I. COURSE PURPOSE

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the language of science and social work research. Emphasis is placed on the relationship between theory and research, conceptualization and problem formulation, operationalization and measurement, sampling strategies, and types of research design.

II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. To develop a working command of the language of science.
2. To know and understand the central concepts of science, knowledge and theory building, and the scientific process.
3. To know and understand the foundations of measurement and the concepts of reliability and validity.
4. To know and understand the logic of research design and the several types of research approaches.
5. To develop coherent research questions developed from the context of a thorough review of a body of research literature.
6. To be able to write bivariate hypotheses and multivariate hypotheses developed out of research questions.
7. Be capable of critically evaluating existing standardized research instruments.
8. To develop a working knowledge of instrument development.
9. Be able to critically evaluate a published research article utilizing threats to internal and external validity as criteria.

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III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Texts

Additional articles will be assigned across the semester. They will be placed on Blackboard at least two weeks before they will be a part of the class discussion.

B. Other Recommended Resources and Media

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program www.citiprogram.org

Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/

The Qualitative Report – An online journal dedicated to qualitative research since 1990 http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/qualres.html

SWRnet – Social Work Research Network. SWRnet provides a weekly update about new research funding opportunities, calls for papers and proposals, conferences and trainings, new data and research, and news for the social work research community (swrnet@bua.edu, ¶ 1). To subscribe go to http://www.bu.edu/swrnet/ go to end of page.

Sage Journals My Email Alerts
Email Alerts provide the option to receive the following types of email alerts:

- Table of Contents – a notification when a new issue is posted, including the complete Table of Contents for that issue with links to content
- Table of Contents (TOC) Awareness – a notification when a new issue is posted, with a link to view the Table of Contents online
- Announcements – announcements from SAGE Publications relating to the journal
- OnlineFirst – notification when new OnlineFirst content is posted, when available for a journal (http://online.sagepub.com/site/sphelp/SageColl_ToolsAlertsPortal.xhtml, ¶ 2)

You select the journals you are interested in getting content from.
C. Course Assignments

1. Hypothesis Writing Assignment
   a. Complete the hypothesis writing assignment, which will be handed out in class;
   b. **E-mail completed assignment to Instructor by 2 PM Day of Class 4.**

2. Measurement Assignment
   a. Students are to select a standardized measure which has been used in social work research;
   b. Evaluate the reliability and validity of the measure, the populations used with, and identify the strengths and limitations;
   c. Find two articles that report using the measure in empirical research;
   d. Review the two articles and critique how the measure was used in each article, including if used as the measure was meant to be used and if it adds to knowledge about the measure: and
   e. Write a short 5 page paper on the evaluation and review in APA Style
   f. **Email to instructor by 2 PM Day of Class 6.**

3. Research Design Assignment
   a. Students will be given a published article, which utilizes a quasi-experimental design or experimental design to critique in terms of internal and external validity issues.
   b. **Be prepared to participate in an in-depth discussion during Class 12.**

5. Problem Formulation with Literature Review
   a. Students are to select an issue of relevance to social work and conduct a thorough review of the empirical and theoretical literature in order to develop a literature based problem formulation paper.
   b. **Hand in topic and draft outline Class 5.**
   c. During Class 14 each student will do a 10 minute presentation on their paper. Email completed paper to instructor by 9 PM on Class 14.

6. Final Take Home Examination

E. Grading Policy and Weights of Assignments

Grades will be based on the CUA Grading Policy as described in the *Graduate Announcements*. Full credit will not be given for assignments that are submitted late. **No credit will be given for assignments submitted after they have been reviewed in class.** The following provides weights for the various course assignments:

- Hypothesis Writing 10%
- Measurement Assignment 10%
- Research Design 10%
- Problem Formulation Paper 30%
- Final Exam 20%
- Attendance and Participation 15%

Revised 8/16/2015
Grading System

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Numeric Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95 – 100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 94</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 – 86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 82</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70 – 79</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 – 69</td>
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F. Preparation, Attendance & Participation
Students are required to attend classes and are expected to participate meaningfully in class discussion/exercises. The class participation grade will be determined by the instructor’s perception of the student’s preparation for and contributions to class discussion/activities. Different students will make different kinds of contributions. Some will have an easy time with spontaneous interactions while others will be more comfortable making planned statements about key ideas from the readings or other sources. Both types of contributions are valued.

G. Course and Instructor Evaluation
The NCSSS doctoral program requires evaluation of this course and the instructor. At the end of the semester, an evaluation form will be provided. Results 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.

IV. CLASS EXPECTATIONS

Please refer to NCSSS Announcements, or appropriate Program Handbook for Academic Requirements (http://ncsss.cua.edu/courses/index.cfm), including scholastic and behavioral requirements.

NCSSS is committed to creating an open and inclusive learning environment where all members - including students, faculty, administrators, and staff – strive to listen to and learn from one another. We recognize that in a multicultural society, it is inevitable that issues or tensions relative to diversity and different life experiences will arise. It is how we handle these events that matters. Therefore, when such issues occur – inside or outside of the classroom - we agree to engage in respectful and productive discussion with one another until learning is enhanced and understanding is deepened by all involved.

A. Scholastic Expectations
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.

B. Behavioral Requirements:
Students are expected to maintain accepted standards of professional conduct and personal integrity in the classroom. Students should:
• Attend all classes and contribute constructively to the classroom culture
• Recognize and avoid behavior that jeopardizes the learning/teaching environment of other students or the instructor
• Demonstrate competence in planning academic activities and in following through on those plans
• Reasonably respond to and respect others’ reactions to one’s comments or actions in the classroom
• Use an appropriate level of class time and instructor’s time and attention in and out of class
• Behave in a manner that is consistent with the ethical principles of the social work profession.

C. 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 (http://graduatestudies.cua.edu/currentstudents/academintgrt.cfm) and appropriate Program Handbooks.

D. Confidentiality
Each student is expected to adhere to the Confidentiality Agreement that is signed at the beginning of every semester. This agreement covers “practice materials” in classes, supervisory sessions, case conferences, seminars, and other educational settings within the NCSSS BSW or MSW programs are for professional learning purposes only and are subject to strict professional standards of confidentiality. These same standards of confidentiality also extend to various forms of written communication and peer consultation.

Adherence to these standards means all students refrain from communicating beyond the classroom setting about practice material that is presented in class. I will also refrain from using social media outlets (blogs, twitter, Facebook, etc.) or email to discuss practice settings, program responsibilities and projects with individuals who are not in teaching or supervision roles directly related to the situation.

E. Accommodations
Students with physical, learning, psychological or other disabilities wishing to request accommodations must identify with the Disability Support Services (DSS) and submit documentation of a disability. If you have documented such a disability to DSS that requires accommodations or an academic adjustment, you much present that documentation to your instructors and arrange a meeting with as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations.

F. Use of Electronic Devices
Please turn off all cell phones or other devices that would disrupt the learning environment of the classroom. If you want to tape the lectures you must get the permission from the instructor and all students.
# CLASS SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 1</th>
<th><strong>Introduction</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction to Social Work Research</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Theory and Ethics in Research</td>
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<td>Paradigms</td>
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<td>Problem Formulation</td>
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<td>Trochim, Donnelly, &amp; Arora – Chapter 2 - Ethics</td>
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| Class 2 - 3 | **Overview of the Research Process** |
|             | Example of a Research Project from Start to Finish |
|             | Writing Research Questions and Hypotheses |
|             | Trochim, Donnelly, & Arora – Chapter 1 – Foundations of Research Methods |

| Class 4 - 5 | **Variables and Measurement** |
|             | Conceptualization |
|             | Operationalization |
|             | Measurement Error |
|             | Reliability |
|             | Validity |
|             | Trochim, Donnelly, & Arora – Chapter 5, 6, and 7 (except 7.3a and 7.3b) |

| Class 6 - 7 | **Sampling** |
|             | Sampling Terminology |
|             | Sampling |
|             | Randomness vs. Randomization |
|             | Factors affecting choice of sampling design |
|             | Factors determining sampling size |
|             | Trochim, Donnelly, & Arora – Chapter 7 (7.3a and 7.3b) and Chapter 4. |

| Class 8 - 9 | **Research Design Overview** |
|             | Casual Inference and Research Design |
|             | Types of Research Designs |
|             | Unobtrusive Research Methods |
|             | Threats to Internal and External Validity |
|             | Trochim, Donnelly, & Arora – Chapter 8 |
| Class 10 - 11 | **Research Design II**  
Pre-Experimental Designs for Research  
Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research  
Experimental Designs for Research  
Trochim, Donnelly, & Arora – Chapter 8 and 9. |
| Class 12 - 13 | **Research Design IV**  
Qualitative Research Methods  
Mixed Methods  
**Research Design Discussion**  
Trochim, Donnelly, & Arora – Chapter 3  
| Class 14 | **Review**  
**Problem Formulation Paper and Presentation Due** |