

WAYNE STATE
UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

SW 9420

Research Practicum

3 credits

Master Syllabus

I. COURSE DOMAIN AND BOUNDARIES

This required course is designed to provide students with a supervised, “hands-on” research experience with a faculty member. The student’s project may involve student-or faculty-initiated research (e.g., work on a new or ongoing research project). It is expected that the student will spend, *on average*, ten hours per week on practicum activities. The primary objective of the research practicum is to strengthen students’ ability to synthesize different phases and components of social work research. The key, therefore, is for students to be involved in as many aspects of the research project as possible (e.g., articulation of research questions, literature review, selection of sampling techniques, formulation of design strategies, development of instruments and other methods of data collection, data analysis, interpretation of results and research report writing).

II. SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OBJECTIVES

Specific objectives for the research practicum will reflect the individualized nature of student research interests, knowledge, and skills. In conjunction with their supervising faculty member, students are expected to develop a contract approved by the Director of the Doctoral Program that specifies:

1. the research objectives and competencies to be acquired/strengthened;
2. the research problem to be examined;
3. the general methodological procedures to be employed;
4. the specific research tasks/activities to be engaged in by the student; and
5. the research training to be provided by the faculty supervisor.

III. PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Ideally, a publishable paper, co-authored by the student and faculty supervisor, will emerge from the research practicum. At a minimum, the student is expected to submit a formal written summary integrating the substantive, methodological, and data analytic components at the end of the practicum. The faculty supervisor evaluates the student’s performance based upon the completion of the tasks specified in the contract, the student’s attainment of targeted knowledge and skills, and the quality of the final research report.

COURSE TEXT

No text is required of this course. Readings will be based on the nature of the research project. Required readings will be developed by the instructor, reviewing the basic steps in the research process and highlighting methodological issues of various types of research designs relative to the specific research project to be conducted in the practicum.

IV. COURSE ORGANIZATION

FAQ re: Research Practicum

Q. When should a student sign up for the Research Practicum?

- A. After completion of Social Work theory courses (and completion of, at least one course in statistics (SW 9100 or equivalent), social work research design (SW 9410, Qualitative Research Methods in SW). Full-time students will generally take the course simultaneous with the one theory course (SW 9430) and SW 9410, Quantitative Research Methods. Part-time students will complete the practicum after completion of the theory and research design courses during the Fall semester of Year 3 in the program).

Q. Who will supervise the Research Practicum?

- A. Any tenured or tenure-track member of the Doctoral Program Faculty in the School of Social Work holding Regular Graduate Faculty Status may supervise the Research Practicum.

Q. How does the Research Practicum related to the student's dissertation research?

- A. The data from the Research Practicum would not normally form the dissertation data set. Because the Research Practicum is meant as a “hands-on” learning experience under the close supervision of a faculty member, it may not allow the autonomous research experience that a dissertation project is meant to foster. In addition, each member of the dissertation committee will want to participate in the formation and implementation of your dissertation project. One faculty member supervises the Research Practicum. The Research Practicum results can, however, be used as pilot data for a dissertation project. The topic used in Research Practicum can also be the same topic and methodology used in the dissertation.

V. GRADING

Grading will be on an S/U (“Satisfactory”/”Unsatisfactory”) basis.

VI. ROLE OF STUDENT AND INSTRUCTOR

If the student initiates a project for the purposes of a research practicum, written permission must be received from any agency or individuals/clients that will be involved in the research. The student is responsible for getting University approval for using human subjects prior to making any contacts with individuals/clients for the purposes of research. The website for Human Subjects is: <http://www.research.fsu.edu/humansubjects/index.html>. All forms, contact phone numbers, and committee deadlines are available on this website. Copies of permission letters, along with Human Subject forms, must be filed with the Ph.D. Program Office.

The role of the student and instructor will follow the university statement of mutual obligations of students and faculty members in the teaching and learning process, as revised on 7/14/97.