

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

**RESEARCH METHODS I**

<b>Course Number:</b>	SW 388R1	<b>Instructor:</b>	Namkee Choi
<b>Unique Number:</b>	66065	<b>Office Number:</b>	SSW 3.122D
<b>Semester:</b>	Fall 2006	<b>Office Phone:</b> <b>e-mail:</b>	(512) 232-9590 nchoi@mail.utexas.edu; nchoi@austin.rr.com
<b>Meeting Time/Place:</b>	TU 8:30-11:20 SSW 2.130	<b>Office Hours:</b>	TU 11:30-1:30 and by appt.

**I. Course Description**

This is the first in a series of research courses required of social work doctoral students. This course introduces students to the basic elements of research design in the social sciences with particular attention to social work research.

**II. Course Objectives**

At the end of this course, students should:

1. Have knowledge of aspects of epistemology relevant to the social sciences, especially social work;
2. Have working knowledge of the language of research in order to use research terminology precisely and accurately;
3. Know the elements and phases of research;
4. Be able to evaluate the quality of research done by others;
5. Have increased facility in designing research, especially in aspects preceding data analysis;
6. Have increased knowledge of tools useful in planning, conducting, and reporting the results of research such as data collection instruments and publication formats;
7. Have increased knowledge of the type of writing needed to describe research designs and report findings;
8. Be familiar with standards for the ethical conduct of research, including human subjects protection, and their relationship to the social work value base;
9. Be familiar with gender and ethnic sensitivity in conducting research;
10. Understand the impact of political and other ideological forces on social work research and program evaluation.

**III. Methods of Instruction**

The methods of instruction will be informal lectures (questions and comments are encouraged), class discussions, class exercises, guest presentations, and student presentations.

**IV. Course Readings**

The required text for the course is:

1. Rubin, A. & Babbie, E. (2005). *Research methods for social work* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.), Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole-Thompson Learning.

2. Required research articles noted in the course schedule. Most of these articles are accessible in pdf files on-line, and you will be able to download for reading and/or printing. For the ones that are not available on-line, the instructor will provide a hard copy in advance.

## V. Grading and Course Requirements

The final grade for the course will be based on (1) weekly assignments (**25** points total); (2) occasional written assignments (**15** points total); (3) two tests (**30** points total; 15 points each); (4) First draft of a research proposal (**10** points); (5) a final paper—revised research proposal (**15** points); and (6) UT Human subjects research ethics training certificate (**5** points)

### Accumulated points and grading scale

100-94 = A	93-90 = A-	89-87 = B+	86-84 = B	83-80 = B-	
79-77 = C+	76-74 = C	73-70 = C-	69-67 = D+	66-64 = D-	59 and below = F

### Course requirements and grade assignment:

1. Weekly assignment: Questions from assigned readings (due each week for which reading assignments are to be discussed in class): For each chapter that is assigned as required reading for the week, please read it and generate at least **three** questions that you want to be discussed in class. The questions must be about the contents of the chapter that you did not clearly understand. For each article, generate **one or two** questions about the method section. These questions must be uploaded to the course Blackboard by **7 pm Monday before each class session**.
2. Occasional written assignments (due each week noted in the course schedule): The instructor will give assignments for students to facilitate their understanding of research methods (e.g., hypotheses writing; research designs; measurement errors). Each student should bring 9 hard copies of his or her assignments to the next class for review and discussion
3. Two--mid-term (in class; closed book; 10/17/06) and wrap-up (take-home; due 12/05/06)--tests (15 points each, 30 points total): Two tests will cover all materials assigned and/or discussed in class this semester. The format will consist of short and long essay questions.
4. Draft of a research proposal (Due 11/14/06): Write a draft of a research proposal for a small scale study for you to conduct a survey, experimental/quasi-experimental study intended to evaluate a social service or intervention program, mixed--method study for the same purpose, existing data analysis, or development and validation of a scale.

The overall purpose of the research proposal is for students to practice, hands-on, writing a feasible research plan for a study of their choice. Specific goals are to (1) familiarize the students with the research literature and theoretical frameworks on a topic chosen by the student; and (2) allow the students the opportunity to generate research questions and hypotheses, select a scientifically solid research design, and describe the data collection methods and analysis strategy that are best for researching the chosen topic. The proposal should be written in the following format

Abstract (about 500 words)

A. Specific Aims (1 page; single space)

B. Background and Significance (of Problem and Literature Review and

- Conceptual/Theoretical Framework; 2-3 pages)
- C. Research Design and Methods (4-5 pages)
- Overview of research design
  - Setting (Study site, if applicable)
  - Subjects (inclusion/exclusion criteria; sample size; recruitment/consent procedures; sampling steps, if applicable)
  - Data collection methods and procedures
  - Measures
  - Data analysis (preliminary at this point since you may not have all the statistical knowledge)
- D. Description of Project Timeline (Gantt chart)
- Appendix (Survey questionnaires, copies of any scales and instruments, letters of support/collaboration)

**Each student will bring 9 copies of his/her draft proposal and distribute them to the instructor and his/her classmates for their feedback.**

5. Final research proposal (Due 12/12/06): Based on the feedback that the student received on draft proposal, a revision is required for improving the proposal. This final proposal must also include IRB application materials (including informed consent form and all the questionnaires and instrument).

6. Study “Policies and procedures governing research within human subjects” at the UR IRB website and take the on-line training and receive certification. (I strongly recommend you to do this early in the semester.)

## VI. Class Policies

\*\*\*Remember that as a Ph.D. student, you are ultimately responsible for your own learning and development. The instructor is an enabler and facilitator for your education, but you need to take initiatives for your own education.

1. Students are expected to attend all classes, if at all possible. In case you have medical emergencies, doctor’s appointment, personal or family crises, special events, and/or university sanctioned activities occurring during the regularly scheduled time of this class, you may miss up to 2 classes without penalty. Students who miss more than two classes during the semester will lose 5 points, and those who miss more than four classes during the semester will lose 10 points.
2. Students are required to upload their weekly assignments to the course Blackboard and bring copies of the other assignments to class by the designated time. Students will lose 3 points for each day that an assignment is late. Any adjustment in assignment due dates and/or examination times **MUST** be discussed with the instructor at least 48 hours prior to the regularly scheduled date. Incompletes will not be allowed in this course.
3. Students are expected to do assigned readings before the class time and actively participate in class discussions and presentations.
4. While scholastic dishonesty is not anticipated, students shall be subject to The University of Texas at Austin’s policy on this subject, in case violations occur.

5. Students with Disabilities: The University of Texas at Austin provides, upon request, appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259 (voice) or 471-4641 (TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing).

## VII. Course and Instructor Evaluation

At the end of the course I will use the standard Course Instructor Survey (CIS) provided by the University of Texas at Austin. The CIS offers students a systematic, campus-wide method of evaluating courses and instructors. It also allows instructors to compare their course ratings with averages for their school. The results are also used by the Dean and the School's Executive Committee as one aspect of faculty evaluation. I hope every student will complete the CIS. In addition to this formal means of evaluating the course, I strongly recommend you to give me any feedback regarding the course during the semester; please stop by during my office hours or make an appointment.

## VIII. Course Schedule

DATE	TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS	REQUIRED READINGS
Week 1 9/5/06	Introduction to Course Scientific inquiry in Social Work Epistemological Issues in the Development of Social Work Knowledge  Research Ethics and IRB process	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 1-3. Gambrill, E. (1999). Evidence-based practice: An alternative to authority-based practice. <i>Families in Society: Journal of Contemporary Human Services</i> , 80, 341-350. Bolland, K. & Atherton, C. (2002). Heuristic versus logical positivism: solving the wrong problem. <i>Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services</i> , 83, 7-13. Thyer, B. (2001). Point/Counterpoint: What is the role of theory in research on social work practice? <i>Journal of Social Work Education</i> , 37(1), 9-25. Gomoroy, T. (2001). A fallibalistic response to Thyer's theory of theory-free empirical research in social work practice. <i>Journal of Social Work Education</i> , 37(1), 26-50.  (Those who are interested can find more debates among Thyer, Gomory, and Munro in the Fall 2002 issue of the <i>Journal of Social Work Education</i> , 38 (3).
Week 2 9/12/06	Research Process Overview: Weekly assignment 1 due	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 4
Week 3 9/19/06	More on problem formulation; the research process; units of analysis; hypotheses; variables; and operational definitions  Weekly assignment 2 due	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 5

	Preliminary ideas for research proposal topic	
Week 4 9/26/06	Measurement; instrument construction; reliability, validity, and cultural sensitivity of measurement;  Weekly assignment 3 due	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 6-7
Week 5 10/3/06	More on Measurement; instrument construction; reliability, validity, and cultural sensitivity of measurement: Article critique  Weekly assignment 4 due	Springer, D. et al. (2002). Creating and validating rapid assessment instruments for practice and research). <i>Research on Social Work Practice, 12(3)</i> , 408-439 (for Part 1) and <i>Research on Social Work Practice, 12(6)</i> , 768-795 (for Part 2).  Pike, C. K. (2002). Measuring video gambling: Instrument development and validation. <i>Research on Social Work Practice, 12(3)</i> , 389-407.  Tyson, E. H. & Glisson, C. (2005). A cross-ethnic validity study of the shortform assessment for children (SAC). <i>Research on Social Work Practice, 15 (2)</i> , 97-109.
Week 6 10/10/06	Sampling methods for surveys; recruitment and retention of minority and oppressed populations  Weekly assignment 5 due	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 8 & 16  Arean, P. A., Alvidrez, J., Nery, R., Estes, C., & Kinkins, K. (2003). Recruitment and retention of older minorities in mental health services research. <i>The Gerontologist, 43 (1)</i> , 33-44.
Week 7 10/17/05	<b>Test 1</b>	
Week 8 10/24/06	Specifics of survey research methods  Weekly assignment 6 due	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 9 & 15
Week 9 10/31/06	Experimental and quasi-experimental designs; internal and external validity  Weekly assignment 7 due	Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 10-11

<p>Week 10 11/7/06</p>	<p>More on experimental and quasi experimental designs: article critique Specifics of Single-system design</p> <p>Weekly assignment 8 due.</p>	<p>Fraser, M. W. (2004). Intervention research in social work: Recent advances and continuing challenges. <i>Research on Social Work Practice, 14</i> (3), 210-222.</p> <p>Fraser, M. W., Day, S. H., Galinsky, M. J., Hodges, V. G., &amp; Smokowski, P. R. (2004). Conduct problems and peer rejection in childhood: A randomized trial of the making choices and strong families program. <i>Research on Social Work Practice, 14</i> (5), 313-324.</p> <p>Alexopoulos, G. S., Raue, P., &amp; Arean, P. (2003). Problem-solving therapy versus supportive therapy in geriatric major depression with executive dysfunction. <i>American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry, 11</i>, 46-51.</p> <p>Miranda, J. et al. (2003). Treatment of depression among impoverished primary care patients from ethnic minority groups. <i>Psychiatric Services, 54</i>, 219-225.</p> <p>(optional) Bellg, A. J. et al. (2004). Enhancing treatment fidelity in health behavior change studies: Best practices and recommendations from the NIH Behavior Change Consortium. <i>Health Psychology, 23</i>, 443-451.</p> <p>(optional) Lutwack-Bloom, P. Wijewickrama, R. &amp; Smith, B. (2005). Effects of pets versus people visits with nursing home residents. <i>Journal of Gerontological Social Work, 44</i>(3/4), 137-159.</p>
<p>Week 11 11/14/06</p>	<p>Single subject design</p> <p>Weekly assignment 9 due</p>	<p>Rubin &amp; Babbie, Ch. 12</p> <p>Brophy, G. (2000). Social work treatment of sleep disturbance in a 5-year-old boy: A single-case evaluation. <i>Research on Social Work Practice, 10</i> (6), 748-758.</p> <p>Bradshaw, W. &amp; Rosenborough, D. (2004). Evaluating the effectiveness of Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment of residual symptoms and impairment in Schizophrenia. <i>Research on Social Work Practice, 14</i> (2), 112-120.</p>
<p>Week 12 11/21/06</p>	<p>Participatory research and Mixed method research; Secondary data analysis</p>	<p>Rubin &amp; Babbie, Ch. 13 &amp; 15</p> <p>Review a meta-analysis from the Cochrane Collaborative on a topic of interest to you (<a href="http://www.cochrane.org/indexs0.htm">http://www.cochrane.org/indexs0.htm</a>)</p> <p>McAllister, C. L., Green, B. L., Terry, M. A., Herman, V., &amp; Mulvey, L. (2003). Parents, practitioners, and researchers: Community-based participatory research with Early Head Start. <i>American Journal of Public Health, 93</i>, 1672-1679.</p> <p>Edmond, T., Sloan, L., McCarty, D. (2004). Sexual abuse survivors' perceptions of the effectiveness of EMDR and eclectic therapy. <i>Research on Social Work Practice, 14</i></p>

		(4), 259-272. Ozawa, M. N. & Yoon, H-S. (2005). "Leavers" from TANF and AFDC: How do they fare economically? <i>Social Work</i> , 50 (3) 239-249.
Weeks 13 & 14 11/28/06 & 12/05/06	Feedback on draft research proposal  12/05/06: Take-home exam due	
Week 15 12/12/06	Final research proposal due	Bring the final research proposal to the instructor's office by 2:00 pm

Electronic links to the articles for the first week:

Gambrill, E. (1999). Evidence-based practice: An alternative to authority-based practice. *Families in Society: Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 80, 341-350. URL: <http://www.familiesinsociety.org/Show.asp?override=true&docid=1214>.

Bolland, K. & Atherton, C. (2002). Heuristic versus logical positivism: solving the wrong problem. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 83, 7-13. . URL: <http://www.familiesinsociety.org/Show.asp?override=true&docid=38>.

Thyer, B. (2001). Point/Counterpoint: What is the role of theory in research on social work practice? *Journal of Social Work Education*, 37(1), 9-25. URL: [http://pdfserve.galegroup.com/pdfserve/get\\_item/1/S3bd975w4\\_2/SB293\\_02.pdf](http://pdfserve.galegroup.com/pdfserve/get_item/1/S3bd975w4_2/SB293_02.pdf).

Gomoroy, T. (2001). A fallibalistic response to Thyer's theory of theory-free empirical research in social work practice. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 37(1), 26-50. URL: [http://pdfserve.galegroup.com/pdfserve/get\\_item/1/S3bd975w4\\_3/SB293\\_03.pdf](http://pdfserve.galegroup.com/pdfserve/get_item/1/S3bd975w4_3/SB293_03.pdf)

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Berger, P. L. & Luckmann, T. (1967). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. Garden City: NY: Anchor Books.

Bloom, M., Fischer, J., & Orme. (1996). *Evaluating practice: Guidelines for the accountable professional*. (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Campbell, D. T., & Stanley, J. C. (1963). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research*. Chicago: Rand McNally.

Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. T. (1979). *Quasi-experimentation: Design and analysis issues for field settings*. Chicago: Rand McNally.

Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Gibbs, L. E. (1991). *Scientific reasoning for social workers: Bridging the gap between research and practice*. New York: Merrill.
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- Guba, E. G. (Ed.). (1990). *The paradigm dialog*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Gubrium, J. F., & Holstein, J. A. (1997). *The new language of a qualitative method*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hudson, W. W., & Nurius, P. S. (Eds.). (1994). *Controversial issues in social work research*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Humphries, B., & Truman, C. (Eds.). (1994). *Re-thinking social research research: Anti-discriminatory approaches in research methodology*. Brookfield, VT: Avebury.
- Isaac, S., & Michael, W. B. (1995). *Handbook in research and evaluation* (3rd ed.). San Diego: Edits.
- Kerlinger, F. N., & Lee, H. B. (2000). Foundations of behavioral research, 4th ed. New York: Harcourt College Publishers.
- Kuhn, T. (1970). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lipsey, M. W. (1990). *Design sensitivity: Statistical power for experimental research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Marlow, C. R. (2001). *Research methods for generalist social work* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Miller, D. C. & Salkind, N. J. (2002). *Handbook of research design and social measurement* (6th ed.). Newbury Park, NJ: Sage Publications.
- Neuman, W. L. (2002). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Padgett, D. K. (1998). *Qualitative methods in social work: Challenges and rewards*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Potocky, M., & Rodgers-Farmer, A. Y. (Eds.) (1998). *Social work research with minority and oppressed populations*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.
- Potocky-Tripodi, M., & Tripodi, T. (Eds.) (1999). *New directions for social work practice research*. Washington, DC : NASW Press.
- Reinharz, S. (1992). *Feminist methods in social research*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Reissman, C. K. (1994). *Qualitative studies in social work research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
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- Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (2001). *Research methods for social work* (5th ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Wadsworth.
- Sherman, E., & Reid, W. J. (Eds.). (1994). *Qualitative research in social work*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Singleton, R. A., Straits, B. C., & Straits, M. M. (1993). *Approaches to social research* (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Stanfield, J. H., II, & Dennis, R. M. (1993). *Race and ethnicity in research methods*. Newbury Park, CA:

Sage Publications.

Task Force on Social Work Research. (1991). *Building social work knowledge for effective services and policies*. Austin, TX: School of Social Work, University of Texas at Austin.

Tutty, L. M., Rothery, M. A., & Grinnell, R. M., Jr. (1996). *Qualitative research for social workers: Phases, steps, and tasks*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Tyson, K. (1995). *New foundations for scientific social and behavioral research: The heuristic paradigm*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Videka-Sherman, L. & Reid, W. J. (Eds.). (1990). *Advances in clinical social work research*. Silver Spring, MD : National Association of Social Workers.

William, M., Unrau, Y. A., & Grinnell, R. M. (1998). *Introduction to social work research*. Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock.

Yegidis, B. L., & Weinbach, R. W. (1991). *Research methods for social workers*. New York: Longman.