

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Course Number:	SW 388R1	Instructor:	Diana DiNitto
Unique Number:	64635	Office Number:	SSW 3.130B
Semester:	Fall 2004	Office Phone:	(512) 471-9227
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Meeting Time/Place:	TU 8:30-11:30 SSW 2.130	Office Hours:	TU 11:15-11:45, 1:30-4:00, and by appt.

RESEARCH METHODS 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.

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

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.

Course Readings

The required text for the course is:

Kerlinger, F. N., & Lee, H. B. (2000). Foundations of behavioral research, 4th ed. New York: Harcourt College Publishers.

Other required readings are available online on Blackboard under “Documents.”

Recommended books are:

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*, 5th Ed. Washington, DC: Author.

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

Campbell, D. T., & Stanley, J. C. (1963). *Experimental & 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.

Guba, E. G. (Ed.). (1990). *The paradigm dialog*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Course Agenda

DATE	TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS	READINGS
Class 1 August 31	Introduction to Course How Scientific is Social Work Research? Assign theory exercise or journal manuscript	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 Kerlinger & Lee, Chap. 1. Handout on Social Thought, Social Philosophy, and Social Theory.

<p>Class 2 Sept. 7</p>	<p>How Do We Know?: Epistemological Issues in the Development of Social Work Knowledge</p> <p>Research Vignette</p>	<p>Bolland, K. & Atherton, C. (2002). Heuristic versus logical positivism: solving the wrong problem. <i>The Journal of Contemporary Human Services</i>, 83, 7-13.</p> <p>Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. T. (1979). Quasi-experimentation: Design and analysis issues for field settings. Chicago: Rand McNally, Chap. 1.</p> <p>Gomorooy, 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.</p> <p>Heineman-Pieper, J., Tyson, K & Heineman-Pieper, M. (2002). Doing good science without sacrificing good values: why the heuristic paradigm is the best choice for social work. <i>The Journal of Contemporary Human Services</i>, 83, 15-28.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Class 3 Sept. 14</p>	<p>Epistemology (con't)</p> <p>Feminist Perspectives on Social Science Research</p> <p>THEORY EXERCISE OR JOURNAL MANUSCRIPT PROPOSAL DUE</p> <p>Research Vignette</p>	<p>Cummerton, J. M. (1986). A feminist perspective on research: What does it help us see? In N. Van Den Bergh & L. B. Cooper (Eds.), <i>Feminist visions for social work</i> (pp. 80-100). Silver Spring, MD: National Association of Social Workers.</p> <p>Guba, E. G. (1990). The alternative paradigm dialog. In E. G. Guba (Ed.), <i>The paradigm dialog</i> (pp. 17-27). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.</p> <p>Peplau, L. A. (1989). Beyond nonsexist research: The perils of feminist methods in psychology. <i>Psychology of Women Quarterly</i>, 13, 379-400.</p> <p>Riger, S. (1992). Epistemological debates, feminist voices: Science, social values, and the study of women. <i>American Psychologist</i>, 47(6), 730-740.</p>
<p>Class 4 Sept. 21</p>	<p>Let's Get Specific: Stating Research Problems and Hypotheses</p> <p>In-class exercise on problems and hypotheses</p>	<p>Kerlinger & Lee, Chap. 2.</p> <p>Karger, H. J. (1983). Science, research, and social work: Who controls the profession?. <i>Social Work</i>, 28, 200-205.</p> <p>Witkin, S. L., & Gottschalk, S. (1988). Alternative criteria for theory evaluation. <i>Social Service Review</i>, 62, 211-224.</p> <p>Handout on Concepts and Hypotheses</p>
<p>Class 5 Sept. 28</p>	<p>Let's Get More Specific: Constructs, Variables, and Operational Definitions</p> <p>In-class exercise on operational definitions</p> <p>Assign research role model exercise</p> <p>Review for Test 1</p>	<p>Kerlinger & Lee, Chap. 3</p> <p>Handout on Causal Modeling</p>
<p>Class 6 Oct. 5</p>	<p>TEST 1</p>	

Class 7 Oct. 12	Looking for Mines: A Review of Internal and External Validity STUDENTS' MID-TERM EVALUATION OF COURSE Research Vignette	Kerlinger & Lee, Chaps. 18 & 19 Campbell & Stanley (review entire book)
Class 8 Oct. 19	"So Many Choices": Selecting the Type of Research Design Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs RESEARCH ROLE MODEL EXERCISE OR FIRST THREE SECTIONS OF JOURNAL MANUSCRIPT DUE	DiNitto, D.M., Webb, D.K., & Rubin, A. (2002). The effectiveness of an integrated treatment approach for clients with dual diagnosis. <i>Research on Social Work Practice, 12</i> , 621-641. Kerlinger & Lee, Chaps. 20, 21, & 22 Lynam, D., & Milich, R. (1999). Project DARE: No effects at 10 year follow-up. <i>Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 67</i> , 590-593.
Class 9 Oct. 26	More choices: Non-experimental Designs (Field Research, Survey Research, Historical Research, Participatory, Meta-analysis, and other Designs) In-class exercise on research designs Review for Test 2	Kerlinger & Lee, Chaps. 23, 24, & 25 Halimi, A. (1996). The qualitative approach to social work: An epistemological basis. <i>International Social Work, 39</i> , 363-375. Busch, N., Bell, H., DiNitto, D.M., & Neff, J.A. (2003). <i>A health survey of Texans: a focus on sexual assault</i> . Austin: Institute on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault, The University of Texas at Austin. Marin, G., & Marin, B. V. (1991). <i>Research with Hispanic populations</i> . Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Chaps. 1 & 3. McAllister, C. L., Green, B. L., Terry, M. A., Herman, V., & 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. Padgett, D. K. (1998). <i>Qualitative methods in social work research: Challenges and rewards</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE PUBLICATIONS, Introduction, pp. 1-17. Van Syke, D. M. (2003). The mythology of privatization in contracting for social services. <i>Public Administration Review, 63</i> , 296-315. Select a meta-analysis from the Cochrane Collaborative on a topic of interest to you (http://www.cochrane.org/indexs0.htm)
Class 10 Nov. 2	TEST 2	
Class 11 Nov. 9	"Choose Me": Sampling in the Conduct of Research In-class exercise on research designs Assign measurement exercise	Kerlinger & Lee, Chap. 8 Review the sampling strategies in the empirical articles for weeks 8 & 9.

<p>Class 12 Nov. 16</p>	<p>Measurement: Choosing Valid and Reliable Yardsticks; Collecting Data; Scales & Indexes</p> <p>Research Vignette</p>	<p>Alvelo, J., Collazo, A., & Rosario, D. (2001). Comprehensive assessment tools for Hispanics: validation of the multi-problem screening inventory (MPSI) for Puerto Ricans. <i>Research on Social Work Practice, 11</i>, 699-724.</p> <p>Kerlinger & Lee, Chaps. 26, 27, & 28.</p> <p>Kumar, K., & Blyerlein, M. (1991). Construction and validation of an instrument for measuring ingratiatory behaviors in organizational settings, <i>Journal of Applied Psychology, 76</i>(5), 619-627.</p>
<p>Class 13 Nov. 23</p>	<p>More on Measurement and Data Collection</p> <p>The Ethical Conduct of Social Work Research</p> <p>In-class exercise on ethics</p> <p>MEASUREMENT EXERCISE OR JOURNAL MANUSCRIPT DUE</p>	<p>Kerlinger & Lee, Chaps. 17, 29, 30, & 31</p> <p>Read "Policies and procedures governing research within human participants" at www.utexas.edu/research/humanresearch/policies.htm and take the on-line course listed in item 2 of "Required Education on the Protection of Human Research Participants."</p>
<p>Class 14 Nov. 30</p>	<p>Putting the Pieces Together: Summary of Course</p> <p>Looking Towards the Dissertation</p> <p>Review for Test 3</p> <p>Student's Final Evaluation of Course</p>	<p>Kerlinger & Lee, Appendix A: A guide for writing research reports</p> <p>Fisher, J. (1985). Evaluating research reports. In R. M. Grinnell, Jr. <i>Social work research and evaluation</i>, 2nd ed. (pp. 476-481). Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock.</p> <p>Review APA Manual</p>
<p>TBA</p>	<p>TEST #3</p>	

In-Class Exercises

Five in-class exercises will be used to give students an opportunity to learn the steps in social work research design. Students will work in dyads to simulate participation on a research team. Dyads will report on their exercises to the class, and dyad members will take turns reporting. The five exercises are as follows:

Exercise 1: Dyads brainstorm possible research questions. The objective of this exercise is to settle on a particular research question and a hypothesis (if applicable) to be tested. Dyads should discuss whether their questions and hypotheses express the relationship between at least two variables, have nature and direction, and address an important social science issue.

Exercise 2: Dyads identify concepts included in their questions and hypotheses and develop both conceptual and operational definitions of those concepts.

Exercise 3: Dyads select the type of research design to be used in their hypothetical studies (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental, survey, etc.) and explicate their design. They will also discuss the threats to internal validity posed by their design and attempt to minimize them.

Exercise 4: Dyads determine the type of sampling method and a sampling strategy to be used in their studies and their rationale for this selection. They will also consider generalizability (external validity) of study results.

Exercise 5: Dyads review and discuss the ethical issues or dilemmas raised as they went through the process of designing their study and any additional issues that have come to mind.

Criteria for Student Evaluation

The final grade for the course will be based on three tests and either three exercises or a manuscript for submission to a journal.

Tests: The first test will be on October 5, the second on November 2, and the third in December during the scheduled final time which will be announced. The tests may include true or false, multiple choice, matching, short answer, and/or essay questions. The format for each test will be discussed one week prior to the test date.

Exercises: Each exercise should be typed and doubled-spaced. Instructions for each of the three exercises are attached. The first exercise is due on September 14, the second on October 19, and the third on November 23.

Journal Manuscript: Those who have access to quantitative or qualitative data may wish to write an article to submit for publication in lieu of the three exercises. If you wish to

consider this option, please make an appointment with the instructor to discuss your idea and submit a written one-page proposal by September 14. Submit a draft of the introduction, literature review, and methodology sections by October 19. Submit a draft of the entire manuscript, including findings, discussion, and conclusion sections no later than November 23.

Paper Grading Criteria

Written exercises and journal manuscripts will be graded on the following criteria:

1. Adherence to the instructions for the assignment.
2. Quality of the writing: organization, clarity, syntax and grammar, and so forth. (Your ability to express a substantial amount of information succinctly is critical to these assignments.)
3. Quality of material chosen for review and analysis.
4. Appropriate referencing.
5. Quality and originality of the ideas presented.

All papers and tests will be given a numerical grade.

The grading scale for papers, tests, and the final grade is:

90-100	=	A
80-89	=	B
70-79	=	C
60-69	=	D
59 and below	=	F

The final grade will be computed in the following manner:

Exercises:

Social Work Theory	10%
Research Role Model	10%
Measurement	10%
<u>Or Journal Manuscript</u>	
	30%

Tests:

#1	20%
#2	20%
#3	30%
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	70%

TOTAL	100%
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Course Policies

1. All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date specified unless an emergency occurs or previous arrangements have been made with the

instructor for compelling reasons. Late assignments may be submitted, but the penalty is five points a day including weekends. This penalty also includes assignments submitted after the start of the class period.

2. The university recommends that instructors specify policies on scholastic dishonesty. While I do not anticipate scholastic dishonesty occurring, please refer to *General Information of the University of Texas at Austin* for policies and other information on this subject. **In this course, scholastic dishonesty will result in a grade of F in the course and a report to the Doctoral Program Director, Dean of the School of Social Work, and the Graduate School. If you are not clear about how to reference others' work, please make sure you clarify this before submitting any assignments.**
3. Students are expected to attend all classes and to be prepared to participate. Students should take turns reporting for their dyad on in-class exercises and will make a brief presentation on each of their three exercises or their journal manuscript in class.
4. Blackboard, a Web-based, password-protected class sites are available for all accredited courses taught at UT and will be used for this course. Syllabi, handouts, assignments, readings, and other resources will be available at this site. Site activities may include exchanging e-mail, engaging in class discussions and chats, and exchanging files. In addition, class e-mail rosters will be a component of the sites. Students who do not want their names included in these electronic class rosters must restrict their directory information in the Office of the Registrar, Main Building, Room 1. For information on restricting directory information see: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gi00-01/app/appc09.html>.
5. Any student with a documented disability (physical or cognitive) who requires academic accommodations should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259 (voice) or 471-4641 (TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.

Course and Instructor Evaluation

You will have two opportunities to evaluate the course and instructor. At mid-term I will use my own format for this. This is an informal procedure. You are free to complete the evaluation or not. Forms should be completed anonymously. The purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to give the instructor feedback that may be useful in improving the course during the remainder of this term and in subsequent terms. Your comments will be appreciated and seriously considered.

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.

Should you wish to discuss the course at other times during the semester, please stop by during office hours or make an appointment.

I look forward to a productive term.

Bibliography

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- Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
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- 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* (3rd 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.
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- Potocky, M., & Rodgers-Farmer, A. Y. (Eds.) (1998). *Social work research with minority and oppressed populations*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.

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Exercise I: An Introduction to Theory

According to Fred N. Kerlinger and Howard B. Lee (2000) in their book *Foundations of Behavioral Research*, "A theory is a set of interrelated constructs (concepts), definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena" (p. 11). Theory building is a primary purpose of research.

Select a theory relevant to the field of social work such as role theory, a theory of human development, a theoretical explanation of some type of social problem, or another theory of particular interest to you. Applying Kerlinger and Lee's definition to the theory you have selected, provide illustrations of 1) constructs/concepts, 2) definitions, and 3) propositions specifying relations among variables and explanations and predictions of phenomena.

Use the following outline to complete the assignment:

1. Name and briefly describe the theory.
2. Briefly identify leading theorists in the field and their contributions to the theory.
3. Provide two illustrations of each of the following, giving adequate descriptions of each (make sure you clearly label each):
 - a. constructs/concepts
 - b. definitions of these constructs or concepts
 - c. explanations and predictions of phenomena and propositions specifying relations among variables
4. Conclude the paper with a critical analysis of the theory, including its utility and its limitations in advancing social work practice

Be succinct. Do not exceed five pages. Attach a list of the references you consulted in APA format. **This assignment is due on September 14.** Be prepared to discuss your paper in class.

Exercise 2: Research Role Model*

This assignment is intended to acquaint you and your classmates with significant contributors to social work knowledge through a review of their empirical (quantitative and/or qualitative) research and scholarly publications. Select an individual whom you believe represents the standards of the profession in terms of research and scholarship. This person must be an empirical researcher. Use the following outline to organize your report.

1. Identification and biographical information (name, education, dates of significant work, other significant information available).
2. Identify and describe some of this researcher's major contributions. What research questions has this individual addressed? What research methods has the individual used? What are the major conclusions the author has drawn from her/his work? Identify other important aspects of the author's work, such as trends reflected in his or her various contributions.

3. How did time and place influence this person's contributions?
4. What major values, attitudes, points of view, and especially epistemological perspectives are reflected in this person's works?
5. Evaluate this researcher's scholarly publications in terms of strengths and weaknesses.
6. **Do not exceed five pages.** Include a list of the references you consulted.

This assignment is due on October 19. Be prepared to discuss this assignment in class.

Exercise 3: Measurements and Instruments in Social Work Research*

The purpose of this assignment is to give students an opportunity to learn about a range of instruments used in social work practice and research. Select an instrument, learn about the instrument, and locate and review **three** or more research articles that utilize this instrument. Write a report covering the following points:

1. What is the name of the measure or instrument?
2. Who developed the measure or instrument?
3. How can the measure or instrument be obtained?
4. When was the instrument first published? Has it been modified?
5. What is the measure or instrument intended to measure?
6. How has the measure or instrument been developed and tested?
7. What theoretical frameworks influenced the development of the measure or instrument?
8. How has the measure been used since it was first developed by the developers and other researchers?
9. How is it administered?
10. How is it scored?
11. What information is available on the instrument's validity from the developers and other researchers?
12. What information is available on reliability from the developers and other researchers?
13. How would you evaluate the adequacy of the instrument? Include information such as ease or difficulty of administration, and scoring, evaluating, and applying results in practice and research. Do you think the instrument does what it claims?

Keep your eyes open for good examples in your reading during the semester, or use an instrument with which you are already familiar from social work practice.

Do not exceed five pages. This assignment is due on November 23. Include a reference list and be prepared to discuss your assignment in class.

*Adapted from Martha Williams.