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SSS 953 ADVANCED SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH
Fall, 2009

COURSE PURPOSE

Building on earlier coursework in research, statistics and theory, this seminar emphasizes research methodologies appropriate for advancing social work knowledge through social science research.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. To understand and appreciate the intrinsic relationship between theory and research;
2. To understand the basic logic underlying research design;
3. To acquire knowledge of key issues in research methodology for social work research;
4. To demonstrate knowledge of both quantitative and qualitative research designs in investigating issues of importance to social work;
5. To defend one's knowledge and ideas about social work research in clear, concise, logical, scholarly fashion;
6. To develop a scholarly proposal for the systematic study of an issue of relevance to contemporary social work;
7. To value the development of knowledge for the development of social work theory, social work programs and practice, and social welfare policy and services.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Texts and Readings

Specific readings have been included with class topics. Students are expected to read for mastery of core ideas and information as well as to stimulate thought.

Other readings will be assigned at various times throughout the class. It is expected that students will read these assigned materials.

Required Texts:

Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Kerlinger, F.N. & Lee, H. B. (2000). *Foundations of behavioral research*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt College Publishers.

Locke, L.F., Spirduso, W.W. & Silverman, S.J. (2007). *Proposals That Work: A Guide for Planning Dissertations and Grant Proposals* Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications.

Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C. (1998). *Mixed Methodology: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Other readings will be assigned in class.

Recommended Texts:

Pan, M.L. (2004). *Preparing literature reviews*. Glendale, CA.: Pyczak Publishing.

Singleton, R.A. & Straits, B.C. (2005). *Approaches to social research*. New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press.

2. Course Assignments

There will be two (2) in-class examinations. Each exam will be worth 25% of the final grade. Students will also be required to prepare a scholarly research proposal, which will be worth 30% of the final grade. Students are also expected to develop a Literature Review and a Methodological Outline by class 9.

Mid-Term Examination	25%	10/7/09
Literature Review and Outline	20%	10/29/09
Proposal	30%	12/10/09
Final Examination	25%	12/17/09

3. Class Participation

Each participant is expected to attend class regularly, share thoughts and ideas about the readings, and share knowledge, experience, and ideas with seminar members.

4. Grading Policy

The grade for this course will be based on the university grading system as described in the NCSST and CUA catalogs. To be considered for a provisional report of I (Incomplete), the work to date must be of passing quality and the student must submit a timely written request. The written request must include the reason for the request, work completed to date, plan for completion of course requirements, and date for resolution.

5. Course and Instructor Evaluation

NCSSS requires written evaluation of this course and the instructor. At the end of the semester, the evaluation form will be distributed in class. The results of the evaluation will not be given to the instructor until grades are submitted. Additional, informal written or verbal feedback to the instructor during the semester is encouraged and attempts will be made to respond to requests.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

1. Scholastic Expectations

Please refer to NCSSS *Announcements*, or the PhD Program Handbook for Academic Requirements, including scholastic and behavioral requirements. All written work should reflect the original thinking of the writer, cite references where material is quoted or adapted from existing sources, adhere to APA format, and should be carefully proof read by the student before submission to the instructor for grading.

2. Academic Honesty

Joining the community of scholars at CUA entails accepting the standards, living by those standards, and upholding them. Please refer to University Policy and appropriate Program Handbooks.

3. Accommodations

Students with physical, learning, psychological or other disabilities wishing to request accommodations must identify with the Disability Support Services (DSS) <http://disabilityservices.cua.edu/> and submit documentation of a disability. If you have documented such a disability to DSS that requires accommodations or an academic adjustment, please arrange a meeting with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations.

CLASS SCHEDULE

1. Introduction and Course Overview

Science and the Scientific Approach

Understanding the Relationship between Theory and Research

Required Readings: Kerlinger & Lee Chapters 1 and 17; Cresswell Chapter 2.

2. Problem Development

- Concepts and Constructs
- Variables
- Types of Variables
- Operational Definitions
- Hypotheses
- The Multivariable Nature of Social Work Research

Required Readings: Kerlinger & Lee Chapters 2 and 3.

Shields, J.J., Broome, K.M., Delany, P.J., Fletcher, B.W., & Flynn, P.M. (2007). Religion and substance abuse treatment: Individual and program effects. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 46 (3) 355-371.

Ohmer, M.I. & Korr, W.S. (2006). The effectiveness of community practice interventions: A review of the literature. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 16 (2) 132-145.

3. Methods of Observation and Data Collection

- Interviews and Interview Schedules
- Objective Tests and Scales
- Observations of Behavior and Sociometry
- Reliability and validity of instruments

Required Readings: Kerlinger & Lee Chapters 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31.

Franklin, C., Streeter, C.L., & Springer, D.W. (2001). Validity of the FACES IV family assessment measure. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 11 (5) 576-596.

Scott, R.L. & Presmanes, W.S. (2001). Reliability and validity of the daily living activities scale: A functional assessment measure for severe mental disorders. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 11 (3) 373-389.

4. Issues in Research Design
 - Purpose and Principles
 - Inadequate Designs
 - Internal and External Validity
 - Experimental and Control Groups
 - Randomization
 - Issues in Designing a Qualitative Study

Required Readings: Kerlinger & Lee Chapters 18, 19 and 20; Cresswell Chapter 3.

5. Experimental Designs
 - Components of the Classical Experimental design
 - Factorial Designs
 - Correlated Group Designs
 - Analysis of Covariance Designs

Required Readings: Kerlinger & Lee Chapter 21.

Jones, L.P., Harris, R. & Finnegan, D. (2002). School attendance demonstration project: An evaluation of a program to motivate public assistance teens to attend and complete school in an urban school district. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 12 (2) 222-237.

Patterson, G.T. (2004). Evaluating the effects of child abuse training on the attitudes, knowledge, and skills of police recruits. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 14 (4) 273-280.

6. Quasi-Experimental Designs
 - Nonequivalent Control Group Design
 - No-Treatment Control Group Design
 - Time Designs
 - Single subject Designs

Required Readings: Kerlinger & Lee Chapter 22

Brooks, F., Zugazaga, C., Wolk, J. & Adams, M.A. (2005). Resident perception of housing, neighborhood, and economic conditions after relocation from public housing undergoing HOPE VI redevelopment. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 15(6) 481-490.

Johnson, Y.M., & Stadel, V.L. (2007). Completion of advance directives: Do social work preadmission interviews make a difference? *Research on Social Work Practice*, 17 (6) 686-696.

7. Nonexperimental Research Designs

- Field Experiments
- Field Studies
- Survey Designs
- Path Analytic Studies
- Secondary Analysis
- Metaanalysis

Required Readings: Kerlinger & Lee Chapters 23, 24 and 25.

McCrae, J.S. & Barth, R.P. (2008). Using cumulative risk to screen for mental health problems in child welfare. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 18 (2) 144-159.

Yoo, J. & Books, D. (2005). The role of organizational variables in predicting service effectiveness: An analysis of a multilevel model. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 15 (4) 267-277.

8. **Mid-Term Examination**

- Covers all material included in classes 1 through 7 and all required readings.

9. Overview of Proposal Assignment

- The Function of the Proposal
- Ethical Issues in Proposal Development
- Content of the Proposal

Required Readings: Locke, Spirduso & Silverman

10. Qualitative Approaches to Research

- Narrative Research
- Phenomenological Research
- Grounded Theory Research
- Ethnographic Research
- Case Study Research

Required Readings: Creswell Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

Fraser, H. (2004). Doing narrative research: Analyzing personal stories line by line. *Qualitative Social Work*, 3 (2) 179-201.

Armour, M., Rivaux, S. & Bell, H. (2009). Using context to build rigor: Application to two hermeneutic phenomenological studies. *Qualitative Social Work*, 8 (1) 101-122.

- 11. Qualitative Research Methodological Issues**
- Introducing and Focusing the Study
 - Data Collection
 - Data Analysis and Representation
 - Standards of Validation and Evaluation

Required Readings: Creswell Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

Ferguson, K. & Islam, N. (2008). Conceptualizing outcomes with street-living young adults: Grounded theory approach to evaluating the social enterprise intervention. *Qualitative Social Work*, 7 (2) 217-237.

Archer, J. (2009). Intersecting feminist theory and ethnography in the context of social work research. *Qualitative Social Work*, 8 (2) 143-160.

Banerjee, M. (2003). Realities of life before and after welfare reform: Perspectives of women of color. *Qualitative Social Work*, 2 (4) 411-433.

- 12. Mixed Methodology**
- Mixed Method Studies in the Social and Behavioral Sciences
 - Research Design Issues for Mixed Method Studies
 - Mixed Methods and Strategies of Research

Required Readings: Tashakkori & Teddlie, Chapters 1 through 9.

Yoon, I. (2009). A mixed-method study of Princeville's rebuilding from the flood of 1999: Lessons on the importance of invisible community assets. *Social Work*, 54 (1) 19-28.

Padgett, D. (2009). Qualitative and mixed methods in social work knowledge development. *Social Work*, 54 (2) 101-105.

- 13. The Role of Research in Enhancing Evidence Based Practice**

Required Readings:

Gambrill, E. (2006). Evidence-based practice and policy: Choices ahead. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 16 (3) 338-357.

Tucker, J. & Roth, D. (2006). Extending the evidence hierarchy to enhance evidence-based practice for substance use disorders. *Addictions*, 101, 918-932.

Thyer, B. (2008). The quest for evidence-based practice?: We are all positivists! *Research on Social Work Practice*, 18 (4) 339-345.

14. Translational Research

Required Readings:

Woolf, S. (2008). The meaning of translational research and why it matters. *JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 299 (2) 211-213.

Glasgow, R. & Emmons, K. (2007). How can we increase translation of research into practice? Types of evidence needed. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 413-33.

Glasgow, R., Lichtenstein, E. & Marcus, A. (2003). Why don't we see more translation of health promotion research to practice? Rethinking the efficacy-to-effectiveness transition. *American Journal of Public Health*, 93 (8) 1261-1267.

Brekke, J., Ell, K. & Palinkas, L. (2007). Translational science at the National Institute of Mental Health: Can social work take its rightful place? *Research on Social Work Practice*, 17 (1) 123-133.

The Final Examination will be Scheduled during the Examination Period

Advanced Social Work Research

Literature Review

The literature review provides a backdrop for the proposal and places it in the context of theoretical and empirical traditions. Specifically the literature review should:

- Introduce and provide a background for your topic;
- Establish the importance of your topic;
- Provide a theoretical basis for your study;
- Provide an overview of previous empirical studies;
- Address important issues related to your problem,
- Discuss the various methodologies that have been used to study the issue.

A literature review is not a series of long, direct quotations, nor is it a list of summaries of each source. Your literature review should integrate and synthesize all of the sources you have selected.

As you go about collecting references related to your topic the following schema might be useful. As you find articles related to your topic you might want to summarize the article either on index cards (the old fashion way) or in a computer database program (the 21st century way). The following should be recorded:

For empirical studies

1. Identifying information (i.e. author, title, citation information)
2. What is the purpose of this study and how is it related to your study?
3. What theory or theories (if any) does the author use in this study? How might you apply this theory to your topic of study?
4. In a brief paragraph describe the type of research design employed in the study.
5. Describe how the sample was obtained.
6. Include a brief description of the sample (size, gender, race, age, socioeconomic status, special characteristics).
7. What are the major variables in the study and identify the status of each variable (Independent, dependent, control)?
8. Indicate the specific measures (operationalization) for each of the major variables. Begin with the dependent variables if dependent and independent variables are included. Discuss issues regarding the reliability and validity of the measures. If the

article is an evaluation of an intervention, briefly describe the intervention (usually the independent variable).

9. Describe the method of data collection.
10. Summarize the findings of the study.
11. What will you apply from this study to your own? How might you use its strengths or compensate for its limitations?

For nonempirical studies

These articles will most likely be expository articles: discussions of theory, summaries of many other studies, or general overviews of the topic you are studying.

1. Identifying information (i.e. author, title, citation information).
2. What information does it provide that is helpful for a better understanding of the topic or helpful in the actual design of your study.

SSS 953
Advanced Social Work Research

Research Proposal

Purpose: This assignment provides opportunity for learning to design a multivariate research project in social work research. While it is anticipated that the work on this class assignment will be useful in developing the dissertation proposal, the assignment *per se* is not a dissertation proposal.

Outline of the Proposal: The completed research proposal should include the following:

1. Cover page with title and identifying information (name, course, date)
2. Table of Contents, including page numbers
3. Introduction and Statement of the Problem (2 pages)
 - ✓ The research problem statement should be clear, focused and concise. Be sure that the focal variables are part of the problem statement.
4. Literature Review (5 to 7 pages)
 - ✓ This section is a summary of the relevant literature (see handout on “preparing a literature review”).
5. Methodology (8-10 pages)
 - a. Research Question and Hypothesis
 - ✓ The literature review should lead directly to a clearly and succinctly stated research question(s) appropriate for a multivariate research study. The hypothesis should include the key dependent and independent variables.
 - b. Research Design
 - ✓ Describe in detail the design you will use to test the above stated hypothesis.
 - c. Measurement
 - ✓ Discuss how each of the variables will be measured. Describe the instruments that you will be using and discuss reliability and validity issues.
 - d. Population and Sampling Issues
 - ✓ Who or what will be the unit of analysis for your study? How will these units be selected? Discuss the potential representativeness of your sample.

- e. Data Collection
 - ✓ Discuss your strategy for data collection.
 - f. Data Analysis Strategies
 - ✓ Discuss your strategy for data analysis.
6. Potential Contributions (1 to 2 pages)
 - ✓ Explain how the study will contribute to the development of social work knowledge, program development, social welfare policy and/or social work practice.
 7. References
 8. Addenda A – Copies of instruments.