SW 9430 Dissertation Seminar 1 credit

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COURSE DESCRIPTION
Offered for S and U grades only. Prereq: candidate status or consent of Ph.D. program director. Development, presentation and critique of dissertation research questions, in context of social work practice or social welfare policy.

COURSE COMPETENCIES FOR THIS COURSE: [These are for the doctoral program in general and should be reflected in each student’s dissertation prospectus.]

Theory
• Understand and apply theory for research design and social work practice

Research Methods
• Employ mastery of qualitative/quantitative and mixed methods research designs, including scientific theory supporting the design, to be ready to conduct research using these designs
• Distinguish between observational vs. intervention/evaluation research designs
• Critique the ethical issues related to all designs and their application in urban practice and communities

Data Analysis [if relevant to study methodology]
• Apply appropriate statistical tests and interpretation of results
• Appraise types of qualitative data analysis and be prepared to apply to appropriate research situations

Integration of Knowledge
• Review and synthesize research and practice literature that is relevant to a social work domain of knowledge
• Identify historical changes in practice and policy for a social work field, including the trends in the fit with social work ethics and values
• Apply relevant theoretical frameworks to a domain of knowledge in social work

TEXTS AND REQUIRED MATERIAL

Other materials are available on Blackboard.

INTRODUCTION:
The primary purpose of this course is to write the dissertation prospectus. Topics include the relationship between theory and data, research design, sampling, measurement, data analysis, and dissertation policies and procedures. The seminar is designed to help participants build on and integrate their previous coursework to develop a dissertation prospectus (with feedback from professor, class and guidance from dissertation chair and committee).

Accordingly, the following knowledge and skills are assumed:

1. The ability to critically analyze individual research studies and to evaluate the state-of-the-literature in a particular research area.

2. An advanced understanding of statistics (including statistical and substantive significance and statistical power) or of qualitative research methods.

3. An understanding of basic research designs, sampling theory, and measurement theory.

Because students will be using a variety of research designs in their dissertation research, this course does not emphasize one design over another.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:
Assignments will be linked to the development of the dissertation prospectus. Students are expected to produce a draft of each section of the prospectus by the dates listed below (before each session so the professor and class members can review the drafts before class). Achieving a “satisfactory” grade for this course means the student has completed a prospectus that satisfies course requirements. It does not mean that the prospectus is approved by the student’s dissertation committee.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS
There are seven course requirements. Due dates are noted on session schedule:

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<tr>
<th>Course Requirement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Draft Introductory Chapter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft Literature Review Chapter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft Theory Chapter</td>
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<td>Draft Methodology Chapter</td>
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<td>Final version of the dissertation prospectus</td>
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<td>Present the dissertation prospectus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serve as a primary reviewer (along with instructor) of one colleague’s chapter during sessions II, III, and IV</td>
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ORGANIZATION OF THE COURSE

The course will meet 5 times for about 3 hours. The first session is an overview, including a review of concept papers that students will have prepared in advance. After that, each class will include review of students’ drafts of prospectus chapters, as well as plans for the next chapters. The final class enables students to do a practice defense of their prospectus.

ROLE OF THE STUDENT AND INSTRUCTOR

See University Statement of Obligation of Students and Faculty Members of the teaching-learning process http://www.bulletins.wayne.edu/fib/fib2d.html

POLICIES FOR THIS COURSE

Attendance policy
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 review of their own work and of others’ work. Drafts should be sent to the professor and peer reviewer by the dates listed on the syllabus.

In order to be courteous to classmates, we ask that cell phones use be restricted to vibrations—no rings. Please limit beeper use to emergencies only. Please use your laptop only to take notes during class.

Electronic communication policy: The professor may take up to 48 hours to return an email.

Inclement weather: Please check with the professor and the Blackboard site in case of weather that might require cancellation of class.

For further details, see the University Statement of Obligations of Students and Faculty Members of the teaching-learning process.

Please run all chapter drafts through SafeAssign on our class BB site. Run them drafts so your prospectus and dissertation do not appear to be plagiarizing your draft. The Graduate School requires that all final dissertations must be checked against SafeAssign.

VII. RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

1. Instructor and Dissertation Chair

Consult with the instructor or dissertation chair about any aspect of your research or the seminar during scheduled consultation hours, via email or by appointment.

2. The School of Social Work

The School provides support and assistance to students who, for a variety of reasons, may be experiencing academic problems with writing, statistics, and/or research. Such students should speak with the Ph.D. Director to arrange for special support services.
3. Wayne State University

Research Design and Analysis Consulting

This unit (part of Psychology Department) provides assistance with the design of research projects and the statistical analysis of data. The service is available free of charge to Wayne State University faculty, staff, post-doctoral students, and graduate students. This service is not designed as a substitute for formal coursework on topics in research design and statistical analysis or for mentoring of graduate students by their thesis or dissertation advisors, and our consultants do not function as tutors or supplemental instructors for individuals enrolled in courses. Rather, the service is designed to augment a researcher's own education and training in research design and statistical analysis. We can suggest methodological and analytical approaches and provide guidance for addressing issues that arise in the research process. In addition, we can provide assistance in the use of SPSS, SAS, and LISREL. The service is staffed by and housed in the Department of Psychology. Consultation is available by appointment. Consult your faculty mentor before contacting this service for assistance. The service is staffed by and housed in the Department of Psychology. The office is located at 5057 Woodward Ave, Room 8402. Consultation is available by appointment. To schedule an appointment, contact the service by telephone at (313) 577-9992 or e-mail at RDAUnit@wayne.edu. For general inquiries, Dr. Sebastiano Fisicaro, the director of the unit, can be reached at (313) 577-2812 or fisicaro@wayne.edu.

- Writing Skills

The Graduate School supports a writing tutor for graduate writing projects (see Graduate School website) and a writing website (www.gradschool.wayne.edu/GradWriting/index.htm) This Graduate Writing Resources webpage is designed to help graduate students in the process of writing dissertations, articles, theses, grant proposals, and prospectuses. The site also provides links to resources that will assist with citations, grammar and punctuation, style, and ways to avoid plagiarism.

- Dissertation Funding

Download materials available from the PhD Office in the Graduate School relative to internal dissertation research grants (http://www.gradschool.wayne.edu/funding/ThesisDissertationApplication.pdf) Grants and fellowships may be available in your specific field of research, so discuss these with your dissertation chair.

- Institutional Review Board (formerly HIC)

Contact the School’s Research Coordinator, Neva Nahan at 577-4498 to arrange for a consultation as you prepare your IRB Protocol. She should review all protocols before you submit them to the IRB.

- Counseling and Supportive Services

If you are feeling overwhelmed, consider talking to me or call WSU’s Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), 5221 Gullen Mall, Room 552 Student Center Building. Phone: 313-577-3398. Website: http://www.caps.wayne.edu/.
Other Resources

You may find the following online resources to be of support while engaged in the dissertation process:

Discussion and Support for Dissertation Writers (http://www.phinished.org/).
Association for Support of Graduate Students (http://www.asgs.org/).


WSU STUDENT RESOURCES

Students with disabilities
http://studentdisability.wayne.edu/rights.php.

Academic integrity and student code of conduct
http://www.doso.wayne.edu

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at Wayne State:
http://www.caps.wayne.edu/

Course Learning Units

Written assignments should be emailed to instructor and other class members by the dates listed below. Blackboard should enable you to email everything to all of us at one time.

Reading for each session should be completed before that session.

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<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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| I    | **Session I. Sept. 13**  Introduction to Course and Dissertation Process September 13  
**Topics:** Overview of the class and the dissertation process  
Selection of peer review partners  
Structure, composition and function of the dissertation committee  
Choosing dissertation topics and research questions  
Finding dissertation support  
Evaluating sample research proposal or prospectus  
Giving constructive and facilitative feedback  
Writing the introductory chapter  
Outline of the introductory chapter (background of problem,  |
|      | Assignment Due: 2 days before class session I.  
Prepare 2 page draft concept paper that includes: purpose, research questions, and possible hypotheses, if applicable. Email to instructor and fellow students 2 days before class session.  
Review each other’s concept papers (all of them) in order to provide helpful suggestions.  |

Readings:

- Chapters from Roberts book:  
  1. Do You Have What It Takes? pp.2-17  
  2. What Exactly Is a Dissertation? pp.18-30  
  4. Choosing a Dissertation Topic pp.46-52  
5. Creating Your Dissertation Team pp.53-62
7. Organizing Yourself pp.67-74


**Giving Facilitative Feedback**
(on Blackboard)

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**Session II. October 4**

**Topics:** Progress update and discussion of students’ drafts
Outlining the literature review
Organizational the extant literature
Evaluating the extant literature
Developing a critical review of the extant literature

**Assignments for Session II:**

Draft introductory chapter due 4 days before class session II. Email to instructor and fellow students

Serve as a primary reviewer (along with instructor) of designated colleague’s chapter

**Readings:**

Roberts book
8. Using the Internet and Technology to Conduct Research, pp. 76-84
9. Reviewing the Literature, pp. 85-110
10. Mastering the Academic Style, pp.111-121
11. Writing the Introduction Chapter, pp. 123-140


Evaluate sample dissertations (first three chapters). Look online for dissertations that are somewhat related to your topic. Note how they organize their literature review, their attention to theory, and their discussion of their methodology.

Outline of literature review
chapter due 2 weeks before class session III
Draft literature review chapter due 4 days before class session III. Email to instructor and fellow students
Serve as a primary reviewer (along with instructor) of designated colleague’s chapter

Readings:


### Session IV  November 15

Progress update and discussion of students’ drafts

Research questions (and hypotheses if relevant)

Conceptualization (and measurement if relevant)

Study population and sampling design

Research design

Data collection protocol

Data analysis procedures and (data measures if relevant)

Limitations of the proposed research

Human subjects protocol

Timeline

Abstract of proposal

### Assignments for Session IV:

- Outline of Theory Chapter due 2 weeks before class session III
- Draft of Theory Chapter due 4 days before class session IV. Email to instructor and fellow students
- Serve as a primary reviewer (along with instructor) of designated colleague’s chapter

Roberts book:

- Ch. 3 What are Ethical Considerations in Research?, pp.31-44
- Ch. 12. Selecting and Describing the Methodology pp.141-165
- Ch.14. Analyzing and Presenting the Results, pp.171-176
- Ch. 16. The Oral Defense: D-Day, pp.184-191


Final draft of dissertation prospectus due 12/5/2011 . Email to instructor and fellow students 12/5/2011

Prepare mock prospectus defense for presentation on December 13

### Session V  December 13

Mock prospectus defenses

Facilitative feedback and peer review

### BIBLIOGRAPHY
Dissertation Writing


**Constructing, Evaluating and Testing Theory**


**Academic Writing: Social Work**

*Families in Society Writing Series*


**Other**


**Academic Writing: General**


Publication Process


*Publication Process (Online Resources)*

List of Journals in the Human Services Field:
http://www3.uta.edu/sswtech/publish/journals/


Peer Review in the Internet Age: www.public.iastate.edu/~gerrymck/DraftFive.doc

Copyright: http://www.utsystem.edu/OGC/IntellectualProperty/cprtindx.htm

Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals: Writing and Editing for Biomedical Publication: http://www.icmje.org/#editor


Authorship


Ranking of Journals


Getting Research Funding