I  COURSE DOMAIN AND BOUNDARIES

This research course equips students with the knowledge and competence in quantitative and mixed methods needed to conduct independent, applied research in social work practice or social welfare policy. The purpose of this course is to prepare students to select and implement research designs that are appropriate and adequate for answering contemporary social work practice and social welfare policy research questions.

II  KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL OBJECTIVES

By the end of the semester, students will demonstrate advanced knowledge and skill in their understanding and articulation of the following:

1.  Fundamental aspects of epistemology relevant to social work;
2.  Application of the basic elements and phases of research design;
3.  Ability to evaluate the quality of research conducted by others;
4.  Facility in designing research, especially in aspects preceding data analysis.
5.  Use criteria related to validity, reliability, feasibility, and practicality in designing a research study;
6.  Application of basic sampling concepts, designs and decisions within research designs;
7.  Ability to identify and to strengthen weaknesses in research logic and design;
8. Ability to apply ethical principles in the conduct of research, including human subjects protection, and their relationship to the social work value base;

9. Familiarity with gender and ethnic sensitivity in conducting research;

10. Ability to provide as well as to accept constructive and productive critiques on research issues and decisions.

III PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Students are expected to demonstrate their progress in basic comprehension, integration, analysis, and application of the course material through class assignments, e.g., papers, presentations, discussions, and draft/final versions of research proposal).

IV COURSE TEXTS AND READINGS

Required Texts:


Additional Required Readings are identified in section VII

Recommended Texts:


Mandatory On-Line Training on the Protection of Human Research Participants:

All students will be required to complete all required modules of the CITI on-line training program for responsible conduct of research and to submit documentation substantiating completion. Human Investigation Committee, Wayne State University. Internet WWW page at URL: http://www.hic.wayne.edu.
V  ORGANIZATION OF THE COURSE

Students are introduced to all aspects of research design preceding data analysis. Our class sessions will include informal lectures, class discussions, and student presentations. We will use a seminar format and will critique student assignments, papers and published articles. Nonetheless, this course integrates a heavy experiential learning component whereby students will learn by applying what has been studied, by receiving critical feedback on what you have done, and by attempting to improve your performance in light of that feedback.

VI  ROLE OF THE STUDENT

Students are expected to attend all class sessions; absence from class may affect student grades, particularly excessive absences and tardiness. More than two absences will result in students being asked to withdraw from the class. Students are expected to arrive for class on time and stay until the end of the class session. Students are expected to be prepared at class time for discussions pertaining to assigned readings and in-class presentations. As a courtesy to all, cell phone use should be restricted to vibrations – no rings. Please limit beeper use to emergencies only. For further details, see the University Statement of Obligations of Students and Faculty Members of the teaching-learning process.

VII  GRADING POLICY

Final grades will be determined in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Value of Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written Assignments/presentations (4)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(DUE 9/18, 10/2, 10/30 &amp; 11/6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Line CITI Training (DUE 9/11)</td>
<td>-10 points if not completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXAM (10/23)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Version of Research Proposal (DUE 12/4)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I will assign a numerical grade or letter grade for course assignments. The criteria for assignment grades are as follows:

- **A** 95.0-100  Mastery of subject content, demonstration of critical analysis, creativity and/or complexity in completion of assignment.
- **A-** 90.0-94.9 The difference between A and A- is based on the degree to which these skills are demonstrated.
- **B+** 87.0-89.9 Mastery of subject content beyond expected competency, but has not demonstrated additional critical analysis, creativity or complexity in the completion of the assignment.
B 83-86.9 Mastery of subject content at level of expected competency – meets course expectations
B- 80-82.9 Less than adequate competency, but demonstrates student learning and potential for mastery of subject content.
C+ 77-79.9 Demonstrates student learning with a minimal understanding of subject content. Significant areas needing improvement.
C 73-76.9 Demonstrates minimal understanding of subject content. Significant areas needing improvement to meet course requirements.
F < 73 Student has failed to demonstrate minimal understanding of subject content.

1. **Written Assignments**

There are four writing assignments, each of which pertains to the development of an NIH style research proposal. The first two assignments relate to the development of a researchable question, development of hypotheses and literature review. Assignments 3 & 4 relate to the development of hypotheses, sampling designs, and suitable research designs and data analysis strategies.

2. **In-Class Presentations**

Students will prepare 10 minute oral presentations for each of their written assignments as well as for the draft of the research proposal. Each student will be required to distribute copies to all classmates of each assignment and presentation.

3. **Research Proposal: Draft proposal to be presented 11/20; Final proposal due 12/4**

The final assignment, building on the individual written assignments, is the preparation of a research proposal. This research proposal will utilize a mixed-methods design. The overall purpose of the research proposal is for students to have a “hands on” experience of writing a feasible research plan in the student’s domain of knowledge. Specific goals are to (1) familiarize students with the research literature and the theoretical frameworks that undergird research in the student’s chosen area of study; and (2) to provide students with the opportunity to generate researchable questions and hypotheses, select an appropriate research design; and describe the data collection methods and analysis strategies that are best for conducting research on the chosen topic.

This proposal will follow current NIH guidelines and should have the following sections (page limits in parentheses):
1. Abstract (1 page)
2. Specific Aims (1 page)
3. Research strategy (6 pages)
4. References (no page limit)
5. Appendices
   a. Figure 1: Literature map (from assignment #1, revised if necessary)
b. Table 1: Data collection techniques (from assignment #4, revised if necessary)

Students also will be expected to prepare a 15-minute PowerPoint presentation of their Research Proposal on 11/28/2012. A shorter (10 minutes maximum) of changes to the proposal based on feedback from the earlier presentation will be expected on the last day of class, 12/5/2012. For both presentations, students should prepare a handout for distribution to the entire class.

Further details on the research proposal will be provided in class, and a detailed assignment will be posted to the class Blackboard Site.

VIII COURSE CONTENT

Session 1  Introduction to Course/ How Scientific is Social Work Research?
8/28/2013

Readings:


Session 2  Developing Questions/Linking Theory to Research/Literature Reviews
9/4/2013


Creswell, J.W.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature
Chapter 3: The Use of Theory
Chapter 4: Writing Strategies and Ethical Considerations
Chapter 5: The Introduction
Chapter 6: The Purpose Statement
Chapter 7: Research Questions and Hypotheses

Session 3  Conducting Ethical and Culturally Competent Research
9/11/2013
Completion of CITI On-Line Training for the Responsible Conduct of Research. Students must submit documentation of completion of all required modules.

Readings:


Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman
Chapter 2: Doing the Right Thing (PDF)


IRB Process at Wayne State University

Session 4  Introduction to Research Approaches  
9/18/2013

Assignment 1: 10 minute presentations

Readings:

Session 5: Randomized Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs  
9/25/2013

Readings:

CONSORT 2010 & Flow Chart 2010


Session 6: Quasi Experimental Designs/Internal Validity & Causality  
10/2/2013

Readings:

Assignment 2 due: 10 minute presentations
Session 7: Sampling & External Validity  
10/9/2013  

Session 8 Reliability & Validity in Measurement  
10/16/2012  

Session 9 EXAM first half of class. Covers sessions 1 through 8  
10/23/2013  
Introduction to the Mixed Methods Approach  

Readings:  
Creswell, J.W. Chapter 1: The Selection of a Research Design  
Ivankova, N.V., A Sample Mixed Methods Dissertation Proposal (PDF)

Session 10 Mixed Methods Strategies/Design Considerations  
10/30/2013  
Assignment #3 due (10 minute presentation)  

Readings:  
Creswell, J.W.  
Chapter 10: Mixed Methods Procedures.

Session 11 Examples of Mixed Methods Designs
11/6/2013 (Possible guest speaker)

**Assignment #4 due (10 minute presentations)**

Session 12
11/13/2013

Writing & Editing Research Proposals

Readings:


Tashakkori & Teddlie  Chapter 12: Tables or Tableaux? The Challenges of Writing and Reading Mixed Methods Studies. (PDF)

** November 21, 2012 THANKSGIVING BREAK: NO CLASS

Session 13 Data Analysis Issues in Mixed Methods Designs
11/20/2013

Present draft of your Research Proposal

Readings:

Teddlie & Tashakkori
Chapter 11: The Analysis of Mixed Methods Data (PDF)

** November 27, 2013 THANKSGIVING BREAK: NO CLASS

Session 14 Presenting Mixed-Methods Research Proposals
12/4/2013 Final written version of research proposal due

Brief Oral presentation of research proposals (emphasis on change made since draft presentation on 11/20)
Assignments

Assignment 1: Due 9/18/2013

Write a five page paper including a preliminary review of the literature on a research question that interests you (You might discuss this with your adviser). Prepare a "literature map" such as the one on figure 2.1 of Creswell to accompany your review. What is the question? Why is this a problem? What is the relevance of this question to social work theory, practice or policy? What do you know about this question and how do you know it? Be prepared to do a 10 minute class presentation where you present your topical area and your literature map.

Assignment 2: Due 9/25/2013

Discuss and describe the role of theory in your study. Will you be testing an existing theoretical framework, or developing a new framework based on the data that is collected from the study? Propose research questions and/or hypotheses. What are the experiential, empirical, or theoretical bases for your hypotheses/research questions? Be prepared to do a 10 minute class presentation. (2 pp. maximum).

Assignment 3: Due 10/30/2013

Provide a concise description of any instrument or scales that you would propose to use in your study. What are the major potential threats to internal and external validity in your study? How will you address these threats? Discuss the validity and reliability of the proposed measures. Briefly describe the ways in which your proposed measures are sensitive to the particular needs/concerns of the population you propose to study.

Assignment 4 Due 11/6/2013

Write a two page overview of your proposed study in which you describe the mixed methods research design you have chosen to address your research question(s), as discussed by Creswell. Provide the rationale for the selection of your research design AND your proposed sampling design. Also, consider the generalizability (external validity) of study results based on your proposed research design. Create a table outlining the data collection techniques to be employed. This table should have columns for your proposed hypotheses/research questions, and proposed methods and procedures for collecting the data for each of the hypotheses/research questions (landscape orientation for this part will likely work well). What are the major potential threats to internal and external validity in the study? How do you propose to address these threats? Be prepared to do a 10 minute class presentation.
IX BIBLIOGRAPHY


Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C., Eds. (2003). *Handbook of mixed methods in social and


