Course Syllabus: Social Work Research
College of Health Sciences and Human Services
Social Work Department
SOWK 3643-101
Fall 2024

Contact Information

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Social Science Research Methods is a study of empirically-based concepts and methods used in sociology, social work and criminal justice for social research; including community/societal needs, micro-level intervention and program effectiveness. The course focuses on the analytic approach to building knowledge and skills including: role of concepts and theory, hypothesis formulation, operationalization, research design, data collection, data processing, data analysis and report writing. Emphasis is given to both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to building knowledge. The course also prepares students to be good consumers of empirical literature, and to develop, use and communicate empirical knowledge across system levels.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, the students should be able to:

Knowledge Dimension:

1. Understand the relevance of research within social work practice (EPAS 4).

2. Demonstrate knowledge of the process of conducting research, types of research and issues of reliability, validity, and sampling (EPAS 4).

Values Dimension:

3. Identify ethical issues related to the design and conduct of research (EPAS 4).
4. Identify the importance of culturally competent research (EPAS 4).

Skills Dimension:

5. Synthesize all course content to design a research proposal, to collect, organize and interpret data, and present the results of the study at the MSU's Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity (UGRCA) Forum (EPAS 4).

Cognitive and Affective Dimension:

6. Apply knowledge in research to identify appropriate variables for measurement and research designs (EPAS 4).
7. In the research project, students will work collaboratively in groups (EPAS 4).

Recommended Text:

Royse, D. (2011). Research Methods in Social Work (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

COURSE INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

This course will be taught through use of lectures, large and small group discussions, and audiovisual presentations. Students are expected to attend classes and to actively participate in discussions. The expectation is that students will have read the assigned readings to facilitate class dialogue and interaction.

Note: Please send your email on outlook (instead of D2L). Except for the weekend, I will check my emails during all the weekdays. Please expect a reply within 24 hours. In case you need any clarification, please don't hesitate to contact me either via email or via office phone.

D2L

D2L will be used throughout the semester for communication between class sessions. The course material (Syllabus, Power points, and other relevant items) will be posted onto D2L.

COURSE REQUIRMENTS:

AI-Generated Submissions: Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all writing assignments should be prepared by the student. Developing strong competencies in this area will prepare you for a competitive workplace.

Therefore, AI-generated submissions (for example, ChatGPT) are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism.

Social Work Program Attendance Policy

Students are allowed three excused absences as defined by MSU absence policy. For an absence to be excused the *student must inform the instructor the reason for the absence** and provide documentation supporting the need for the class absence. *A student who has missed five classes (including the three excused absences) will receive a lower letter grade. After six absences the student will be dropped from the class. If the sixth absence were to happen after the last day for "W", the student will receive grade "F."**

It is expected that students attend every class. If unable to attend class, please inform the instructor before the class starts (or before class time). If unable to attend class due to an emergency, please inform the instructor as soon as possible. Please note that *for each "uninformed class absence" 5 points will be taken off from the final points**. Please note that the instructor should be informed directly via email or office phone. In case of an emergency, please inform the instructor as soon as possible. **Coming late to class and leaving early from class without any prior notice will also have an adverse impact on attendance and participation grade.**

Class Participation:

It is expected that students will contribute to the maintenance of a healthy learning environment, by paying attention to lectures, to fellow students' contributions in the class and by not being disruptive in class. It is expected that students actively participate in class discussions and exercises. It is also expected that everyone who shares ideas/views is respectful of others' time and ideas/views. We could agree to disagree but we ought not to be disagreeable.

Class participation is expected not only at the time of class discussions but also during lectures by raising pertinent questions, by contributing relevant ideas and by sharing relevant examples. Students will be expected to read all the assigned materials prior to class and be prepared to engage in class discussions related to the class topics.

Until the day of poster presentation at the Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Forum (UGRCA), students will be frequently required to work in groups during class hours and also outside class time (as needed) for their research projects. *It is vitally important that everyone participates in all the research project related work/activities. Failure to do so will have an adverse impact on grade**.

Laptop and Cell Phone regulation:

No Photographing, recording, text messaging is allowed without the permission of the instructor. Please turn off or set cell phones on vibrate. Please do not surf the internet, listen to IPOD music while in class. **Please note that using electronic devices during class time will have an adverse impact on attendance and participation grade**.

Students with Disabilities:

Note: Individuals requiring special accommodations according to the Americans with Disabilities Act, please present the instructor with a special Accommodation Request Form from the Midwestern State University Counseling Center.

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is essential to the mission of Midwestern State University. As such, students are expected to perform their own work (except when collaboration is expressly permitted by the course instructor) without the use of any outside resources. Students are not permitted to use old papers when preparing for this paper, nor may they consult with students who have already written the paper. When practiced, academic integrity ensures that all students are fairly graded. Violations to the Academic Integrity Policy undermine the educational process and will not be tolerated. It also demonstrates a lack of respect for oneself, fellow students, and the course instructor and can ruin the university's reputation and the value of the degrees it offers. We all share the obligation to maintain an environment which practices academic integrity. Violators of the Academic Integrity Policy will be subject to failing this course and being reported to the Office of Student affairs for disciplinary action which could result in suspension or expulsion from Midwestern State University.

All students are expected to submit their own original work. The presentation of another's words or ideas as your own, without giving credit to the source is regarded as plagiarism. Academic fraud, plagiarism, dishonesty, and cheating are serious acts of academic misconduct. If you are unclear about the proper use and citation of sources, or the details and guidelines for any assignment, you should discuss your concerns prior to the due date with the instructor.

Academic fraud and cheating includes these and other misrepresentations:

➢ presentation of the ideas of others without credit to the source;
➢ use of direct quotations without quotation marks and without credit to source;
➢ paraphrasing without credit to the source;
➢ participation in group project which presents plagiarized material;
➢ failure to provide citations for material obtained through electronic research;
➢ downloading and submitting work from electronic data bases without citation;
➢ submitting material created/written by someone else as one's own;
➢ copying from someone else's exam, homework, or laboratory work;
➢ allowing someone else to copy or submit one's work as his/her own;
➢ accepting credit for a group project without doing one's share;
➢ submitting the same paper in more than one course;
➢ using notes or other materials during test without authorization;
➢ not following the guidelines specified by instructor for "take home" exams; and
➢ the fabrication of research data.

Research and Creative Activity Opportunities at MSU:

EURECA:

Enhancing Undergraduate Research Endeavors and Creative Activities (EURECA) is a program that provides opportunities for undergraduates to engage in high-quality research and creative activities with faculty. EURECA provides incentives and funding through a system that supports faculty and students engaged in collaborative research and creative works. For more information contact the Office of Undergraduate Research at (940) 397-6274 or by email at eureca@msutexas.edu or better yet, stop by the UGR office located in the atrium of the Clark Student Center, room 161. Information and resources are also available at Eureca.

Note: Please check the EURECA webpage for further details.

Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR):

To support undergraduate research and creative activities, Midwestern State University holds an enhanced institutional membership with the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR). This institutional membership includes unlimited memberships for any interested faculty, staff, and students. Students may find information on benefits and resources at the CUR website.

The CUR Undergraduate Resources Webpage contains:
➢ Research Opportunities
➢ Presentation Opportunities
➢ Undergraduate Research Journals
➢ CUR-Sponsored Student Events
➢ The Registry of Undergraduate Researchers
➢ And more!

Note: National Council on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) conducts annual conferences. It is a **great opportunity for students to showcase their research projects** at the annual conference.

Posters on the Hill:

Posters on the Hill is a critical element in CUR's advocacy efforts. It is more important than ever that the voice of undergraduate researchers and their mentors are heard on Capitol Hill. This prestigious event celebrates the impressive work of the accepted students and supports the messages of the importance of undergraduate research at the federal level.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

Reading quizzes and Final Exam:

There will be two reading quizzes (each worth 10 points) and a final exam (worth 30 points). The final exam will be given on the date scheduled by the university.

The quizzes will consist of multiple-choice questions and true or false statements. The final exam will consist of multiple-choice questions and short answers. ONLY what is presented in

class will be included in the quizzes and final exam. For the quizzes and the final exam, students will be required to use **Scantron**.

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) (50 Points):

In compliance with Midwestern State University's policy regarding human subjects' research, students will need to complete the free online CITI training as preparation to conduct research with human subjects. Certificates are awarded for completion. Students will be required to ***submit a copy of the certificate to the instructor***. They are encouraged to keep a copy for themselves.

The *course is available at*: Citi Program.

You must set up an account to use the CITI program. On the CITI homepage, click on the "Register" box in the upper right corner. Under "Select Your Organization Affiliation," type in and select "Midwestern State University." Follow the instructions to continue with your account set-up (username and password).

Please make sure to complete the "**Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Basic Course**."

Research Project (200 Points):

Research project is the "***MAJOR COURSE ASSIGNMENT***" which consists of the following components. The requirements of each component must be completed.

Research Topic/Problem Formulation: Choose a topic of interest (or recognize a problem that needs to be addressed) as a group. Please make sure to choose a topic, which would be interdisciplinary in nature. The instructor's broad areas of research interests are listed below and students (if interested) could select topics pertaining to any of these areas:

➢ Religion and Social Work
➢ Marriage and Family
➢ International social work
➢ Social work with communities

Literature Review: Conduct a literature review based on the chosen topic or the identified problem. ***Each student*** (including each group leader) will be responsible for reviewing ***at least three peer-reviewed journal articles*** on the chosen topic. Please note ***this is only a minimum requirement***. The more articles you review, the better. The articles should have been **published within the last 5 years**. All the referenced articles should be listed per APA format.

You may or may not find the heading, "Literature Review" in the journal articles but typically in the first section of a journal article, the author(s) would have referenced various scholarly sources. Please make sure to read this section thoroughly so you will know how to write the literature review section of your research proposal. Each student will write a summary (not less than a page, double-spaced) relating to the chosen topic referencing scholarly sources and submit

the same to the group leader. The group leader will compile the group's summaries and submit the group's literature review assignment (a Word document, double-spaced, not exceeding three pages) to the instructor.

Note: Literature review is a crucial component of the research project.

Research question and Hypothesis (or Hypotheses): Based on literature review, formulate a research question and hypothesis (or hypotheses). The research hypothesis (or hypotheses) should be narrow and specific, can be answered by observable evidence, and should also have relevance for social work practice.

Research Design: Develop a relevant research design to answer the research question and to test hypothesis (or hypotheses). This will involve specifying the following:

➢ Key variables
➢ Sampling
➢ Inclusion and exclusion criteria
➢ Method(s) of recruitment
➢ Data collection method (e.g., Survey),
➢ Identifying potential ethical issues (if any)
➢ Creating the instrument (e.g., Questionnaire), and
➢ Data analysis

Presentation at the Undergraduate Research Forum: Please note that the groups' efforts in preparing documents which should be submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), data collection, preparation of presentation materials, and presentation on the scheduled day will all be considered for assigning grades.

Students will collect primary data from study participants, code the data and then enter the data in SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). After data entry, they will analyze the collected data using SPSS. After analyzing the collected data, each group will discuss the importance of their research findings, including implications for social work practice. Limitations of the study will be addressed and suggestions for future research will be made. ***On the scheduled date (November 21, 2024) of MSU's Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Forum (UGRCA), each group will either do an oral presentation or a poster presentation of their research***.

Note: The grade for the research project (<u>except for the CITI training</u>) will be based on students' participation throughout the research process. Therefore, it is vitally important that everyone in the group takes part in the process actively and cooperates with the group and the group leader. If at any point, you find anyone in your group not doing the expected work, please bring it to the instructor's notice ASAP. Please also do not hesitate to ask for help from the instructor.

Group members should be respectful of one another and the instructor. Group leaders should be willing to take the group along with them throughout the research process.

Research Proposal (100 Points):

Each group will submit a research proposal. Groups will use the same research topic that was used for the research project. The components of the research proposal (Problem and objectives, Literature review etc.) will be discussed in class. All the components discussed in class will be included in the research proposal. Further details will be discussed in class.

Note: Many of the components of the research proposal will be similar to the components of the research project.

Take advantage of MSU Writing Center:

Begin drafting papers as early as possible and take advantage of the MSU Writing Center, located off the 2nd floor atrium of Prothro-Yeager! Tutoring is available Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; you can also find a tutor at the satellite location in Moffett Library Honors Lounge, Sunday and Thursday from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Writing tutors will not edit your papers for you, but they will provide support and feedback at every stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to drafting, revising to proofreading.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit Campus Carry.

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit Safety / Emergency Procedures. Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled "*Run. Hide. Fight.*" which may be electronically accessed via the University police department's webpage: *"Run. Hide. Fight."*

Important Dates

Deadline for December graduates to file for graduation: September 23, 2024.

Deadline for May graduates to file for graduation: October 4, 2024.

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" November 25, 2024

Refer to: <u>Drops, Withdrawals & Void</u>

EVALUATION OF COURSE OUTCOMES:

The student's achievement will be evaluated on the basis of written assignments, class exams, and class participation.

The final grade will be calculated based upon the points that a student has accumulated throughout the term. A student may earn points as follows:

Grade Item	Points
Class Attendance	20
Reading quizzes (2) Each worth 10 Points	20
CITI Training	50
Research Project	200
Research Proposal	100
Final Exam	30
Total	**420**

Late Assignments:

Late assignments shall have a negative effect on grade. Only electronic copy of the assignment will be accepted. Late assignments are assessed a penalty of 5 points per day. If no prior information is provided to the instructor about submitting the assignment late, no grade will be assigned. Do your assignments early to avoid computer, printer, or family emergencies. If anyone has difficulty with writing, please seek help from the University Writing Center.

Course Changes:

Although much thought, study, and research has gone into designing the course and learning opportunities, often the most significant learning comes in unexpected moments. The instructor cannot predict these times but only respond to them. Therefore, ***the instructor reserves the right to alter the course outline, assignments, or examination dates in order to incorporate these unexpected learning moments***.

GRADING SCALE

The total grade for the course is an accumulation of the points earned on each assignment. The following letter grades are used:

A=90% of available points
B=80-89% of available points
C=70-79 % of available points
D=60-69% of available points
F=0-59% of available points

Social Work Program Grade Policy:

A course grade of below a C or an average of below 70% will be considered a failing grade. Students must repeat social work courses in which they receive a grade of D or F.

Note: This grade policy is in effect since the Fall of 2020.

COURSE SCHEDULE (TENTATIVE)

Week	Topics	Assignments
Week 1 (August 27, Tuesday & August 29, Thursday, 2024)	Course Introduction Forming Research Groups Place of research & Evidence-based practice	N/A
Week 2 (September 3, Tuesday & September 5, Thursday)	Literature review	N/A
Week 3 (September 10, Tuesday & September 12, Thursday)	Literature review Cont.…. Hypothesis Sampling	
Week 4 (September 17, Tuesday & September 19, Thursday)	Data collection methods	Reading quiz 1 on September 17, Tuesday
Week 5 (September 24, Tuesday & September 26, Thursday)	Measurement Ethics in research and culturally competent research	
Week 6 (October 1, Tuesday & October 3, Thursday)	Ethics in research and culturally competent research Cont.	

Week	Topics	Assignments
Week 7 (October 8, Tuesday & October 10, Thursday)	Research designs	
Week 8 (October 15, Tuesday & October 17, Thursday)	Research designs Cont.	Reading quiz 2 on October 15, Tuesday
Week 9 (October 22, Tuesday & October 24, Thursday)	Research process (quantitative & qualitative approaches)	
Week 10 (October 29, Tuesday & October 31, Thursday)	Research process (quantitative & qualitative approaches) Cont.	
Week 11 (November 5, Tuesday & November 7, Thursday)	Research process (quantitative & qualitative approaches) Cont.	
Week 12 (November 12, Tuesday & November 14, Thursday)	Writing research proposals and research reports	
Week 13 (November 19, Tuesday & November 21, Thursday)	Writing research proposals and research reports Cont.	**UGRCA Forum Presentation (November 21, Thursday)**
Week 14 (November 26, Tuesday)	Writing research proposals and research reports Cont.	
November 27-December 1, 2024	**NO CLASSES-Thanksgiving Break**	
Week 15 (December 3, Tuesday & December 5, Thursday)	Program Evaluation	Research Proposal due at 11.59 p.m. on December 7, Saturday (to be submitted in D2L DropBox)
Week 16 (December 10, Tuesday)	Final Exam (8.00-10.00 a.m.)	

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