CUA

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
National Catholic School of Social Service
Washington, DC  20064

SSS 341: Social Work Research and Statistics II
Spring 2017 (3 credits)
Meets Tu/Th 1/10/17 – 4/27/17 12:40 – 1:55 pm

Instructor: M. Nicole Belfiore, MSW, PhD
Email: belfiore@cua.edu
Office Hours: By appointment

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I. COURSE PURPOSE
This is the second course of a two–semester sequence on research and statistics for undergraduate social work majors. SSS 341 is designed to introduce students to the basic elements of research design and research methodology. Emphasis is placed on building analytical and critical thinking skills to enable students to become informed consumers of research. Students are introduced to the following topics in this course: the research process, problem formulation, hypotheses construction, conceptualization and operationalization of variables, reliability and validity of instruments, research design, sampling techniques, data collection, data analysis, and presentation of findings. Instructional methods include required readings from the textbook and assigned peer–reviewed journal articles, lectures, classroom discussions, assignments, exams, and other forms as deemed appropriate.

II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES
• Recognize the role of research in informing all levels of social work practice.
• Appreciate the importance of research in providing an empirical basis for theoretical knowledge and the role of theory in guiding research.
• Identify ethical considerations in conducting and drawing from research studies, particularly in regards to the importance of protecting vulnerable populations.
• Formulate research questions and testable hypotheses, including null and alternate directional and non–directional hypotheses.
• Critique the adequacy and feasibility of research designs, measurement, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and data analyses.

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Assess the generalizability of research findings.

Demonstrate a solid understanding of APA style in writing for research.

Develop a working knowledge of how to write literature reviews and critique peer-reviewed journal articles.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Reading—Text

B. Required Reading—Articles on BlackBoard


C. Coursework and Due Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXAM I</td>
<td>1/24/17</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXAM II</td>
<td>2/14/17</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXAM III</td>
<td>3/21/17</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXAM IV</td>
<td>4/27/17</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASSIGNMENT I: APA Style</td>
<td>1/15/17</td>
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<td>ASSIGNMENT II: Literature Review</td>
<td>2/26/17</td>
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ASSIGNMENT III: Article Critique 4/9/17 (Su)
ASSIGNMENT IV: Article Critique 4/23/17 (Su)
SEMINAR–DISCUSSION I 4/4/17 (Tu)
SEMINAR–DISCUSSION II 4/11/17 (Tu)
CUA RESEARCH DAY 4/20/17 (Th)

D. Weighting of Coursework

PARTICIPATION 20%
- OVERALL (5%)
- SEMINAR–DISCUSSION I (5%)
- SEMINAR–DISCUSSION II (5%)
- CUA Research Day (5%)

EXAMS 30%

ASSIGNMENTS 50%
- ASSIGNMENT I (5%)
- ASSIGNMENT II (15%)
- ASSIGNMENT III (15%)
- ASSIGNMENT IV (15%)

E. Grading Policy

Grades for the course are based on the University grading system.

Grading System
A  95-100
A– 90-94
B+ 87-89
B  83-86
B– 80-82
C+ 77-79
C  73-76
C– 70-72
D+ 67-69
D  63-66
D– 60-62
F  0-59

F. Class Attendance and Participation

Students are expected to attend class and participate in discussions.
Participation is defined as reading and reflecting upon the required readings prior to class in order to understand the context of the discussion and to speak informatively on the day’s topic. It is understood that some students will have an easier time than others with spontaneous class participation while others will have an easier time with pre–planned questions and comments. Both types of contributions are valued.

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REQUESTS FOR EXCUSED ABSENCES MUST BE MADE PRIOR TO CLASS COMMENCEMENT. Prior to or on the date a student is requesting to be excused from class, an email from the student requesting an excused absence must be received by the instructor by 12:40 p.m. or earlier according to Cardinal Mail’s date–time stamp. Requests received once class commences will not be accepted and absences will be unexcused. Zero points will be recorded for that particular day’s participation grade.

ABSENCES DUE TO ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION REQUIRE ADVANCED NOTIFICATION. Students participating in CUA athletic sport activities must notify the instructor in a timely manner of any potential absences from class, provide written documentation of their athletic participation, and plan ahead to make up for any potential class absences. Absences without prior notification are considered unexcused absences. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to athletic participation absences.

G. Late Coursework Policy
All assignments are to be uploaded to BlackBoard no later than 11:55 p.m. on their respective due dates. Submissions received after 11:56 p.m. are considered late. They will neither be accepted nor reviewed, and the grade will be entered as a zero. These penalties will apply unless you have made prior arrangements with the instructor. Extensions will not be granted the day an assignment is due. If you should need an extension (e.g., health reasons, family emergency, etc.), you must discuss this with your instructor at least 48 hours (excluding weekends and holidays) in advance of the due date.

H. Exam Policy
If you are unable to take an exam on its scheduled date, you must notify the instructor at least 48 hours in advance in order to make alternate arrangements. Not taking an exam on the scheduled date without prior written notice and explicit permission from the instructor is automatic grounds for failure (i.e., the student’s grade will be recorded as a zero). Please note, there are no make–up exams.

I. Electronic Devices
RECORDING OF CLASSROOM LECTURES IS PROHIBITED unless advance written permission is obtained from the instructor. Students who require recording or other adaptations of lectures as a reasonable accommodation for a disability should contact the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) in advance in order to obtain permission for the recording and must provide the instructor with written documentation. The University has instituted a policy on recording of classroom lectures, which may be accessed at: http://policies.cua.edu/academicgrad/recordingclassroomlecturesgraduate.cfm.

USE OF COMPUTERS IS RESTRICTED TO SPECIFIC CLASS CONTENT ACTIVITIES. During class, students are expected to refrain from any and all unauthorized use of computers, laptops, and other electronic devices. Unauthorized use includes but is not limited to the following: emailing, game playing, surfing the web, and other uses not relevant to the content of this course. Students who ignore this policy and utilize computer devices for purposes other than taking notes will be dismissed from class. Each

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dismissal will result in a 5% deduction from one’s overall grade for participation per incident.

**Using Smart Phones or Other Mobile Communication Devices is Not Allowed.**
The use of smart phones or other mobile communication devices is distracting and disrespectful; thus, their use during class is prohibited except in an emergency. In such instances, students are to leave the classroom and return in a prompt, courteous manner. In consideration of others, individuals should either silence or turn their cell phone ringers to vibrate while in class. Students who ignore this policy will be dismissed from class. Each dismissal will result in a 5% deduction from one’s overall grade for participation per incident.

**J. Course and Instructor Evaluation**
NCSSS requires electronic evaluation of this course and the instructor. At the end of the semester, the evaluation form may be accessed at [http://evaluations.cua.edu/evaluations](http://evaluations.cua.edu/evaluations) using your CUA username and password. Additional, informal written or verbal feedback to the instructor during the semester is encouraged.

**CLASS EXPECTATIONS**

**A. Scholastic Expectations**
Please refer to NCSSS Announcements or the appropriate 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 be carefully proofread by the student before submission to the instructor for grading.

**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 appropriate Program Handbooks.

**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: TOPICS AND READINGS*
*The Instructor reserves the right to modify this schedule if needed.

Class 1  
Introduction and APA Style  
1/10/17 (Tu)  
http://www.apastyle.org/
https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

Class 2  
Why Social Workers Need Research  
1/12/17 (Th)  
Dudley: Chapter 1  
Assignment I: Made available on BlackBoard (BB) at 2:00 p.m.  
Due: Upload to BB by 11:55 p.m. on 1/15/17 (Su)

Class 3  
Philosophies and Perspectives about Research  
1/17/17 (Tu)  
Dudley: Chapter 2

Class 4  
Research Ethics and Social Work’s Mandates  
1/19/17 (Th)  
Dudley: Chapter 3

Class 5  
EXAM I (in–class)  
1/24/17 (Tu)  
Dudley: Chapters 1–3

Class 6  
Step 1: Understanding the Research Topic  
1/26/17 (Th)  
Dudley: Chapter 4

1/31/17 (Tu)  
NO CLASS—Mass

Class 7  
Step 1: Understanding the Research Topic (continued)  
Step 1: Defining and Measuring Concepts  
2/2/17 (Th)  
Dudley: Chapters 4–5  
Assignment II: Made available on BB at 2:00 p.m.  
Due: Upload to BB by 11:55 p.m. on 2/26/17 (Su)

Class 8  
Step 1: Defining and Measuring Concepts (continued)  
2/7/17 (Tu)  
Dudley: Chapter 5

Class 9  
Step 2: Focusing a Research Study  
2/9/17 (Th)  
Dudley: Chapter 6

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### CLASS SCHEDULE: TOPICS AND READINGS (CONTINUED)

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Text Sources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2/14/17 (Tu)</td>
<td>EXAM II (in–class)</td>
<td>Dudley: Chapters 4–6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>2/16/17 (Th)</td>
<td>Literature Review Day</td>
<td>Please bring your laptops to class</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2/21/16 (Tu)</td>
<td>NO CLASS—Administrative Monday</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2/23/17 (Th)</td>
<td>Step 3: Considering Sampling Techniques</td>
<td>Dudley: Chapter 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>2/28/17 (Tu)</td>
<td>Step 3: Constructing Surveys</td>
<td>Dudley: Chapter 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>3/2/17 (Th)</td>
<td>Step 3: Constructing Observational Studies</td>
<td>Dudley: Chapter 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/7/17 (Tu)</td>
<td>NO CLASS—Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/9/17 (Th)</td>
<td>NO CLASS—Spring Break</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>3/14/17 (Tu)</td>
<td>Step 3: Exploring Causal Relationships</td>
<td>Dudley: Chapter 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>3/16/17 (Th)</td>
<td>Step 3: Exploring Causal Relationships (continued)</td>
<td>Dudley: Chapter 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>3/21/17 (Tu)</td>
<td>EXAM III (in–class)</td>
<td>Dudley: Chapters 7–11</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>3/23/17 (Th)</td>
<td>Step 4: Collecting the Data</td>
<td>Dudley: Chapter 12</td>
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CLASS SCHEDULE: TOPICS AND READINGS (CONTINUED)

**Class 19**
3/28/17 (Tu)  Qualitative Research Activity
Assignment III: Made available on BB at 2:00 p.m.
**Due:** Upload to BB by 11:55 p.m. on 4/9/17 (Su)

**Class 20**
3/30/17 (Th)  Step 5: Quantitative Data Analysis
Dudley: Chapter 13

**Class 21**
4/4/17 (Tu)  SEMINAR–DISCUSSION I
Articles on BB: Chang et al. (2015); Davis et al. (2013)

**Class 22**
4/6/17 (Th)  Step 5: Qualitative Data Analysis
Dudley: Chapter 14

**Class 23**
4/11/17 (Tu)  SEMINAR–DISCUSSION II
Articles on BB: Bettmann et al. (2015); McClatchey & Wimmer (2014)
Assignment IV: Made available on BB at 2:00 p.m.
**Due:** Upload to BB by 11:55 p.m. on 4/23/17 (Su)

4/13/17 (Th)  NO CLASS—Holy Thursday

**Class 24**
4/18/17 (Tu)  Step 6: Preparing the Report
Dudley: Chapter 15

**Class 25**
4/20/17 (Th)  NO CLASS, but required attendance at CUA Research Day

**Class 26**
4/25/16 (Tu)  Program and Practice Evaluation
Dudley: Chapter 16

**Class 27**
4/27/16 (Th)  EXAM IV (in–class)
Dudley: Chapters 12–16

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