STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK  
BSW PROGRAM

Class Meeting Time and Location  
Monday 4:00-6:30pm  
Tyler Junior College, Jenkins 210

SWK 485.401  
Social Work Research  
Fall 2017

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Office hours: by appointment

Prerequisites: None  
Co-requisites: None

COURSE SYLLABUS

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION
The purpose of this course is to introduce students to research methods with an emphasis on social work. Students will learn about basic quantitative and qualitative research methods and their application to social work practice. This course serves as the foundation for advanced social work research courses, including SWK 455: Research Practicum.

REQUIRED TEXT:

RECOMMENDED TEXT:

II. CURRICULUM DESCRIPTION
The BSW program at SFASU features a generalist perspective to social work practice, defined as follows: Generalist practice is a practice perspective that serves client systems utilizing an ecological systems approach focusing on persons, families, groups, organizations, and communities. It is not confined by a narrow cadre of theories; rather it is versatile enough to allow problems and situations, as well as strengths, capacities, and resources, to determine the practice approach. Generalist practice employs a problem solving framework and a broad knowledge, value, and skill base which demands ethical practice and on-going self-assessment. Briefly, generalist social work practice:

- Is multi-level to include individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- Is multi-theory, allowing for the free selection of theories as appropriate
- Utilizes a problem identification and solving focus that follows a problem-solving framework
- Utilizes multiple interventions at multiple levels, as appropriate
- Addresses the complexity of individual, family, group, organizational, and community system interactions
- Requires an integration of awareness, competence, and professional response to issues of values, ethics, diversity, culture, social justice, and populations-at-risk

III. PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES (PLO) (CSWE CORE COMPETENCIES)
1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
4. Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-informed Practice
5. Engage in Policy Practice
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

IV. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLO) (CSWE COMPONENT BEHAVIORS)
1. Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context
2. Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication
3. Use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research
4. Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings
5. Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery
6. Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes
7. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes
8. Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes
9. Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels

V. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS
The primary instructional model for this course is collaborative learning. Specifically, the instructor will set course content, course objectives, and methods of classroom assessment. The course will incorporate the following instructional strategies: lecture, class discussion, in-class activities, assigned readings, and individual projects. Students are encouraged to actively participate in activities, ask questions, and contribute comments for discussion. Most importantly, students are expected to be active learners and to ask for clarification when they have questions. The goal of this approach is to develop a safe learning environment that addresses a variety of learning styles, promotes critical thinking, and fosters creativity

VI. COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS
This course will utilize Desire to Learn (D2L) to support the delivery of course content (for help with D2L go to http://www.sfaonline.info/#d2ltutorials-c14y8). The student will need basic skills regarding the use of a word processor and web browser. The student must have access to a computer that meets the minimum requirements outlined below. Computers are available to current students through a number of labs across campus (see www.sfasu.edu or the instructor for details).

Your computer should meet or exceed the minimum computer system requirements as listed below:
- Operating System: Windows XP, Windows 7, Windows 8 or a Macintosh with OSX or higher
- Processor: 2.0 GHz or higher
- Memory: 2 GB of RAM
- Internet: 1.5 Mbps+/high-speed recommended

VII. COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Course Overview
Introduction to APA
D2L
Why Study Research
Reading: Rubin & Babbie Chapter 1 and NASW Code of Ethics
Week 2: Why study Research? Evidence Based Practice
Reading: Rubin & Babbie Chapters 1, 2, Gambrill article

Week 3: Ethical and Cultural Issues in Social Work Research
Culturally Competent Research
Reading: Rubin & Babbie Chapters 5 & 6

Week 4: Computer Lab Activity - Library Research

Week 5: **Exam 1**
Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods
Reading: Rubin & Babbie Chapters

Week 6: Factors Influencing the Research Process
Reading: Rubin & Babbie Chapter 4

Week 7: **Assignment A Due**
Reviewing Literature and Developing Research Questions
Reading: Rubin & Babbie Chapter 7

Week 8: Measurement in Quantitative and Qualitative Inquiry
Reading: Rubin & Babbie Chapter 8

Week 9: **Exam 2**
Quantitative and Qualitative Measurement Instruments
Reading: Rubin & Babbie Chapter 9 and Springer article

Week 10: Surveys
Reading: Rubin & Babbie Chapter 10
Sampling: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches
Reading: Rubin & Babbie Chapter 11

Week 12: Experiments and Quasi- Experiments
Reading: Rubin & Babbie Chapter 12

Week 13: **Exam 3**
Single Case Evaluation Designs
Program Evaluation
Reading: Rubin & Babbie Chapters 13 and 14

Week 14: **Assignment B Due**
Additional Methods in Qualitative Inquiry
Analyzing Available Records: Quantitative and Qualitative Methods
Reading: Rubin & Babbie Chapters 15, 16 and Rubin article

Week 15: Completion of any remaining course content
Course summary and evaluation

Week 16: **Final Exam**
VIII. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Class attendance and participation: In order for the class to discuss the readings and complete in-class activities, it is essential for students to read assigned material before coming to class, to attend class regularly, and to participate. Furthermore, students are expected to arrive on time and stay for the duration of the class. Absences and/or a persistent pattern of lateness will affect a student’s grade. Finally, students are responsible for all material covered in class and assigned in the syllabus, whether or not they have attended class.

Cell phones/ pagers/ electronic devices: Such devices are disruptive to the classroom environment and students are expected to refrain from using them during class. All such devices are to be placed on silent mode or turned off during class. Repeated interruptions may result in a deduction of points from the final average.

B. Readings: The course outline provides a list of required readings for each week (students will receive a detailed schedule the first full week of class that will outline the readings to be covered each class). Since lectures and class discussions are designed to answer questions about the material and expand upon the basic concepts, students are expected to complete the assigned readings prior to class. Furthermore, students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the information, as evidenced by active participation in class discussion. For example, students should present well-formulated questions and comments that demonstrate prior preparation.

C. Quizzes: The quizzes given over the semester will test for general comprehension of the course material (assigned readings and/or previous lecture topics). Missing a quiz due to an unexcused absence will result in a grade of “0” on that quiz. Make-up quizzes will be given for an excused absence as defined by the SFASU General Bulletin (available online at www.sfasu.edu/bulletin) and will be scheduled by the instructor.

D. In-Class Activities: There will be a total of 10 in-class activities over the course of the semester. Each activity will be worth 5 points, which will be based on your preparedness and participation.

E. Exams: Four major application exams will be given during the semester. All material provided on the topics, including all assigned readings, discussions, lectures, discussion questions/response, and guest presentations are subject to examination. The exams will consist of matching, true/false, multiple choice, short answer, and/or essay questions.

The student is expected to take all exams at the scheduled time. Permission to miss any exam will be based on the policy for excused absences as stated in the SFASU General Bulletin (available online at www.sfasu.edu/bulletin). Missing an exam without either prior permission or an excused absence will result in a grade of “0” on that exam. The instructor will schedule make-up exams.

F. Assignments: The student is responsible for completing assignments in accordance with the specific guidelines identified in the assignment description (in the syllabus). Assignments A & B are to be typewritten (by typewriter or word processor) in 12 pt. font with double spacing and standard margins. All assignments are to be in APA format per the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.). Failure to meet these guidelines will result in loss of points. See the descriptions of Assignments A & B for guidelines.

Students are expected to turn in assignments at the scheduled time. Permission to turn in any assignment late will be based on the policy for excused absences as stated in the SFASU General Bulletin (available online at www.sfasu.edu/bulletin). Turning in an assignment late without an excused absence will result in 10% of the total points being deducted from the total points earned for each day the assignment is late, with 10% deducted immediately following the class period during which the assignment is due.
GRADING:
Quizzes = 30
In-class activities = 50
Exams = 400
Assignment A = 100
Assignment B = 100
Total = 680

GRADING SCALE:
A  609-680
B  541-608
C  473-540
D  405-472
F  0-404

IX. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
Honesty and representing one’s knowledge and abilities appropriately are important ethical principles of the social work profession. All violations of the Academic Integrity Policy will be addressed in accordance with SFASU Policy A-9.1 (SFASU Policy A-9.1 can be found at the web address below). All incidents will result in a grade of “0”. Given the limited number of graded assignments in this course, a “0” could have serious consequences for the student’s academic standing.

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

Definition of Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the Student Academic Dishonesty policy (SFA Policy 4.1) on http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/student_academic_dishonesty.pdf

Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

Please read the complete policy on Course Grades: http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades.pdf
Acceptable Student Behavior:

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the ICARE Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

Please see the following link for the complete policy:
http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/student-code-of-conduct_10.4.pdf

X. STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations.

For additional information, read Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities (SFA Policy 6.1) http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic-accomodation-for-students-with-disabilities.pdf
ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment A – Annotated Bibliography

Each student is expected to identify a current social issue or problem relevant to generalist social work practice. The topic must be approved by the instructor prior to beginning the assignment. Each student will then develop a comprehensive annotated bibliography on the chosen topic.

The following aspects of the social issue are to be addressed:

a. Problem Definition/Description and Etiology (cause) of the Problem
b. Description of the Population Experiencing the Problem (Characteristics, Issues, Strengths, and Weaknesses)
c. Competing Points of View Regarding the Problem
d. Implications for the Delivery of Generalist Social Work Practice Interventions.

The annotated bibliography should contain at least 10 References, including:

1. At least one article from a professional peer reviewed journal that informs the problem definition/description and etiology (cause)
2. At least one article from a professional peer reviewed journal that informs the description of the population
3. At least one article from a professional peer reviewed journal that informs the description of the competing points of view
4. At least two articles from a professional peer reviewed journal that informs the implications for generalist social work practice.

The professional peer reviewed journals should either be from social work or closely related disciplines. The remainder of the resources can be drawn from professional peer reviewed journals, books, and reliable Internet sources.

Each entry is to be in APA format and followed by one to two paragraphs that briefly describe the source’s contents and importance to the chosen topic.

Students will submit assignments in the Drop Box folder in Desire 2 Learn no later than 4pm on the due date for the assignment. The assignment will be considered late until it has been submitted to the Drop Box in D2L.

This assignment is due:

Assignment B – Critique of Empirical Social Work Literature

Each student is expected to identify 5 empirical articles that examine social work interventions to address the social issue/problem identified in Assignment A (you may use articles identified in the annotated bibliography).

The articles must be from a professional peer reviewed journal (social work or closely related discipline). Two of the articles must be quantitative and two of the articles must be qualitative. The 5th article can be either qualitative or quantitative.

Once the articles are identified, the student is expected to critically critique the following aspects of the article:

1. Thoroughness of Literature Review
2. Problem Formulation
3. Conceptualization and Operationalization
4. Measurement
5. Instrumentation
6. Sampling
7. Design
8. Data Analysis/Results
9. Implications of the Results
10. Discuss the Article’s Relevance/Applicability to Generalist Social Work Practice.

Each entry is to be in APA format and followed by paragraphs that address the above content. Students will submit assignments in the Drop Box folder in Desire 2 Learn no later than 4pm on the due date for the assignment. The assignment will be considered late until it has been submitted to the Drop Box in D2L. See the D2L website: http://www.sfasu.edu/sfaonline/486.asp for student tutorials on using D2L.

This assignment is due:

Bibliography and References