Social Work 650: Methods of Social Research
University of Wisconsin-Madison
School of Social Work
Spring 2015, Jan. 20–May 11

Class Time: Tuesdays, 3:30 – 5:25PM
Classroom: ENGINEERING HALL, room 1800
Instructor: Tally Moses., M.S.W., Ph.D.

Office Hours: By appt.
Room: SW Bldg, room 310
Email/Phone: moses@wisc.edu;
(608) 263-3674

Teaching Assistant:
Bomi Kim: bkim67@wisc.edu
Scott Wood: srwood2@wisc.edu

Lab Sections:
Lab 301: M 9:30-10:45AM; SOCIAL WORK 106 (BK)
Lab 302: M 2:30-3:45PM; SOCIAL WORK 110 (BK)
Lab 303: M 4:00-5:15PM; SOCIAL WORK 110 (SW)
Lab 304: W 2:30-3:45PM; SOCIAL WORK 110 (SW)
Lab 305: W 4:00-5:15PM; SOCIAL WORK 110 (SW)
Lab 306: W 4:00-5:15PM; SOCIAL WORK 114 (BK)

I. Catalogue Description
Social research and problems of project design and programming. Distinctive characteristics of investigations, directed to planning, administrative and scientific objectives.

II. Course Overview
The purpose of this course is to develop students' understanding and skills in the approaches, techniques, and challenges of conducting social work research and to enable students to be competent and discerning consumers of social science literature.

III. Course Format
Class sessions are composed of primarily of lectures and large group discussions. In-class i>clicker questions in lectures will be used to help us identify that we need to review. Lab discussions are focused on review of course material, review of assignments, as well as group or individual exercises. Quizzes may also be used in labs (ungraded) to give you an opportunity to evaluate your learning. Your active participation in class labs and completion of all assignments is expected and essential to how you will be evaluated.
IV. Course Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies addressed in course</th>
<th>Practice behaviors addressed in course</th>
<th>Assignment(s) measuring behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1.6: Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.</td>
<td>* Use practice experience to inform areas of worthwhile scientific inquiry. * Use research concepts to judge what qualifies as effective practice.</td>
<td>Homework Assignments Lab Exercises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.10d: Understand evaluation</td>
<td>* Apply research skills to analyze social work interventions.</td>
<td>Homework Assignments Lab Exercises Field agency program evaluation assignment In-class Examinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More specific research-based competencies</td>
<td>* Understand the logic of the scientific research process and its relationship to social work theory and practice. * Develop a beginning understanding of the conceptual foundations and methodological tools of qualitative and quantitative social research. * Demonstrate an ability to critically evaluate research literature with respect to its relevance, quality, and utility for informed social work practice. * Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical standards guiding social research and procedures for protecting human subjects. -- Understand how to use research to advance social and economic justice. -- Demonstrate an understanding of what is meant by culturally competent research.</td>
<td>Homework Assignments Lab Exercises In-class Examinations</td>
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V. Course Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings &amp; Homework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/20</td>
<td>Course overview * Introduction of instructor and TAs * The role/function of research in social work * Evidence based practice research</td>
<td>Text Chs. 1 &amp; 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/27</td>
<td>Language of social science research. * Link between theory &amp; research * Basic paradigms of knowledge and epistemologies * Models of causal explanation * Basic methods: Quantitative, qualitative and mixed method</td>
<td>Text Ch. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Readings &amp; Homework</td>
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</table>
| 2/3     | Social Work Research Ethics  
* History of ethics in research  
* Contemporary ethical standards  
* Studying oppressed & vulnerable groups  
[Guest speaker: Tracy Schroepfer, Associate Professor] | Text, Chs. 4 & 5  
* Homework 1 due |
| 2/10**  | Problem Formulation  
* Literature Review  
* Defining the “problem”  
* Decisions about what, who, and how to study  
* Time dimension in research  
* Use of theory  
* Hypotheses | Text Chs. 6 & 7  
* Homework 2 due |
| **We begin the use of i>clickers!** | |
| 2/17    | Measurement  
* Different types of variables  
* Defining variables  
* Conceptualization  
* Operationalization | Text Ch. 7 & Ch. 20 (pp. 501-504)  
* Homework 3 due |
| 2/24    | Evaluation of measures and strength of associations  
* Measurement reliability and validity  
* Measures of association  
* Statistical significance levels  
* Clinical significance | Text Ch. 8, Ch. 21 (pp. 532-540 & pp. 545-546)  
* Homework 4 due |
| 3/3     | Sampling  
* Probability  
* Nonprobability | Text, Ch. 14  
* Homework 5 due |
| 3/10    | MIDTERM EXAM | |
| 3/17    | Survey research & secondary data analysis  
* Selecting & constructing measures  
* Conducting surveys  
* Using existing data (quantitative) | Text Ch. 15 & Ch. 16 (407-417 only)  
* Homework 6 due |
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<th>Lecture</th>
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<th>Readings &amp; Homework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 3/24    | Program Evaluation  
  * Formative Evaluation  
  * Summative Evaluation  
  * Logic models | Text. Ch. 13 |
| 3/31    | SPRING BREAK! | |
| 4/7     | Quantitative Designs  
  * Overview of research designs  
  * Internal/external validity  
  * Experimental designs  
  *Guest speaker: TBA* | Text, Ch. 10  
  "Homework 7 due" |
| 4/14    | Quantitative Research Designs, Cont.  
  * Quasi-experimental group designs  
  * Single subject designs  
  * Correlational research designs | Text, Chs. 11 & 12  
  "Homework 8 due" |
| 4/21 & 4/28 | Qualitative Research  
  *Qualitative research paradigms  
  *Qualitative data collection  
  *Qualitative Data Analysis  
  *Ways to enhance rigor | Text, Ch. 17, & 18, Ch. & 19  
  (pp. 478-480 & 483-487 only)  
  Ch. 16 (pp. 419-427)  
  "Homework 9 due 4/21" |
| 5/5     | Catch-up, revisit program evaluation,  
  and review for final exam | "Homework 10 due" |
|         | Exam Reviews (not mandatory)-- TBA | |
| 5/11    | FINAL EXAM | 12:25pm-2:25pm, room TBA |
| 5/15    | Field Agency Program Evaluation assignment due (MSW students) | |
VI. Text and Other Materials for the Course

**Required text**:  

*The 8th Edition (2014) of this text is available and you may choose to purchase it. A listing of page translations between the 7th and 8th editions for readings outlined in the syllabus will be posted on Learn@UW.*

**Required articles**:  
Along with the homework assignments, research articles will be posted on Learn@UW. You will be expected to download articles from Learn @ UW, read them, and utilize them for completing homework assignments. If you have any problem with this, please speak with me.

The articles assigned in this class are used to (1) give you examples of the type of research we’ll be covering, (2) provide an opportunity for you to apply the concepts you learn in class and via reading the Textbook, and (3) promote a greater comfort level in approaching research literature. Be sure to keep all of the articles for the duration of the course because we may return to an earlier reading.

**Required i>clicker**:  
You are required to purchase an i>clicker+ (plus) remote for in-class participation (online). i>clicker is a response system that allows students to respond to questions the instructor poses using the remote. The class’s aggregate response distribution shows immediately on the screen. Your responses will be graded for participation, not for accuracy. Each clicker has a unique serial number on the back of the remote. Place a piece of scotch tape over that bar code and ID to preserve it.

The i>clicker response system will be used in every class between Feb. 10th and May 5th (except for midterm exam session) and you are responsible for bringing your i>clicker remote to each class.

Please register your i>clicker remote online (https://www1.iclicker.com/register-clicker/) by **Feb 10** and be ready to go in class on **that day**. Complete the fields with your first name, last name, remote ID (the series of numbers and sometimes letters found on the bottom of the back of your i>clicker remote), and your UW net ID [e.g., “moses” as in moses@wisc.edu would be my net ID]. You must be present in class at least once and voted on at least one question, in order to complete this registration properly.

*At the end of the semester, if you do not need the i>clicker remote any longer, you would likely be able to sell the i>clicker back to the bookstore or on some other online market exchange and recover some of the cost.*
VII. Evaluation of Student Outcomes: Assignments & Grading

EXAMS
There will be a mid-term exam (covering material through 2/24) and a final exam (covering material from 3/3-5/5) in this class. Both exams will consist of multiple choice and short-answer questions. A couple of weeks prior to each exam, you will be given a list of concepts that will be covered on the exam. You will be allowed 1 double-sided page of notes for each exam. These note pages will be turned in along with your exam.

Final exam: Thursday, 5/11, at 12:25pm-2:25pm, room TBA

READINGS
You are expected to read all of the textbook material assigned BEFORE each class, so that you can keep up with the class lectures and contribute to class discussions. A research article associated with the weekly homework will be posted each week on Learn@UW. You are expected to read these articles—we will refer to the articles in lectures, labs, and assignments. So it is important that you bring the week’s article readings with you to class/lab every week. Also, be sure to keep all of the article readings for the duration of the course because we may go back to an earlier reading.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS
There will be 10 homework assignments during the course of the semester, each worth 16 points. As noted, these will be posted on Learn@UW on a weekly basis. You are asked to type up and bring to class—they will be collected in the beginning of class. Homework assignments will ask you to apply concepts from lecture and textbook to the research articles assigned during the semester. The homework assignments will typically cover concepts already reviewed in class in order to give you an opportunity to apply the concepts and learn by doing so. All homework assignments must be typed and are due at the beginning of the lecture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ Excellent or Very Good (16/16)</td>
<td>All questions completed; and Your writing is clear and cogent; and Each response is complete and demonstrates thoughtfulness; and Responses are generally accurate, demonstrate understanding; and No more than a couple of minor mistakes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>± Adequate (12/16)</td>
<td>All questions completed; and Your writing is clear and cogent; and Effort is evidenced in your responses but responses could be more complete; or Two or more responses are inaccurate in part or total, demonstrating some confusion or lack of understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-- Less-than-Adequate (8/16)</td>
<td>One or more questions are left unanswered or incomplete; or Responses are difficult to understand and therefore difficult to judge; or Lack of effort shown in several responses (responses are not complete); or Several responses are inaccurate in part or total, demonstrating confusion or lack of understanding.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Homework assignments cannot be made up or turned in late (late is defined as past the beginning of lecture). In some circumstances, if you have an illness or a situation which is beyond your control and that prevents you from attending class or turning in homework on time, you may be able to email the homework assignment. This situation will be handled on a case by case basis. You must contact your TA and discuss this with her/him.

Academic Integrity: Homework must be written in your own words. Please do not copy directly from fellow students, from the text, internet or from the article itself (see note on plagiarism below*).

*Plagiarism or cheating (e.g., copying from a peer, from the text, online material) is tantamount to academic misconduct and will not be tolerated! Plagiarism is defined as the use of scholarly work by other students researchers/ writers where you claim that work as your own. Any assignment containing plagiarized writing will receive a “0” as the least severe level of punishment. Other options, depending on my judgment, could result in failing the class or expulsion from the University. All students involved would receive the punishment (givers and receivers). Please don’t do it! If you’re having difficulties, please see me or the TA and we will recommend an appropriate course of action to enable you to meet the needs of the assignment.

LABS
There will be 13 labs during the course of the semester. Each lab will be devoted to the following: (1) addressing students’ questions pertaining to lecture material or readings; (2) reviewing homework assignments; (3) taking practice quizzes; and (4) individual or small group exercises that provide opportunities to apply the concepts discussed in class by performing various tasks associated with a research project (e.g., develop research questions and instruments, select and think through sampling strategy depending on research agenda, etc.)

Lab attendance is mandatory; attendance will be taken in each lab. You may miss 1 lab with no penalty, but missing more than 2 labs may result in significant lowering of your class grade and it is a cause for concern. Lab points will be given for attendance and participation; each lab is worth approximately 6.5 points.

FIELD AGENCY EVALUATION ASSIGNMENT (FOR MSW STUDENTS ONLY): MSW students will be required to conduct an assessment of how well their field agency utilizes program, evaluation to inform service delivery. This assignment involves making recommendations for both formative/process and summative/outcome evaluations that your agency can use. Explicit guidelines for this assignment will be provided in class.

I>CLICKEr POINTS: Your i>clicker participation in responding to questions interspersed throughout each of 12 classes that use the i>clicker is worth 10% (BA/BSW) or 5% (MSW) of your overall class grade. Typically (unless otherwise noted), you will receive 1 point for answering (i.e. participating) regardless of whether you select the correct answer or not.
PARTICIPATION
Attendance in both labs and classes is mandatory. If you have to miss class or lab for any reason, it would be best to notify the instructor and TA ahead of time by email. You are responsible for catching up on the material on your own and cannot make up the missed i>clicker points.

Overall grade scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course %</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94 – 100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Outstanding, surpasses expectations in all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88 – 93</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Surpasses expectations in many areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82 – 87</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Meets expectations in all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76 – 81</td>
<td>BC</td>
<td>Meets expectations in some areas, below in others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 – 75</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Below expectations in most areas, not acceptable graduate-level work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64 – 69</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Below expectations in all areas, not acceptable graduate-level work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;=63</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Fails to meet minimal expectations in all areas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GRADE WEIGHTS FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS (BA, BSW)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lab Participation</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i&gt;clicker pts</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework Assignments</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>280</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>800</td>
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GRADE WEIGHTS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS (MSW)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lab Participation</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i&gt;clicker pts</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework Assignments</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Agency Program Evaluation</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VIII. Additional Course Information

POWER POINT SLIDES
Class lectures will be accompanied by a power point slide presentation. The PowerPoint (ppt) slides will be posted on Learn@UW on a weekly basis (by Monday at 8pm at the latest). It is up to you whether or not to print the ppt slides and use these as a template for note-taking.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN CLASS
You are not permitted to use your laptop, iPad, Kindle, or any other device including your cell phone while in lecture or in labs. The iclicker is the only technology to be used by students in class.
EMAIL
I use email quite frequently to send out various messages and updates. Be sure to read your email before coming to class.

STATISTICS
An introductory statistics course is a prerequisite for the class. If you have not had statistics in several years, please get hold of a statistics text to review and/or read chapters 20 and 21 in the Rubin and Babbie text book.

STUDY GROUPS
I would strongly urge students to form study groups. Students who have done this in the past have found it very helpful. An important consideration in forming a successful study group is the inclusion of peers that have a better grasp of the material. However, as noted above, even if working on homework together, the writing must be your own—be sure to write independently.

INCOMPLETES
The University policy regarding the granting of incompletes will be strictly adhered to.

FINAL COMMENT: I very much hope that you find this course interesting and intellectually stimulating!! PLEASE let me know, at any time during the semester, if you have suggestions for making this class a better learning experience.