I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is the first in a sequence of two courses that present the basic concepts of the social work research process as well as the methods that are employed. This course provides a foundation for systematic methods of assessment and evaluation which are key to a generalist practice. Simultaneously, and subsequently in the BSW curriculum, students will be introduced to key theories of social work intervention and assessment which will build on the content offered in the research sequence.

In this course, students will be introduced to various aspects of research design, including, but not limited to: problem definition and operationalization; ethical research practice; cultural sensitive research practice; and a variety of different research methods. Attention will be focused on understanding the research issues and applying them in practice settings. The application will be reinforced through class exercises and course assignments.

II. EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

After taking this course, students should be able to:

1. Develop an understanding and an awareness of the importance of research in the social work profession (BSW Program Objective 9 and 1).

2. Identify and describe the various steps in the research process (BSW Program Objective 9 and 1).

3. Assess the quality of research in current professional journal articles, especially as it relates to quality, relevance, and utility for social work practice (BSW Program Objectives 1 & 9).

4. Critique specific pieces of research for its ability to attend to the needs presented by culturally diverse client populations (BSW Program Objective 9).
5. Conceptualize social work interventions and outcomes (BSW Program Objective 9).

6. Protect research respondents and be familiar with ethical issues that warrant attention in conducting research and know appropriate ways to avoid or resolve potential dilemmas (BSW Program Objectives 2 & 3).

7. Develop a plan to promote the use of systemically collected information in agency-based decision-making (BSW Program Objectives 1 & 12).

8. Assess the cultural sensitivity of research instruments and data collection tools (BSW Program Objectives 2, 3, 4, & 9).

III. CURRICULUM THEMES

1. Practice Centeredness
The over-arching themes that guide the curriculum of the School of Social Welfare are incorporated throughout the practice oriented BSW program. This research course is oriented towards the application of research skills in a practice setting.

2. Strengths
The strengths orientation is a humanistic empowerment approach to social work that focuses on highlighting the natural, and often untapped, mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional resources of all persons. Unlike research courses in many disciplines focused on measuring and documenting pathology, this course supplements that perspective by highlighting the use of systematic research tools as methods to identify, articulate, and highlights the natural resources present in individuals, families, and communities.

3. Social Justice
Social Justice is emphasized in this course by evaluating research strategies for the presence of systematic biases that would perpetuate the struggles of vulnerable populations. Additionally, credible alternatives are offered which can be utilized to intentionally reflect the life challenges of oppressed, stigmatized, and marginalized persons.

4. Diversity
Diversity is emphasized in this class by critiquing research methods for the existence of prejudice and partiality that would preclude the recording of specialized circumstances of diverse populations. Attention is devoted to understanding the limitations of techniques that suppress the richness of unique individuals and promoting examples that cultivate an appreciation for individuals distinguished by race, ethnicity, religion, spirituality, class, sexual orientation, age, gender, and ability.

5. Critical Perspective
The tools, techniques, and skills developed in this class are an addition to critical thinking skills developed in a liberal arts curriculum which allows students to question the simplistic presentations of the actions of individuals, families, communities, and systems.
Student Course Content

Although this course is typically taught in medium-sized classroom setting a variety of methods of instruction are utilized to engage students. Students are expected to participate in class by reading the course material, engaging in class discussion, actively participating in exercises, and autonomously completing their own written assignments that employ research methods and techniques to a unique practice setting.

IV. LIBERAL ARTS PERSPECTIVE

The research sequence assumes a rich background in liberal arts education. Skills such as critical thinking, presenting and evaluating an argument, and others will be built upon in this course. Such skills are fostered in philosophy, humanities, and other social science courses. The research sequence will embellish this repertoire of critical thinking skills by adding techniques related to using information to present, refine, assess, and evaluate an argument.

V. PROFESSIONAL PURPOSE AND VALUES

This course presents social work research material in the context of a set of professional ethics and values that emphasize the dignity and self-determination of the individual. Attention focuses on research as a viable method for accurately representing the life issues of service consumers and the effectiveness of the services they receive.

VI. SOCIAL WORK GENERALIST AND HUMAN DIVERSITY

The skills and techniques presented in this class will greatly assist the generalist social worker in assessing the ongoing needs of service consumers and assessing the effectiveness of service systems at addressing those needs. Efforts will be extended towards understanding the bias inherent in many methods of assessing needs and evaluating services while exploring alternatives which may be more likely to fully represent the issues and struggles of consumers along with the abilities of service delivery to aid in those challenges.

Linkages to Other Courses in the Curriculum

This course offers a foundation for later social work practice courses. Students are able to utilize the skills and abilities acquired in this course to assess consumer needs, define interventions, and evaluate social work practice interventions.

VII. TOPICS

Required
Problem Formulation/Conceptualization
Ethical Research Practice (protection of human subjects)
Promoting Utilization of Research in an Agency Setting
Cultural Sensitivity
Validity & Reliability
Research Methods
    Experimental & quasi-experimental design
    Qualitative methods
    Survey research
    Sampling Design
    Single Subject Design

Recommended
Logic Models
Measurement
Theory & Research
Program Evaluation

VIII. RECOMMENDED READINGS

Research Methods Texts


Qualitative Studies


**Examples of Theoretical Development in Articles**


**Conceptualization**


**Scale Construction**


**Validity**


**Validity and Reliability Issues**


Validity and Reliability in Qualitative Study

Cultural Bias in Measurement


Correlational Study with Quota Sampling

Qualitative Study with Purposive Sampling (misnamed snowball sampling)

Descriptive Surveys


Correlational Study

Causal Study


**Experimental Studies**


**Program Evaluation**


**Program Evaluation (including both process and outcome evaluation)**

**Single Subject Design Study**


**Politics of Research**

**Ethics in Research**

“Instructions for Submitting Proposals to the University of Kansas Advisory Committee on Human Experimentation (ACHE),” February, 1994. [360-382]


**IX. SUGGESTED ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Application Assignments (Educational Outcomes 2,4,5,6,7)

Students select and describe a practice setting reflecting their personal or professional interest. Using this site students apply the material from the course to a critical question of interest in their setting. Topics include, but no limited to: describe the theoretical models operating in this setting; describe a small scale study and design an ethical human subjects protocol; design a survey including the outline of a questionnaire and a sampling plan; outline a research plan for a qualitative study; an experimental design; and or a single subject design.
2. Critique a research article (Educational Outcome 3)

Chose a specific article or allow students to find their own within guidelines, (a research study that focuses on a consumer group that offers some diversity, see discussion earlier). Have students describe the population in the study, the research design employed, and a critique of the research design. The critique should address the appropriateness of the design, the degree to which it was implemented effectively, and the validity of the study findings.

3. Review of research related to a diverse population (Educational Outcome 4)

Have students pick a specific population within a service setting, i.e., Adoption of African American males and conduct a brief literature review in this area (3-5 articles). Students complete a paper that includes: what they learned about this population, especially the challenges of doing research with this population; a research question they would like to pursue; a brief design for pursuing that question; and a plan for making their research design culturally sensitive to the specialized needs of this population.

X. Grading

BSW Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59 and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. Incomplete grades. A temporary grade of Incomplete may be assigned to a student who, for a reason beyond the student’s control, has been unable to complete the required work in a course on time. It is the student’s responsibility to request an Incomplete from the instructor. A request signed by the student and the faculty member must be on file when grades are submitted. A student may not enroll in a course sequential to one in which he or she has an I or F letter grade. An incomplete not removed by the end of the next semester will be changed to an F.

The Master syllabi should specify:

B. Attendance policies for BSW courses. For example: Class attendance is very important. More than two absences could result in the loss of all your attendance points. More than four absences will result in failure in this class. If you have missed two classes, please arrange an appointment with me to discuss the reasons for the absence and to arrange for make-up work that will count toward your class
participation points. Points are deducted for missing class and coming to class late (3 pts. for each absence/lateness).

**Individual instructors’ syllabi should specify the following:**

C. The weighting of each assignment in the course and the dates by which they are done.

D. For every assignment, explain the standards used for grading.

E. If class participation is part of the grade, indicate what this means. For example, if 10 points are awarded for class participation, one point will be deducted for every class missed.

F. Indicate the policy on late assignments, e.g., they are not accepted and treated as an “F” grade or the grade is reduced by ___ for each day, week, etc.

G. Indicate how final grades will be determined.

**XI. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Students who have special educational needs of any kind, including those related to learning disabilities, other disabilities, English as a second language should discuss necessary accommodations with the instructor within the first two sessions of the course. The university and School of Social Welfare are committed to provide supportive programs and accommodations to assist students who have special learning needs to successfully meet course expectations. In particular, students who feel that they have a disability that may require accommodation should advise the instructor of such disability and desired accommodation as soon as one obtains written documentation of the disability. The instructor will work with the student and the office of Services for Students with Disabilities to provide reasonable accommodations.

Please notify the instructor if your religious observances conflict with class or due dates for class assignments so we can make appropriate arrangements.

**XII. RECORDING AND SHARING RECORDINGS OF LECTURES**

Course materials prepared by the instructor, together with the content of all lectures and review sessions presented by the instructor are the property of the instructor. Video and audio recording of lectures and review sessions without the consent of the instructor is prohibited. On request, the instructor will usually grant permission for students to audio tape lectures, on the condition that these audio tapes are only used as a study aid by the individual making the recording. Unless explicit permission is obtained from the instructor, recordings of lectures and review sessions may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course.
XIII. HIPAA REGULATIONS

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requires that any personal information that may identify a person must be removed to protect confidentiality. Confidentiality applies to both classroom discussions and to written work. Please follow these simple, yet essential guidelines:

- Always disguise the name and other personal identifying information when you speak and write about a person, following the guidelines established by HIPAA.
- If writing in great detail about a client, ask permission from the client.
- Share nothing about specific clients, agencies or other students outside of the classroom.

Any information shared with the class/instructor will be confidential, within the limits defined by the Code of Ethics and state guidelines.

**Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.**

XIV. INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY

Provide students with information on how to see and/or reach you.

XV. INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

In the event of inclement weather students should call:

- Lawrence: the University (785) 864-SNOW, or if hearing impaired and have TTY/TDD equipment, (800) 766-3777
- Edwards Campus: (913) 897-8499
- KCKCC Campus: (913) 334-1100

to determine if classes have been cancelled. Class will be held if classes have not been cancelled, and students should contact the instructor if weather or driving conditions make it impossible for them to get to class.