School of Social Work  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
1350 University Avenue  
Madison, WI 53706  
SW650 Methods of Social Work Research  
Summer 2016

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Office Hours: by appointment  
Meeting Times and Location: Saturday 9AM to 1:10 PM, HSS 202

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 Competencies and practice Behaviors and Assignments
Your successful completion of this course means that you will have progressed toward achieving some of the course social work competencies by demonstrating the following behaviors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies addressed in course</th>
<th>Practice behaviors addressed in course</th>
<th>Assignment(s) measuring behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2.1.6: Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research | * Use practice experience to inform areas of worthwhile scientific inquiry  
* Use research concepts to judge what qualifies as effective practice | Methods Lab Assignments Research Proposal |
| 2.1.10d: Understand evaluation | * Critically monitor and evaluate interventions | Methods Lab Assignments Research Proposal |

IV. Course Content
Class sessions are divided into two segments. The first three hours of class will be composed primarily of lectures, discussions and videos; during the final class hour, students’ will engage in individual and/or group exercises in order to apply the material covered during the lecture.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 4</td>
<td><strong>An Introduction to Scientific Inquiry in Social Work</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Overview and Introductions&lt;br&gt;• Why study research?&lt;br&gt;• Assessing the quality of research&lt;br&gt;• Examining the impact of philosophy and theory on social work research</td>
<td>Babbie, Chapter 1&lt;br&gt;Babbie, Chapter 2&lt;br&gt;Babbie, Chapter 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Specific methods of qualitative research
- Qualitative data analysis
- Content Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 23</td>
<td>Qualitative Methods (continued)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qualitative Field Research Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 30</td>
<td>Quantitative Data Analysis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Final Exam Review</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Part C Due</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>August 6</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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V. Texts and Reading Materials for the course


You may also choose to utilize the 4th, 5th, 6th, or 7th edition of Babbie; if you do so, let me know so I can ensure the chapter numbers detailed in the table above are accurate.

Additional readings be provided by the instructor via email or posted on Learn@UW.

VI. Evaluation of Competencies and Practice Behaviors: Assignments, Grading and Methods

**Methods Lab Assignments**
You will complete a total of seven lab-based assignments during the course of the semester; the grades on the six highest lab assignments will be tallied into your overall grade, the lowest grade will be dropped. The lab assignments provide you with an opportunity to apply the concepts addressed in class and via the text. Lab assignments should be completed and turned in to the instructor prior to the end of the class session in which the lab activity occurs. If you miss lab, you will not be able to make up the lab assignment.

**Research Proposal**
This assignment will provide you with experience conceptualizing and writing a research proposal. *You will receive formative feedback on Parts A and B; the actual grade is assigned to the entire document (Part A, B, and C). Parts A and B should be revised and resubmitted along with Part C in order to fulfill the requirements for the Research Proposal assignment.*

**PART A: Problem Statement**
In the Problem Statement, you will identify a research topic. In this paper, provide the reader with a brief introduction to the topic on which you will focus your proposed research. Information regarding the prevalence or severity of an issue is often included in this portion of the proposal. This type of information lets the reader know that the topic is relevant. Keep in
mind, a topic is not a research question. Essentially, the goal of the problem statement is to convince the reader that the “problem” you are interested in is important to the discipline of social work. This document should be approximately one page in length. The document must be formatted according to most recent APA manual.

PART B: Literature Review
For the literature review, you are to locate at least ten articles from scholarly, peer-reviewed journals related to your selected topic. Summarize each of the selected articles. Be sure to highlight the following items for each article:

- What is the research question?
- How did the researcher collect information regarding the research question (this is usually in the Method section of the article)?
- What did the researcher find out related to the research question (this is usually in the Results section of the article)?

After summarizing each article, provide your interpretation of “what is known” about the selected topic. In this section, you should compare and contrast the articles to identify commonalities and differences in terms of findings. Please submit a copy of each selected article along with your literature review.

The article review section should be ½ to 1 page in length for each article and double-spaced. The interpretation section should be at least three pages in length. The document must be formatted according to most recent APA manual; however, you do not need to submit an abstract.

PART C: Proposal
In the research proposal, you will exhibit your ability to conceptualize and design a research project. The sections of the research proposal are as follows:

Introduction
In this portion of the paper, the information presented in the problem statement paper (written earlier in the semester) is often relevant. In the introduction, you are convincing the reader that your topic is important to the discipline of social work and an area that is in need of additional research-based knowledge.

Research Question
In this portion of the research design paper, you will state your research question.

Sampling
Describe the individuals who will participate in the research, as well as the sampling procedure used to select the subjects. Be sure to state and justify your proposed sample size and specify the unit of analysis. In addition, address any ethical issues regarding human participants and provide a brief description of the procedures you will use to protect human subjects.
Measurement and Data-Collection Methods
In this section, if appropriate, provide definitions of each variable and indicate the independent variable and the dependent variable. Keep in mind that the mechanism for measuring or observing the variables contributes significantly to the operational definition of the variables. You should also provide the reader information about the measures/data collection instruments that you would use during the data collection portion of your proposed research. If you are using existing measures, provide information on the reliability, validity or trustworthiness of the measures. If you are creating your own measures, discuss the steps taken to ensure that the measures are trustworthy. Attach a copy of the measure(s)/data collection instruments. In addition, if you are using an interview guide, talk about where the interviews will take place and who will conduct the interviews. You should describe the procedure in a way that another researcher could replicate the same study just by reading about the procedure.

Data Analysis
Identify how you are going to process and analyze the data.

Conclusion
I recommend that you structure the paper based on the headings and subheadings provided in this outline. The paper should be APA formatted; however, you do not need to include an abstract. The length of this paper will vary based on your research design; however, a minimum of five pages is expected.

Note: All assignments will be collected at the beginning of class on the week that the homework is due. Plagiarism will not be tolerated; details regarding plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct can be found at the following website: http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html

Grading Scale
Research Proposal  40 points
Lab Assignments (6)  5 points each for a TOTAL of 30 points
Mid-Term Exam  15 points
Final Exam  15 points
TOTAL  100 points

Grades are based on percentage of points earned.
94-100  A  Outstanding, surpasses expectations in all areas
88-93  AB  Surpasses expectations in many areas
82-87  B  Meets expectations in all areas
76-81  BC  Meets expectations in some areas, below in others
70-75  C  Below expectations in most areas, not acceptable graduate-level work
64-69  D  Below expectations in all areas, not acceptable graduate-level work
63 or below  F  Fails to meet minimum expectations in all areas

VII. Policies
Attendance
Due to the accelerated nature of courses in the University of Wisconsin-Madison Part-Time MSW Program, students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and to arrive on time. If you have to miss class or lab for any reason, it would be best to notify the instructor ahead of time by email. You are responsible for catching up on the material on your own. Students are not allowed to make up points for labs missed due to absence.

Student Behavior Policy
In order to learn, we must be open to the views of people different from ourselves. Each and every voice in the classroom is important and brings with it a wealth of experiences, values and beliefs. In this time we share together over the semester, please honor the uniqueness of your fellow classmates and appreciate the opportunity we have to learn from each other. Please respect your fellow students’ opinions and refrain from personal attacks or demeaning comments of any kind. Finally, remember to keep confidential all issues of a personal or professional nature discussed in class.

Students with Disabilities
If you require accommodations to obtain equal access to this class or to any assignments that I may give, please contact me as soon as possible. I want all my students to have an excellent learning experience.

Readings
You are expected to read all of the material assigned before each class session. Please bring your text, as well as any ancillary readings, with you to class.