COURSE PURPOSE

The purpose of this course is to introduce student 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.

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 instrument.
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.
III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Texts

OR


B. Recommended Texts

C. Other Recommended Resources and Media
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

NIH IRB Training online course

D. 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 1 PM Day of Class 3;
   c. Be prepared to discuss in during Class 3.

2. Measurement Assignment
   a. Students are to select a standardized measure which has been used in social work research;
   b. Critique the measure in terms of reliability and validity;
   c. Find two articles that report using the measure empirical research;
   d. Review how the measure was reportedly used: and
   e. Write a short 2 – 3 page paper on the critique and review in APA Style Class 4.

3. Evaluating a Survey
a. Students will be given a non-standardized survey which they will evaluate using one of the three methods presented in class.
b. Write up the evaluation with a rationale as to why you selected the method you selected and your
c. Be prepared to discuss your evaluation in Class 6.

4. 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. The critique should be 4 – 6 page paper written in APA style.
b. Be prepared to participate in an in-depth discussion during Class 13.

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 outline Class 7.
c. The paper will be 15 to 20 pages in APA style.
d. Present a short summary of your topic in Class 14.

6. Mid-Term Examination

7. Final Examination

E. Grading Policy
Students are expected to attend all classes, be prepared for class, and to participate meaningfully in class discussion.

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Term</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem Formulation Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
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<td>Participation</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 distributed in
class. 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 (available on the NCSSS web page), including scholastic and behavioral requirements.

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.

Additional 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.

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

Class 1
Review of SSS 945 Content
  Ethics and Research
  Theory and Research
  Problem Formulation
  Philosophical Issues in Research
  Literature Review
Trochim & Donnelly Chapter 1 sections 1-1a – h; 1-2a – c; 1-3a; Chapter 6: 6-1a, b,c

Class 2
Overview of the Research Process
  Example of a Research Project from Start to Finish
Variables
  Conceptualization
  Operationalization
Writing Research Questions and Hypotheses
Trochim & Donnelly Chapter 1 sections 1-4a

Class 3
Measurement
  Measurement Error
  Reliability
  Validity
Trochim & Donnelly Chapter 1 sections 1-2d; Chapter 3: 3-1a-c, 3-2a-e; 3-3a; Chapter 6: 6-2a-c

Class 4
Measurement
  Qualitative Measures
  Evaluating Instruments
Trochim & Donnelly Chapter 2; Chapter 6: 6-1d

Class 5
Constructing Measurement Instruments

Class 6-7
Sampling
  Sampling Terminology
  Sampling
  Randomness vs. Randomization
  Factors affecting choice of sampling design
  Factors determining sampling size
Trochim & Donnelly Chapter 4: 4-1a-f; 4-2a-d; 4-3a-c; Chapter 5; Chapter 6: 6-2a-c
Class 8  Midterm Examination

Class 9  Research Design Overview
Casual Inference and Research Design
Types of Research Designs
Unobtrusive Research Methods
Threats to Internal and External Validity
Trochim & Donnelly Chapter 7: 7-1a-d; 7-2; 7-3
Campbell & Stanley

Class 10-11  Research Design II
Pre-Experimental Designs for Research
Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research
Experimental Designs for Research
Trochim & Donnelly Chapter 9: 9-1a-d; 9-6a-b; Chapter 10: 10-1a-b; 10-3a-d; Chapter 11: 11-1a-e; 11-2; 11-3a-g

Class 12-13  Research Design Discussion
Research Design IV
Qualitative Research Methods
Trochim & Donnelly Chapter 6; Chapter 8

Class 14  Review
Problem Formulation Paper and Presentation Due