I. COURSE PURPOSE

This is an advanced course in research design and includes an examination of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research designs. The course builds on earlier coursework in theory, research, and statistics.

The quantitative section of the course provides an overview of deductive derived research designs such as classical experimental designs, quasi-experimental designs, survey designs, and designs based on secondary data analysis. Emphasis is placed on the role of theory in the development of research designs.

The qualitative portion of this course provides an overview of the philosophical underpinnings, ethical and socio-cultural considerations, and value stances of qualitative methodologies. Focus is placed on connecting the epistemology of knowledge with appropriate methods, with the recognition that different research questions require different methods of research and emerge from different ways of knowing. The course emphasizes issues of special challenge to qualitative researchers, such as the selection of participants, the development of rapport in the field, the investigator’s reflexivity, and the establishment of rigor and quality within data analysis.
II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

As a result of their course participation, students will accomplish the following core objectives:

1. Understand and appreciate the intrinsic relationship between theory and research.

2. Understand the basic logic underlying research design.

3. Acquire knowledge of key issues in research methodology for social work research.

4. Demonstrate knowledge of both quantitative and qualitative research designs in investigating issues of importance to social work.

5. Defend one’s knowledge and ideas about social work research in clear, concise, logical, scholarly fashion.

6. Understand the appropriate use of experimental, quasi-experimental and survey designs.

7. Develop knowledge in the history, philosophy, values, and ethical considerations in social work research.

8. Develop an increased understanding of the challenges and opportunities inherent in research observation and interviewing, with a particular focus on socio-cultural considerations and the researcher’s unique instrumental role.

9. Develop an appreciation of the usefulness of qualitative methods for research for both macro and clinical social work practice orientations and questions.

10. Examine and critique the relevance, quality, and rigor of selected qualitative methods and epistemologies for the study of specific social work problems.

11. Recognize the challenges, pros, and cons of mixed method research studies.
III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Texts


B. Recommended Texts


C. Course Assignments

**Assignment 1**: Critical Review of Quantitative Research Article – Due Class #8. (25%)

**Assignment 2**: Critical Review of Qualitative Research Article – Due Class #12. (25%)  

**Assignment 3**: Students will develop either a quantitative or a qualitative research proposal – Due Class #13. (40%)  

**Assignment 4**: Students will make a presentation of their research proposal at the final meeting of the course. (10%)

D. Grading Policy

Grades for the course are based on the University grading system. The grade is based on content (substance, attention to assignment, attention to page limit), writing style, and timely submission (assignments submitted later than the assigned or agreed upon date will be downgraded). See directions in handout of course assignments and in scholarly expectations below for further clarification.

E. Course and Instructor Evaluation

NCSSS requires evaluation of this course and the instructors. At the end of the semester, written evaluation forms will be distributed for you to complete anonymously. Additional, informal written or verbal feedback to
the instructors during the semester is encouraged and attempts will be made to respond to requests.

IV. CLASS EXPECTATIONS

A. Scholastic Expectations

Please refer to Doctoral Program Handbook (available on the NCSSS web page) 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 (v. 6) format, and should be carefully proofread by the student before submission to the instructor for grading. It is expected that all assignments will be submitted on the due date. Failure to submit work on time will result in a lowered grade, unless there has been an alternative arrangement with the professor prior to the due date of the assignment.

B. 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 Doctoral Program Handbook.

C. 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, please arrange a meeting with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations.
Class Schedule

Class 1: Overview of the Research Process

- The Language of Research
- The aims of science, scientific explanation, and theory
- Deductive and inductive reasoning
- Concepts, variables hypotheses

Readings
Trochim & Donnelly: Chapters 1.

Class 2: Issues in Research Design

- Sampling
- Measurement
- Inadequate designs
- Internal and external validity
- Experimental and control groups
- Randomization

Readings
Trochim & Donnelly: Chapters 2, 3, and 7.

Class 3: Classical Experimental Designs

- Components of the classical experimental design
- Factorial designs
- Randomized block designs
- Covariance designs
- Hybrid experimental designs

Readings
Trochim & Donnelly: Chapter 9.

Class 4: Examples of Experimental Designs

Readings


**Class 5: Quasi-Experimental Designs**

- Nonequivalent Control Group Design
- Regression-Discontinuity Design
- Other Quasi-Experimental Designs

**Readings:**

Trochim & Donnelly: Chapter 10.


Class 6: Non-experimental Research Designs

- Field experiments
- Field studies
- Survey designs
- Path analytic studies

Readings

Trochim & Donnelly:  Chapter 4.


Class 7: Advanced Design Topics

- Designing Designs for Research
- Relationships Among Pre-Post Designs
- Contemporary Issues in Research Design

Readings

Trochim & Donnelly:  Chapter 11

Class 8: The Analysis of Secondary Data

Readings


**Class 9: Historical Overview of Qualitative Research**

- Understanding theoretical and disciplinary origins of qualitative methods
- Appreciating the place of qualitative research in clinical and macro social work practice

**Readings**


**Class 10: Qualitative Approaches to Research**

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

**Readings**


**Class 11: Qualitative Approaches to Research Continued**
Readings


Class 12: Methodological Issues in Qualitative Research

- Entering the field and conducting observation
- Interviewing and Use of Documents
- Data Analysis and Interpretation
- Strategies for Rigor

Readings


Class 13: Mixed Methods

- Choosing a mixed method design
- Examples of mixed methods designs
- Pros and cons of mixed methods designs

Readings


Class 14: Student Presentations