

**University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
School of Social Work**

Course: SOWO 510, Foundations for Evidence-Based Practice and Program Evaluation
Spring 2015, Monday 9:00-11:50 A.M., Room 101

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Office Hours: Before class and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES: Social workers, whether they are front-line practitioners, program managers, administrators, or policy makers, routinely face complex human situations involving individuals who come from diverse backgrounds. The social interventions social workers have at their disposal vary in their degree of effectiveness with any given individual, family, group, organization or community. In order to provide the most effective social work programs, policies and interventions, social workers must be able to determine if what they are doing is beneficial to the individuals, families, groups, organizations, or communities they serve. To this end, students will develop knowledge of the purposes of research and evaluation and the approaches and methodologies necessary to evaluate social work interventions. Upon completion of this course students will be able to demonstrate:

1. Skill in developing and implementing social intervention evaluations that promote evidence-based social work practice and policy;
2. Skill in evaluating social intervention research and applying findings to social work practice and policy;
3. Skill in qualitative and quantitative evaluation design, measurement, data analysis, and knowledge dissemination;
4. Knowledge of the practical, political, and economic issues related to the evaluation of social interventions;
5. Skill in accessing and assessing public databases and research literature as a foundation for evidence-based practice;
6. Skill in designing social intervention research that is sensitive to racial, religious, gender, sexual orientation, social, economic, and other issues of difference; and
7. Ability to apply social work ethics and values to the evaluation of social interventions.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND READINGS:

Rubin, R. & Babbie, E. R. (2011). Essential research methods for social work. (3rd ed) Belmont, CA: Brooks-Cole.

This text book is available in the UNC Student Stores. Links to other assigned and/or recommended readings, videos, or slides will be posted on the class Sakai site: <http://sakai.unc.edu>.

POLICY ON INCOMPLETE OR LATE ASSIGNMENTS: An assignment is considered late if it is submitted any later than the start of class on the day it is due. The grade for late assignments will be reduced 10% per day, including weekends. That is, if an assignment is turned in any later than the start of class, the grade will be reduced by 10% if turned in within the next 24 hours, 20% if turned in within 48 hours, 30% if turned in within 72 hours, etc.

To give some flexibility in meeting requirements in other classes, students will be given a one-week extension on any assignment, excluding in-class quizzes. You do not need to notify me in advance – if I do not have your assignment at the start of class, I will assume you are using your optional extension.

A grade of **Incomplete** is given only in exceptional and rare circumstances that warrant it, e.g. family crisis, serious illness. It is the student's responsibility to request and explain the reasons for an Incomplete. The instructor has no responsibility to give an Incomplete without such a request.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: Academic dishonesty is contrary to the ethics of the social work profession, is unfair to other students and will not be tolerated in any form. Please refer to the APA Style Guide, The SSW Manual, and the SSW Writing Guide for information on attribution of quotes, plagiarism and appropriate use of assistance in preparing assignments. All written assignments should contain a signed pledge from you stating that, "I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in preparing this written work." In keeping with the UNC Honor Code, if reason exists to believe that academic dishonesty has occurred, a referral will be made to the Office of the Student Attorney General for investigation and further action as required.

FORMAT FOR WRITTEN WORK: APA format should be used for all written assignments. Students should refer to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.) for information on APA format:

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Students should also consider the UNC writing center (Phillips Annex) for on-line and tutorial help (<http://writingcenter.unc.edu>/ or 962-7710).

POLICY ON ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students with disabilities that affect their participation in the course and who wish to have special accommodations should contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (Voice: 962-8300; Relay NC: Dial 711). Students must have a formal letter from the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services to receive disability-based accommodations. Students should discuss the need for specific accommodations with their instructor at the beginning of the semester.

TEACHING METHODS:

We will use PowerPoint lectures, case examples, multimedia, problem-solving exercises, and peer group discussions related to students' research topics.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES:

Although we will use laptops to complete in-class activities and labs, electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, laptops, tablets) should not be used during class for social purposes or other activities irrelevant to the course content. Alerts and notifications on devices should be silenced during class. Students who must answer emails/phone calls/ text messages should do so during the 15 minute break.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS**GRADING**

Requirement	% of total
Quizzes (10)	20%
Research ethics training	replaces 1 quiz score
Class participation	
Project check-ins	5%
Peer group evaluations	5%
Literature Summary and critical review	10%
Midterm exam	20%
Evaluation project	20%
Final exam	20%

Final grade:

H: 94 – 100; P: 80-93; L: 70-79; F: <69

Research and ethics training (due February 2nd):

You must take the Human Subjects Research Course for Social Behavioral and Educational (SBE) modules. This is an online training and can be accessed through <https://www.citiprogram.org>. You will need to register with CITI before starting the course. For step-by-step instructions for registering and accessing the module click [here](#). You must pass the assessment at the end of the training in order to get credit. Please bring in a printed verification or email electronic verification by February 2nd. This assignment will be counted as a quiz grade (replacing the lowest quiz score).

Quizzes:

Students will take a short quiz at the start of most class sessions. Questions on the quiz will be drawn from the previous class period and assigned readings. Quizzes will be returned once grades are recorded. Quiz grades will be averaged and the lowest quiz score will be dropped and replaced with the Research and Ethics Training. The quizzes are meant to provide continuous feedback about students' knowledge of core concepts and also provide the information necessary

to take corrective measures, by both the instructor and students, to ensure that adequate learning has occurred. **Students must be in class to take the quiz and make-up quizzes are not given.** In the event that a student misses a class, it will count as that student's dropped quiz score.

Class participation

Class participation will not be measured by the frequency you speak during class. Rather, participation is measured by students' engagement in activities, namely completion of in class assignments (project check-ins) and performance as a peer discussion group member.

Project check-ins

Throughout the semester, students will complete in-class activities and group discussions about your individual research projects. The purpose of these check-ins is to keep you on track to complete your research project and to provide opportunities for peer and instructor feedback. From time to time, I will collect the product of your in-class activities (e.g., worksheets, brainstorming research questions, drafting a logic model) to review. Students will receive an H, P, L or F for these in-class assignments. Students not present during project check-ins will receive an F for the assignment. The project check-ins are as follows:

- Exploring potential research/evaluation topics
- Drafting research questions
- Identifying and measuring outcomes
- Revisiting measurement and selecting a sampling strategy
- Selecting a research design
- Reviewing components of the evaluation paper
- Describing your sample using descriptive statistics
- Examining relationships between variables, part I
- Examining relationships between variables, part II
- Potential use of qualitative methods in your project

For project check-ins requiring data analysis, students will access software (STATA and Excel) to compute statistical tests via the virtual lab at <http://virtualab.unc.edu>. If possible students should bring their laptops to class or ensure that a member of their peer discussion group has a laptop. Any students having difficulty accessing a laptop should contact me a week or more in advance of the scheduled project check-in.

Peer discussion group evaluations

As you design and conduct your evaluation, you will need to make many decisions and weigh competing priorities (e.g., implementing a rigorous research design to control for threats to internal validity versus selecting a less rigorous design because it's more feasible in a real world setting). Each student will be assigned to a peer discussion group that will complete project check-ins and provide feedback to each other. The project check-ins are designed to help students think through these decisions and your peer group can provide valuable feedback to help you make key decisions about how you design and carry out your (hypothetical) evaluation. At the end of the semester, students will complete a peer evaluation form for each of the members in the peer discussion group, including themselves.

Literature summary grid and critical review (March 23rd)

Students will complete a literature summary grid (see assignment on Sakai) of at least five scholarly articles. In addition, students will write a critical review of the literature thus far, indicating the major findings, the quality of the research, and the gaps in the literature. The purpose of this assignment is to practice evaluating the available literature on your topic area and ensuring that students begin examining the literature in preparation for writing the research paper. See the assignment posted on Sakai for specific instructions.

Midterm and Final Exams (March 2nd April 20th, respectively): The midterm and final exams will be worth 20% each (40% of the total grade). The final exam will not be cumulative. Exams will consist of true/false, multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

Evaluation project (due April 13th):

This evaluation project builds upon course assignments in SOWO 570 where students were tasked with identifying a community problem, conducting an assessment, and proposing an intervention. Students may use the same topic and intervention to complete the evaluation project or choose another topic related to their interest and/or field placement. If students choose the same topic used in SOWO 570, materials gathered to complete those assignments can be used again. However, students should not copy/paste material from those assignments into sections of the evaluation project and should use additional peer-reviewed articles to meet the guidelines of this assignment.

For the data analysis portion of this assignment –regardless of whether you use your SOWO 570 topic or generate a new idea –students can choose one of two options: (1) conduct a real evaluation of a program or practice in the field (i.e., design an evaluation and collect real data), or (2) design an evaluation and analyze fictitious data. **Students who elect to conduct evaluations in the field should meet with me by February 9th to discuss.** I will be creating data sets for students who will be using fictitious data sets. To ensure that I have enough time to create these data sets, students must email me by March 16th indicating:

- Research design
- Number and relevant characteristics (e.g., gender, age) of sample
- Measurement tool(s), including the way the measure is scored (for simplicity, students can choose up to two measures/outcome variables/dependent variables)

The final product will be a report which contains the following: (1) Title page, (2) Abstract, (3) Introduction, (4) Literature Review, (5) Methods, (6) Results, (7) Discussion, (8) Conclusion, (9) References, and (10) Appendix that includes the logic model and any other tables or figures referenced within the paper. Reports should be between 7 and 10 pages (excluding the Title page, abstract, references, and appendix). Students can turn in drafts of each section of the report to obtain feedback about their writing mechanics (grammar, spelling, style), organization, logic, and compliance with APA standards. APA guidelines should be followed in preparing this document.

Grading rubric for evaluation project

Element	Explanation	Total points
Title Page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes: Title, student name, course, instructor Title piques the readers' interest Includes running head All elements formatted in APA 	2
Abstract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited to 300 words Describes the problem area and pressing need States research question/hypothesis Indicates proposed methods Indicates potential implications of the research 	2
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefly describe the problem area State the importance/relevance of this topic State your research objective Briefly describe how your paper is organized 	2
Literature review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the broad topic your research question addresses Within that broad topic area, what is the specific issue or pressing problem that needs to be addressed Summarizing relevant research studies examining your topic area Identify the gaps in the research (e.g., what topic or research question is left out of the literature? What populations haven't been studied with respect to this topic?) Provide relevant statistics regarding the negative outcomes associated with the problem (in other words, why should we care about this?) Discuss the quality of the literature you reviewed State that the proposed research study will address the gaps in the literature End with a clear research question that your research proposal will address. Ensure that this question is specific, narrow, and attainable and that it includes the target population of your research and the specific problem or issue. Ensure that the question satisfies the elements of PICOT (population, intervention, comparison, outcomes, and time) 	7
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State the specific design of your research (pre-, quasi-, experimental) State the type of methods you will use (qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods) Indicate your independent and dependent variables Indicate your sampling method and the target sample (both size and characteristics) Indicate and describe your data collection methods including any instruments you will use. Indicate the data analysis procedures you used Briefly describe the intervention 	10
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear presentation of the data 	10

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate presentation and interpretation of test results 	
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss results and their implications (impact of the findings) • Discuss real and potential limitations of the study • Discuss ideas for future research 	7
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize your paper in a way that is clear and easy to follow (consider using sub headings) • Ensure that your research articles are organized in a way that is consistent with your arguments 	5
Writing mechanics (grammar, spelling, style), logic, and compliance with APA standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paper is clearly organized with smooth transitions and a clear and consistent focus on the topic. • Sentences are well constructed, easy to read, and free from grammatical errors • APA style is used for data presentation, citations, and references • Paper has no spelling or punctuation errors. 	5

Total possible points: 50 *Partial credit (e.g., 2.25) may be awarded for each element

COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

Class 1 – Introduction to course **January 12 Why study research?**

Due:

- Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 1 (Why Study Research?)
- Gambrell, E. (2001). Social work: an authority-based profession. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 11(2), 166-175.
- Wakefield, J. C., & Kirk, S. A. (1996). Unscientific thinking about scientific practice: evaluating the scientist-practitioner model. *Social Work Research*, 20(2), 83-95.

In class:

- Ungraded quiz (baseline assessment)

January 19 Holiday- No class

See <http://diversity.unc.edu/programs-and-initiatives/mlk/> for UNC MLK 2015 calendar of events.

Class 2 – Evaluation of Social Interventions and Evidence-Based Practice **January 26 Accessing library resources**

Due:

- Rubin & Babbie, Chs:
 - 2 (Evidence Based Practice)
 - 3 (Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methods Of Inquiry)
 - 4 (Factors Influencing the Research Process)

In class:

- Quiz 1
- Project check-in: exploring potential research/evaluation topics

Class 3 – Other factors influencing research: ethics & cultural competence
February 2 Identifying outcomes, developing research questions and hypotheses,

Due:

- Research ethics training (CITI) due
- Rubin & Babbie, Chs:
 - 16 (Ethical Issues in Social Work Research)
 - 17 (Culturally Competent Research)
 - 5 (Reviewing Literature and Developing Research Questions)
 - 6 (Conceptualization in Quantitative and Qualitative Inquiry)

In class:

- Quiz 2
- Project check-in: Drafting research questions

Class 4 – Measurement of outcomes
February 9 Reliability and validity

Due:

- Rubin & Babbie, Chs:
 - Ch. 7 (Measurement in Quantitative and Qualitative Inquiry)
 - Ch. 8 (Quantitative and Qualitative Measurement Instruments)

In class:

- Quiz 3
- Logic model review
- Project check-in: identifying and measuring outcomes

Class 5 – Sampling
February 16 Internal and external validity

Due:

- Rubin & Babbie, Chs:
 - Ch. 9 (Surveys)
 - Ch.10 (Sampling: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches)

In class:

- Quiz 4
- Project check-in: revisiting measurement and selecting a sampling strategy

Class 6 – Research and evaluation designs
February 23

Due:

- Rubin & Babbie, Chs:
 - 11 (Experiments and Quasi-Experiments)
 - 12 (Single-Case Evaluation Designs)

In class:

- Quiz 5
- Project check-in: selecting a research design

Class 7 – Midterm
March 2 Final research designs due

March 9 Spring Break-No class

Class 8 – Program evaluation
March 16 Writing the evaluation report

Due:

- Email regarding your research design, measures, sample size, sample characteristics (e.g., gender ration, age range)
- Rubin & Babbie, Ch 13 (Program evaluation)
- Formative vs summative process evaluation: <http://toolkit.pellinstitute.org/evaluation-101/evaluation-approaches-types/>
- <http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/sites/nirn.fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/ASPE-Blase-Fixsen-CoreInterventionComponents-02-2013.pdf>

In class:

- Quiz 6
- Project check-in: Reviewing components of the evaluation paper

Class 10 – Data analysis & descriptive statistics
March 23

Due:

- Article summary grid and critical review
- Rubin & Babbie, Ch: 18 (Quantitative Data Analysis)
- Video- descriptive statistics: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uhxtUt_-GyM&list=PL1328115D3D8A2566

In class:

- Quiz 7
- Project check-in: describing your sample using descriptive statistics

Class 11 – Inferential statistics part I
March 30

Due:

- Video-T-tests: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Pd3dc1GcHc>
- Video- Analysis of Variance: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qV-WoquC4dA>
don't worry about references to factorial ANOVA or the references to interaction effects

In class:

- Quiz 8
- Project check-in: examining relationships between variables, part I

Class 12– Inferential statistics part II
April 6

Due:

- Video- chi-square tests: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VskmMgXmkMQ>
- Video- correlation: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=372iaWfH-Dg>

In class:

- Quiz 9
- Project check-in: examining relationships between variables, part I

Class 9 – April 13	Qualitative research The follow up assessment
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Due:

- Evaluation project due
- Rubin & Babbie, Chs:
 - 14 (Additional Methods in Qualitative Inquiry)
 - 15 (Analyzing Available Records: Quantitative and Qualitative Methods)
 - 19 (Qualitative data analysis)

In class:

- Quiz 10 (the follow up assessment)
- Sample qualitative data analysis
- Project check-in: potential use of qualitative methods in your project

Class 13– April 20	Final exam
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