I. Catalogue Description

The course focuses on giving graduate students skills in applied quantitative data analysis.

Attributes and Designations: This course fulfills a requirement for a seminar in applications of research methods for the PhD in social welfare.  
Requisites: The course is part of the curriculum for PhD students in social welfare. It is also open to advanced MSW students and interested graduate students from other departments with instructor consent.  
How credit hour is met: This class meets for one 3 hour class period each week over the spring semester and carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, writing, data analysis, studying) for approximately 6 hours out of classroom each week. The syllabus includes additional information about meeting times and expectations for student work.

II. Course Overview

This PhD seminar provides each student with the opportunity to complete a quantitative research paper on a topic of their choosing; ideally, the paper will be submitted for publication in a peer-review journal after completion of the course. The course aims to increase students’ knowledge of methodological problems and issues faced in applied quantitative research, sharpen their skills in conducting and presenting their own research, and improve their ability to evaluate the research of others.

This course is most relevant for students who have two of the following in place: (a) a research question; (b) familiarity with a dataset that can be used to answer the question, and (c) statistical programming skills. The instructors will point students toward a dataset if a student needs one.
III. Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of the course, students should demonstrate: (1) advanced knowledge of the problems and issues faced in conducting quantitative research (2) skills in all phases of a quantitative analysis research paper, from the proposal to selecting data and methods, to analyzing results, to writing the paper; (3) skills in presenting their own research and evaluating the research of others.

Course activities consist of: (1) joint reviews of students' proposals for their papers, as if the class were a review panel; (2) an overview of selected quantitative analysis approaches and methods; (3) ongoing discussions of topics that arise while doing quantitative research; and (4) class presentations of final papers with discussants, as if the class were a professional conference session.

IV. Texts and reading material

There are no required textbooks. Required readings will be posted on the class web site or available from the web. However, we highly recommend that you include research, statistics, and programming texts in your personal library.

V. Assignments

Final paper and preliminary products: The final product will be a 20-30 page research paper that uses quantitative analysis. The paper should include a discussion of the significance of the research question, a literature review, a description of data and methods, specific hypotheses that are tested, quantitative results, limitations, and conclusions and next steps. The paper is due at midnight May 6. Papers turned in after this date will accrue significant penalties. The goal for this paper is a journal-ready manuscript. It should have the same components as the near-final paper (see below), the same style requirements and the same page constraints. With your final paper, we also want: (a) a one-page memo that outlines how close you think this is to submission to a journal, and, if it’s not yet ready (we assume this will be all of you), what you think must be done prior to submission, and what you think should be done but is probably not required; (b) a “revises and resubmit memo to the editor” that outlines the revisions have been made from the near-final (and why) and which comments from reviewers have not been addressed (and why); (c) any homeworks or preliminary products that were not turned in electronically – and, even if they were, any of these on which you were given handwritten feedback.

Several preliminary products will lead up to this:

- a one-page proposal abstract is required: this should include ~2 sentences on why your topic is important, a statement of the research question, including the dependent variable and key independent variables and 1-2 sentences on the data you’re planning to use, the sample, and the main statistical method (about 1 page in total) due February 1, 8 am.
- a working proposal is required, including a discussion of the significance of the research question, a very brief literature review, data, methods, and limitations (maximum 5 single-spaced pages without references), due February 14, 8 am.
• a memo that describes whether (and how) the final paper will differ from the proposal abstract is required, due **March 15, 8 am**.

• an OPTIONAL draft of the introduction and literature review. If this is turned in by **March 15, 8 am** you will receive feedback on these sections.

• a draft of the results section. This should generally not exceed 5 double-spaced pages, with tables not counting in this number, due **March 29, 8 am**

• a required “near-final” paper (**due Thursday at 8 a.m. the week before the presentation**). A full paper is due, and a journal submission is the model of what we are looking for. “Near-final” means you get an opportunity to sharpen and improve it later, it does **not** mean an incomplete version is acceptable. It should include an abstract, a discussion of the significance of the research question, a literature review, a description of data and methods, specific hypotheses that are tested, quantitative results, limitations, conclusions, and implications for policy and/or practice (and, obviously, references and tables). Footnotes are acceptable. Format should be a standard research paper, one inch margins, 11- or 12-point font, double-spaced. Any common style is acceptable for references. Note: If you have more than 25 pages of 11-point text (excluding tables), you have too much material for a single article.

**Discussant for peer paper:** the last weeks of the course will be a mock conference, with students presenting papers and acting as discussants. Information on the discussant role, as well as more detail on all preliminary products, will be distributed.

**Homework:** There will be two homework assignments. These will be focused on each student’s project; for example, one assignment will be to provide a cross-tabulation between the student’s dependent variable and their key independent variable, and a very short discussion of what they learned.

**Class Participation:** Because much of the learning occurs during the class time, students are required to attend every class or to receive approval in advance for not attending. In addition, students are expected to have carefully and critically read all assigned readings, and to be prepared to discuss them.

**VI. Grading**

**Grades:** 45% final paper and preliminary products; 10% discussant for peer paper; 45% homework and class participation. This is a graduate seminar; the expectation is that the seminar will provide a collaborative learning environment.

We use the following criteria for grading consistent with that for graduate courses in the School

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Outstanding; surpasses expectations in all areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Surpasses expectations in many areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Meets expectations in all areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>Meets expectations in some areas; below in others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Below expectations in most areas, not acceptable graduate work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Below expectations in all areas</td>
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</table>
Fails to meet minimal expectations in all areas, not acceptable work

**Academic integrity and plagiarism.** Academic honesty is a critical requirement for graduate study. Please review the School of Social Work guidelines on plagiarism – [https://socwork.wisc.edu/sites/socwork.wisc.edu/files/content/pdf/Plagiarism081318.pdf](https://socwork.wisc.edu/sites/socwork.wisc.edu/files/content/pdf/Plagiarism081318.pdf). If a student intentionally misrepresents another’s work as their own, the student will receive no credit for the assignment and a final semester grade no higher than a C. Other penalties may be assigned consistent with School and University policy.

**VII. Expectations of Students and Instructors**

**Respect for Diversity:** It is our intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students’ learning needs are addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class is viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is our intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let either of us know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups.

**Accommodation for Students with a Disability:** The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students requiring accommodation, as approved by the McBurney Center, are expected to provide the instructors with a copy of their Verified Individualized Services and Accommodation (VISA) by the second week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. For more information, please contact the McBurney Center at mcburney@odos.wisc.edu; Phone at 608-263-2741; Text messaging at 608-225-7956; or by FAX at 608-265-2998, 711 (Via relay); Address is 702 W Johnson St #2104, Madison, WI 53706 Accommodations will not be made without a VISA. Faculty will work either directly with the student or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations.

**Religious Observances:** In accordance with University policy, accommodation will be made for students who are participating in a religious holiday or who have a conflict between religious observances and mandatory class requirements. To request accommodation, notify the instructor within the first two weeks of class of the specific days or dates on which a student requests relief.

**Expectations of Students:** Students are expected to:

- Attend each class session (or receive approval in advance for non-attendance) and actively participate in the in-class discussions. (If you cannot attend class, you are not only responsible for gaining permission in advance, but also for knowing what occurred and getting any handouts).
- Carefully and critically read all required readings before coming to class
• Complete all assignments by the due dates and times (thus you are expected to plan your life so that you can make the required deadlines in the course).
• Inform the instructor during the first week of the semester of any special accommodations needed for meeting class expectations (as approved by the McBurney Center).
• Be respectful of other class members and instructors --a diversity of views and opinions may be articulated during discussions. Respect includes cell phones being turned off and appropriate use of laptops.

Expectations of Instructors: The instructors are expected to:
• Co-create a classroom environment that facilitates learning.
• Assure that course objectives are being met.
• Be available for in-person consultations, either through regular office hours or by appointment.
• Be available to address student questions through emailed correspondence during normal business hours.
• Give reasonable guidance on preparing for assignments.
• Be open to discussing concerns about the course.
• Evaluate and return assignments in a timely manner.

VIII. Course content (tentative)

Class 1, January 28: Overview of course and publication process

One-page proposal abstract due to the dropbox Friday, February 1, 8 am.

Class 2, February 4: Mock review panel 1: of the abstracts submitted, which ones should we invite to submit a more detailed proposal?

Read all one-page proposals

Readings on what makes a good proposal (class website)

Class 3, February 11: Descriptive analyses and measurement issues


**Working proposal due Thursday, February 14, 8am**

Class 4, February 18: Mock review panel 2: evaluating all working proposals

Read all working proposals

*Homework 1 (on variable construction) will be due Friday, February 22, 8am*

Class 5, February 25: Evaluating working proposals, continued

Read remaining working proposals

Additional readings may be required

Class 6, March 4: Typical difficulties in conducting empirical research


*Homework for class Monday March 4th*: Bring copies of your output; details distributed by email

*Homework 2 (on relationships between independent and dependent variables due Friday March 8, 8 am)*

CLASS 7, 8, and 9 FEATURE SPEAKERS presenting one of their own papers in which they use a particular statistical technique. They will present: a) a brief review of the question, data, and findings, (b) a more extended discussion of the method, including why a particular statistical method was chosen (instead of a simpler approach), and some of the advantages and disadvantages of conducting the chosen type of analysis, and (c) a discussion of some of the hidden decisions made in this particular piece of empirical research, some of the difficulties encountered, and how they were solved.

Class 7, March 11: Professor Katherine Magnuson (HLM -Hierarchical linear modeling)
Readings to be determined

*Required memo describing changes between proposal & paper due Friday, March 15, 8 am*

*Optional assignment (draft of introduction and lit review of final paper) due Friday, March 15, 8 am*

Spring recess March 18

Class 8, March 25: Professor Jan S. Greenberg (SEM – Structural equation modeling)

Readings to be determined

*Required results draft due Friday, March 29, 8 am*

Class 9, April 1: PhD Candidate Angela Guarin (Event history analysis)

Readings to be determined

CLASS 10-12 FEATURE STUDENT PRESENTATIONS IN A MOCK CONFERENCE. “Near-final” papers are due by Thursday at 8 am the week before the presentation. Each student is required to read all the papers that will be presented every week. Each student will be assigned to be a formal discussant of one or more papers.

Class 10, April 8: Mock conference I
Papers by: Molly Costanzo and Yixia Cai

Class 11, April 15: Mock conference II
Papers by: Aaron Reilly, Christina Kim and Mariela Quesada Centeno

Class 12, April 22: Mock conference III
Papers by: Seungmi/Laura Klunder, Yoona Kim and Leslie Hodges

Class 13, April 29: Any remaining presentations or techniques. Brunch at 1141 Elizabeth Street

FINAL PAPER AND 2 MEMOS DUE May 6, midnight

IX. Rules, Rights, and Responsibilities
For statement on academic integrity, see section VI.
For statement on accommodations for students with a disability, see section VII.