SOCW 6301: Applied Research Methods I

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Office Hours: Monday: 9 am – 12 pm, 1–4 pm, Tuesday: 9 am – 12 pm
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**Prerequisite:** Graduate standing
**Co-requisite:** None

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

I. **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides the foundation for understanding applied research in the profession of social work.

II. **COURSE OVERVIEW**

SOCW 6301 is the introductory course in social work research methods for the research sequence for the doctorate in social work. This course provides the foundation for understanding applied research in the profession of social work. It addresses the areas of critical thinking, understanding the social work research literature, conducting literature reviews appropriate for research proposals, applied research methods (quantitative and qualitative), evaluation methods, and formulation of research plans.

This course is the first in a series of research courses focused on understanding the research process. The research sequence is designed to prepare students to think critically, to understand the professional literature, to evaluate practice, to collect and analyze data, to conduct research in advanced social work practice settings, to become a scholar in an educational setting.

III. **COURSE CONTACT HOURS AND STUDY HOURS**

Course credit is determined per CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (E PAS).

IV. **TEXTS AND MATERIALS**


V. CURRICULUM DESCRIPTION

The DSW program of SFASU includes an advanced curriculum focused on preparation for advanced practice and social work education. The DSW program’s mission is to prepare students for teaching, administration, leadership and practice. The program creates and maintains a learner-centered environment in which students are prepared to effectively address the challenges of living and working in a global community. The learning environment enhances students’ ability to develop the knowledge, skills, values and cognitive and affective processes needed for higher education, administration and leadership and practice. Students develop insight in how they are influenced by their own values in addressing critical social work issues related to anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion. The program contributes to the enhancement of social, economic, and environmental justice in diverse contexts. Doctoral students are able to identify as social work educators, practitioners, scholars and leaders who are guiding and influencing the future of the profession.

VI. PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES (CSWE 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

VII. OBJECTIVES / STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (CSWE BEHAVIORS)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. Describe the differences between quantitative and qualitative research methods. (Competency 4)
2. Understand the role of quantitative and qualitative research in advancing a science of social work. (Competency 4)
3. Describe how quantitative and qualitative research are used in evaluating social work practice. (Competency 4)
4. Understand the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. (Competency 4)
5. Understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. (Competency 4)
6. Describe the processes for translating research findings into effective practice. (Competency 4)
7. Describe how quantitative and qualitative research methods are used in social work practice with individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations. (Competencies 6, 7, 8, 9)
8. Understand research and the dimensions of diversity as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability, and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spiritually, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. (Competency 2)

9. Describe the connection to research and strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. (Competency 3)

10. Apply the value base of the social work profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact research and practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. (Competency 1)

11. Understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. (Competency 5)

VIII. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

This is a face to face or hybrid class that will involve instructional supported learning. Content will be delivered both face to face (F2F) and via D2L/Brightspace. Methods of instruction will be based on active learning theories that will involve lecture by instructor, guest lecture, student discussion and presentations, small group activities and audio-visual presentations. Class discussions will add to and supplement the reading assignments and be based on the topics presented in the course materials. To be successful in the class, it is important that students take responsibility for their own academic performance, be active learners, read the assigned material, complete all assignments and respond to feedback. The course is organized into weekly learning sessions where students will be able to find the information to read and learn each week from assigned readings, class lecture and group exercises. PDF files and links to articles will be provided when available. Some content will be enhanced with online material and some examination may take place online.

IX. COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS

This course will utilize D2L/Brightspace to support the delivery of course content - go to https://www.sfasu.edu/d2lsupport for more information.

X. COURSE CALENDAR

Week 1  Introduction to Social Work Research (9/1)
The Educator-Research-Practitioner Paradigm
A. Goals of research in social work
   1. Cultural variables/global perspectives
B. Research-informed Practice, Practice-informed Research in Rural Areas
C. Application to generalist practice
D. Grand Challenges for Social Work
   1. Inter-professional social work and research
   2. Knowledge, values, skills and cognitive and affective processes
   3. The researcher and advocacy
Readings: Grinnell, Williams & Unrau - Chapter 1; IASSW; You, Gu and Yi (2010); Williams (2016); Teixera (2018)

Week 2 Ethics in Practice-Informed research and research-informed practice (9/8)
A. Diversity and difference in research
B. Informed consent
C. Social, economic and environmental justice
   2. IFSW Code of Ethics
   3. Human rights in research

Readings: Grinnell, Williams & Unrau - Chapter 4-5; IASSW; You, Gu and Yi (2010); Thyer (2017); Reamer (2013)

Week 3 Epistemology and Critical Thinking (self-study; 9/15)
A. Development of Knowledge
   1. Critical thinking
   2. Scientific method
   3. Empiricism
B. Epistemology
C. Development of Theory
   1. Social science theory
   2. Social work theory
   3. Research and Practice Theory
D. Conceptualization

Readings: Grinnell, Williams & Unrau - Chapter 1-2; Roestenburg & Oliphant; Lohmeier (2016); Williams (2013, 2016)

Week 4 Conducting Literature Reviews in Research (9/22)
A. Definition
B. Purpose
   1. Defining/Investigating research problem area
   2. Developing research questions
   3. Use as a consumer/application to practice
C. Selecting a strategy
D. Types of literature reviews

Readings: Grinnell, Williams & Unrau – Chapter 3; Williams (2016); Mason et al (2017)

Week 5 Collecting Information through Literature Reviews (Livestream; 9/29)
A. Collecting information
   1. Rural resources for information
   2. Types of information
B. Screening literature for feasibility and quality
   1. Reliability
   2. Validity
   3. Appropriateness for inclusion in defining research problem area
   4. Trustworthiness of information
C. Summarizing
D. Literature and evidence

Readings: Grinnell, Williams & Unrau - Chapter 3; Thyer, 2017; Smith-Osborne
Week 6  Introduction of Social Work Research Methods (Assignment 1 is due; 10/6)
   A. Quantitative research methods
   B. Qualitative research methods
   C. Utilizing quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study (mixed methodology)
   D. Applications to practice and evaluation

Readings: Grinnell, Williams & Unrau - Chapter 6-8; Roestenburg & Oliphant; Fifolt & Lander (2013)

Week 7  Quantitative research methods (self-study; 10//13)
   A. Overview of quantitative methods
   B. Purpose of quantitative methods
   C. Development of quantitative data collection instruments
   D. Analysis of quantitative data
   E. Presentation of quantitative data
   F. Applications to social work and inter-professional practice

Readings: Grinnell, Williams & Unrau - Chapter 6, 9-10, 14, & 17; Archibald and Estreet (2017); Sheppard, M. (2016)

Week 8  MIDTERM EXAM (ONLINE; 10/20)

Week 9  Qualitative Research Methods (Livestream; 10/27)
   A. Overview of qualitative methods
   B. Purpose of qualitative methods
   C. Development of qualitative data collection instruments
   D. Analysis of qualitative data
   E. Presentation of qualitative data
   F. Applications to social work and inter-professional practice

Readings: Grinnell, Williams & Unrau - Chapter 7, 15, & 18; Roestenburg & Oliphant; Barusch, Gringeri and George (2011); Kevany and MacMichael (2014)

Week 10 Qualitative Research Methods (cont. 11/3)

Readings: Grinnell, Williams & Unrau - Chapter 7, 15, 18, 20; Roestenburg & Oliphant; Barusch, Gringeri and George (2011); Kevany and MacMichael (2014)

Week 11 Qualitative and Quantitative Designs used in Social Work (self-study; 11/10)
   A. Case studies
   B. Group designs
   C. Structured observation
   D. Survey research

Readings: Grinnell, Williams & Unrau – Chapter 11-13 & 16; Broadhurst (2016); Oliver (2012); Sheppard, M. (2016)

Week 12  Qualitative and Quantitative Designs used in Social Work (11/17)
   A. Participant observation
   B. Secondary analysis
   C. Utilizing existing statistics
   D. Content analysis
   E. Historical Research
Week 13  THANKSGIVING WEEK (11/24)

Week 14  Practice Evaluation and Methods (Livestream; Assignment 2 is due; 12/1)
A. Program evaluation in Social Work
B. Purpose of evaluation in Social Work
C. Types of program evaluations
   1. Process
   2. Impact
   3. Outcome
D. Methods to evaluate individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations
E. Program evaluations in research-informed practice and practice-informed research
   Using existing program evaluation frameworks

Readings: Grinnell, Williams & Unrau – Chapter 12; Moreau and Cousins (2014); Roestenburg & Oliphant; Csiernik & Birnbaum (2017)

Week 15  Paper Presentations (12/8)

Week 16  Final Exam (Online; 12/15)

XI. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Class Participation: In order for the class to discuss the readings, it is essential for you to read assigned material before coming to class, to attend class regularly, and to participate in class discussions both face-to-face (F2F) and online. You are responsible for all material covered in class and assigned in the syllabus, whether or not you have attended class. Attendance is required. Excuse absences (i.e. illness, death or accident) will be considered case by case and granted by the instructor based on the merit and verifiability of the extenuating circumstance. Absences will be noted. Two or more unexcused absences will result in a reduction in the final grade.

B. Cell Phones/Electronic Devices: Because such devices are disruptive to the classroom environment, I ask that you refrain from using them during class unless they are made a part of the classroom exercise. I also ask that you either place such devices on silent mode or turn them off during class. It is particularly disrespectful to your classmates and instructor to text while class is in session. Repeated interruptions will result in a deduction of points from the final average. You might also be asked to leave the class.

C. Readings: The course outline provides a list of required readings for each week (you 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, you are expected to complete the assigned readings prior to class. Furthermore, you are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the information, as evidenced by active participation in class discussion and group learning exercises. For example, you should present well formulated questions and comments that demonstrate prior preparation.

D. Exams: There will be a midterm and a final exam administered online. Students are
required to take the exams at the scheduled time. Makeup exams will be scheduled according to university policy with a university-approved excuse.

E. Quizzes/Exercises: There will be unannounced class exercises. Students are required to participate in the exercises at the scheduled time. Makeup exercises will be scheduled according to university policy with a university-approved excuse.

F. Assignments/Presentations: See Assignments for a listing of all assignments for this course. All assignments are due at the beginning of each class, unless the assignment is a class presentation which will be due in class. No late assignments are accepted.

XII. GRADING POLICY

| Assignment #1: Critical Thinking and Empirical Research | 100 |
| Assignment #2: Systematic Review | 100 |
| Midterm Exam | 100 |
| Final Exam | 100 |
| **Total** | **400** |

XIII. GRADING SCALE
The earned points will be averaged and a letter grade assigned as follows:

A = 360 – 400
B = 320 – 359
C = 280 – 319
*D = 240 – 279
*F = Below 240

*Not applicable for credit toward graduate degree.

XIV. ATTENDANCE POLICY

Per Class Attendance Policy SFA 6.7 students are expected to attend all classes, laboratories, and other class-related activities on a regular and punctual basis. Attendance policies will be stated in the course syllabus. For those classes where attendance is a factor in the course grade, an accurate record of attendance will be maintained. Absences At the discretion of the instructor, students may be excused from attendance for reasons such as health, family emergencies, or student participation in approved university-sponsored events. When possible, students should notify their instructors in advance about absences. Students are responsible for providing documentation in a timely manner to the instructor for each absence. The instructor determines whether such documentation is satisfactory. Students missing classes, other than for university-sponsored trips, should contact the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR) and request that an absence notification be sent to the instructor(s). The notification is not an excuse, and is not evaluated by OSRR. The notification is only provided as a courtesy to the student and the student's instructor(s). If participating in university-sponsored events, announcements in mySFA may constitute official notification. Faculty members sponsoring activities that require their students to be absent from other classes must submit to the provost and vice president for academic affairs an explanation of the absence, including the date, time, and an alphabetical listing of all attending students. If approved by the provost and vice president for academic affairs, this information will be posted on mySFA. Whether
absences are excused or unexcused by the instructor, a student is still responsible for all course content and assignments. Students with accepted excuses may be permitted to make up work for absences equaling no more than 15% of the scheduled course meeting time for the term, depending on the nature of the missed work. The timeline for completing make-up work will be determined by the instructor.

https://www.sfasu.edu/docs/policies/6.7.pdf

XV. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (SFA POLICY 4.1)

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other electronic/online resources should be discussed with the instructor.

The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.

Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

Note: The following is specific to School of Social Work

Social work students are required to uphold the School of Social Work Academic and Professional Integrity Code they agreed to when they first enrolled in the program. The BSW/MSW/DSW Student Handbook and Academic and Professional Integrity Code outline 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. 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, visits to agencies, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate or inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

XVI. Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (SFA Policy 5.5)

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 coursework 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 to compute the grade point average. For additional information, go to https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades-5.5.pdf.

XVII. STUDENTS WITH 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 promptly may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

XVIII. Student Wellness and Well-Being

SFA values students’ overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help, SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

On-campus Resources:
The Dean of Students Office (Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby)
www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents
936.468.7249
dos@sfasu.edu

SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic Human Services, Room 202
The Health and Wellness Hub “The Hub”
Location: corner of E. College and Raguet St.

To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person – mind, body and spirit. Services include:

- Health Services
- Counseling Services
- Student Outreach and Support
- Food Pantry
- Wellness Coaching
- Alcohol and Other Drug Education

Crisis Resources:
- Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343
- National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 9-8-8
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
- Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741
Assignment I: Critical Thinking and Empirical Research

Due Date:

This assignment is designed to expose students to various aspects of critical thinking. Students will use a specific taxonomy to identify the different aspects of critical thinking. Students will review different research studies and apply critical thinking skills.

The critical thinking discussion needs to be based on the student’s critical perspective. Example questions to guide the process of critical thinking are:

1. What is the main issue?
2. What is the conclusion?
3. What are the reasons/rationale for why we are to believe the conclusion?
4. What words or phrases are ambiguous?
5. What are the value conflicts and assumptions?
6. What are the descriptive assumptions?
7. Are there any fallacies in the reasoning?
8. How good is the evidence?
9. Are there rival causes?
10. Are the statistics deceptive?
11. What significant information is omitted?
12. What reasonable conclusions are possible?
13. Are there issues related to diversity that should be considered?
14. Are there social and economic justice issues that should be considered?
15. What considerations should be made regarding human behavior and the social environment?

Written Assignment:

1. Students will select and examine a research method for a topic of interest in a specific study by using at least three sources, as well as material from the textbook. They will then prepare a 3-page written summary of the method as it relates to the topic (describing the method in detail). Use at least two journal articles using the same method to help summarize the method as it applies to the topic selected.
2. Then, provide supporting evidence to the selected method, 3-5 pages in length (literature review of the method).
3. The total length of this assignment will be 6-8 pages.
4. In-text citations and a reference page are required.
5. In addition to meeting the content requirements, the paper is to be double-spaced and in 12-point font. The paper format, citations, and references should all adhere to the guidelines outlined in the Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.) for a professional paper (see chapter 2 for more details). This is an outline to help organize the structure of the assignment: Introduction, Method Description, Literature Review on Method, Conclusion.
Assignment II: A Systematic Review: Integrating Research and Practice

Due Date:

Students will examine their roles as research-practitioners and consumers. This assignment will focus on the following aspects:

- The importance of becoming a research-practitioner
- The importance of becoming a research consumer
- The benefits of research-informed practice and practice-informed research

For this paper, you need to select a problem from your practice experience and conduct a systematic review. For example, research how social workers have addressed the challenge of managing high caseloads. By systematically evaluating current research, the student can come up with a solution. You will then develop a plan of how to use research to enhance your knowledge of the specific problem in the discussion section.

Students will need to be prepared to present the study and its findings. The paper needs to be double-spaced, in 12-point font, and follow a research paper outline, such as Introduction (5-7 pages), Method (2-3 pages), Results (3-5 pages), Discussion (2-3 pages), and Conclusion (1-2 pages), including a subheading on Implications and Limitations. The paper format, citations, and references should adhere to the guidelines outlined in the Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.).
Bibliography


