <p>Objectives: 4, 9</p> <p>Measures: Final Exam</p>
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15	Dec. 6	<p style="text-align: center;">Review</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Study Week</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Project Part II due)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dec. 13</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Final Exam)</p>
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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Grades will be determined based on the following assignments:

1. Attendance and participation (10 points)
 2. Mid-term Exam (24 points)
 3. Final Exam (36 points)
 4. Project Part I (15 points)
 5. Project Part II (15 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.

Attendance and Participation

Students are expected to attend all classes and actively participate in class discussions.

Midterm and Final Exams

There will be 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 eight and includes 24 multiple-choice items (one point each). The final exam covers sessions one through fourteen and includes 30 multiple-choice items (one point each) and 2 essay items (three points each).

Project

Each student will develop a research proposal/project. The first semester (SW 716) 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 726) research proposal/project should include:

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

As shown above, the research proposal/project is divided into three parts. The student should submit the Part I paper on November 8, and the Part II paper on December 6. The length of each paper should be four to five double-spaced, typed pages (excluding reference pages).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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