

**University of Nebraska at Omaha
School of Social Work**

**SOWK 8190 Research and Computer Applications
SYLLABUS
Spring 2008**

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Office: Social Work area, near north entrance to Milo Bail Student Center
Office Hours: Available anytime by E-mail. Please contact the Instructor for a face-to-face or phone appointment.

Class Times: Tuesdays, 8:30 – 11:15am

Classroom: DSC 022 (CPACS computer lab)

1.0 COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on the use of research and computer programs in social work practice. Social and behavioral science research methods are reviewed. Students learn to analyze existing data using SPSS and to write an empirical research report. The use of Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint in social work practice are explored.

2.0 COURSE AND MSW PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

This course meets the following MSW program objectives:

- #2 Apply and analyze social work values, ethical principles and legal mandates in professional social work practice.
- #3 Demonstrate cultural competency in professional social work practice.
- #4 Identify, serve, and advocate for vulnerable client systems and populations at risk.
- #5 Work effectively in multidisciplinary teams and settings.
- #8 Identify, select and apply empirically supported methods for clinical and integrated social work practice.
- #10 Communicate effectively in oral and written forms in professional social work practice.
- #11 Use effective supervisory, consultative and administrative skills in professional social work practice.
- #12 Function effectively within agency and community structures to deliver professional social work services.
- #13 Apply research methods to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, services, policies and programs.
- #14 Develop, implement, and analyze policies, practices, and administrative structures that promote socially just institutions and communities.

Course Objectives, MSW Program Objectives, and Assignments

Course Objectives	MSW Program Objectives	Assignments
2.1 Discuss research in social work and relationship of research to social work practice and theory building.	#s 8,12,13,14	RP#s 4,6,12

2.2 Explain the relevance and utilization of research in social work practice.	#s 4,5,8,12,13	RP#s 4,6,12
2.3 Demonstrate skills in evaluating social and behavioral science research.	#s 8,13,14	RP#s 4,12
2.4 Gain working knowledge of research methodology, including design, measurement, and sampling.	#s 8,13	RP#s 3,5-12
2.5 Demonstrate moderate skill in the use of statistical concepts and techniques commonly used in social work research.	#s 8,13	RP#s 1,3,5,7-12
2.6 Discuss diversity and populations-at-risk, as it relates to research.	#s 3,4,13,14	RP#s 1-12
2.7 Demonstrate moderate skill in analyzing existing data using SPSS.	#13	RP#s 5,7-12
2.8 Demonstrate moderate skill in orally reporting results of student research project to colleagues using Microsoft PowerPoint.	#s 5,10,11,13	RP# 11
2.9 Demonstrate moderate skill in using Microsoft Excel.	#s 11,13	RP#s 1,5
2.10 Demonstrate moderate skill in using Microsoft Word.	#s 10,11	RP#s 1-4,6-12
2.11 Discuss the role of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the laws and policies related to the protection of human subjects.	#s 2,13	IRB CITI training RP#s 4,6,11,12

3.0 TEACHING METHODOLOGY

3.1 Lecture, discussion, computer demonstrations, service-learning, student presentations, computer assignments, and distance education for required IRB competency.

4.0 TEXTBOOKS

Required textbooks:

- 4.1 Monette, D. R., Sullivan, T. J., & DeJong, C. R. (2005). *Applied social research: A tool for the human services*, 6th ed. Thomson Brooks/Cole.
- 4.2 Course pack (available for purchase in the UNO Bookstore).
- 4.3 Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), 5th ed. (2001). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Recommended textbooks:

- 4.4 Babbie, E., Halley, F., & Zaino, J. (2007). *Adventures in social research: Data analysis using SPSS 11.0/11.5 for Windows*, 6th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press/Sage. (Comes packaged with student version of SPSS 14.0 and 15.0 for Windows.)
- 4.5 Microsoft Office 2007 Student & Teacher Edition, includes Word, Excel, Outlook, and PowerPoint.
- 4.6 Szuchman, L. T., & Thomlison, B. (2008). *Writing with style: APA style for social work*, 3rd ed. Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.

5.0 COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE (tentative)

Session	Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments Due
1	1/15	Course introduction, syllabus overview, introduction to research	Ch.1-2	--
2	1/22	Research ethics/IRB, using Excel (meet with service-learning partner)	Ch. 3	--
3	1/29	Writing a literature review; using the library databases; APA format (meet with service-learning partner)	Ch. 4, APA manual, OWL website, (Galvan book on library reserves)	--
4	2/5	Levels of measurement, validity, reliability	Ch. 5	IRB training (CITI) RP#1 Using Excel
5	2/12	Research terms	Ch. 8	RP#2 Description of agency and intervention; statement of problem RP#4 Part I Identify 5 empirical journal articles
6	2/19	Research designs, sampling	Ch. 6-7, 10-11	RP#3 Data codebook
7	2/26	Introduction to SPSS, setting up a SPSS data shell; missing data		RP#4 Part II Literature review
8	3/4	Univariate analysis: frequency distributions, measures of central tendency and dispersion	--	RP#5 SPSS data shell
9	3/11	Univariate analysis: computing and recoding	Ch. 14-15	RP#6 Research methodology
--	3/18	SPRING BREAK	--	--
10	3/25	Graphs; bivariate analysis: crosstabs	Ch. 14-15	RP#7 Univariate analysis
11	4/1	Intro to inferential statistics; <i>chi</i> square, correlation	Ch. 14-15	RP#8 Recoding and computing
12	4/8	Tests of statistical significance: <i>t</i> -tests, ANOVA	Ch. 14-15	RP#9 Sample description
13	4/15	<i>Putting it all together</i> ; using PowerPoint; qualitative research	Ch. 9, 16, 17	RP#10 Tests of statistical significance (end of class)
14	4/22	Student presentations	--	RP#11 Student presentations
15	4/29	(Prep week) Student presentations, course wrap-up	--	RP#11 Student presentations
16	5/6	(Finals week) NO CLASS	--	RP#12 Final research report

6.0 ASSIGNMENTS

- 6.1 Students are responsible for completing the assigned readings prior to each class. Please come to class prepared to participate and use skills learned.
- 6.2 Time will be allotted each class period for students to begin work on class assignments and seek assistance from the Instructor and fellow students.
- 6.3 The *Research Partnership* (RP) assignments will be completed based on datasets obtained from community agencies (service-learning). The Instructor will provide the datasets from which the students will choose. The students will collaborate in groups on working with these datasets, however, **each student is responsible for completing and submitting her/his own assignments.** Agency representatives will be invited to attend the presentations (RP#11). In addition, students who do well on their final research report (RP#12) will have their papers forwarded to the agency by the Instructor.
- 6.4 Written communication is critical to social work practice. **RP#s 4, 6, and 12 must be prepared in APA format.**
- 6.5 If desired, students may submit a rough draft of RP#s 4, 6, and/or 12 to the Instructor for feedback. This must be done a minimum of one week in advance of the due date – the Instructor will seek to respond with comments and suggestions within three days.
- 6.6 **All assignments must be submitted to the Instructor electronically by E-mail (unless noted otherwise), and must be received by class time on the due date.** Submitting a paper copy of assignments as well is optional. It is advisable for you to document the submission of your papers via the “Send and File” option in Lotus Notes, or comparable option in whatever E-mail software you use. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that the Instructor has received the assignment by the deadline, and that it is in an accessible format. Submit all papers in Microsoft Word, SPSS, or Excel format. Assignments turned in late will have significant points deducted. No assignment will be accepted that is more than one week past the due date.
- 6.7 Computer labs: <http://www.unomaha.edu/its/labs.php>

7.0 ATTENDANCE POLICY AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

- 7.1 Student attendance and participation in class are essential for learning. Missing even one class will cause a student to miss skills taught that day, and make catching up very difficult. Students are expected to be actively involved in class and labs.
- 7.2 Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Please plan to be prompt and to stay for the entire 3-hour session (one break).
- 7.3 Although not encouraged, students are allowed two class absences without a point penalty. A 20-point penalty will be taken for each class session missed over two. Students who arrive late or leave early may lose points, at the Instructor’s discretion. A student who misses a class is responsible for information and assignments communicated during that class session. Disruptive behavior or refusing to participate in classroom activities (including discussions and exercises) may also result in a lower course grade.

7.4 All students are expected to:

- be punctual;
- respect the opinions of peers;
- speak up when you have a point to make, a question, or a disagreement;
- be willing to *help* each other (*without cheating*); and
- demonstrate ability to give and accept feedback.

7.5 Please *turn off* ringers on cell phones before class begins.

7.6 If a student stops attending but does not officially withdraw from the course, the student will receive a grade of “F”.

8.0 GRADING POLICY

points

possible

25	Attendance
20	IRB (CITI) training
20	RP#1 Using Excel
20	RP#2 Description of agency and intervention, statement of problem
20	RP#3 Data codebook
40	RP#4 Literature review
20	RP#5 SPSS data shell
35	RP#6 Research methodology
15	RP#7 Univariate analysis
10	RP#8 Recoding and computing
20	RP#9 Sample description
30	RP#10 Tests of statistical significance
25	RP#11 Presentation
100	RP#12 Final research report
<u>400</u>	TOTAL

<u>Cumulative Points*</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Final Grade</u>	<u>Quality Points</u>
393-400	98-100%	A+	4.00
376-392	94-97.9%	A	4.00
365-375	91-93.9%	A-	3.67
353-364	88-90.9%	B+	3.33
337-352	84-87.9%	B	3.00
325-336	81-83.9%	B-	2.67
313-324	78-80.9%	C+	2.33
297-312	74-77.9%	C	2.00
285-296	71-73.9%	C-	1.67
273-284	68-70.9%	D+	1.33
257-272	64-67.9%	D	1.00
245-256	61-63.9%	D-	0.67
below 244	below 60.9%	F	0.00

*Final grade is based on cumulative points earned.

No extra credit.

Graduate Academic Policies - Quality of Work Standards
from UNO School of Social Work, Student Handbook, Fall 2005, p. 69

The following are standards required of all masters-level students at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Basic Standard

A “B” (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) average or higher must be maintained in all graduate work taken as part of the degree program. Additionally, a grade of “B” (3.0) or higher must be achieved in practicum courses (8400 and 8410).

Automatic Dismissal

Receiving a grade of “C-” (1.67 on a 4.0 scale) or below in any course taken in the student’s major field of study or in any course included in the plan of study or program of study will result in **automatic** dismissal from the degree program by the Office of Graduate Studies. In this case, the department or school will recommend that the Dean for Graduate Studies either dismiss, or place on probation with conditions for reinstatement, as a student in good standing.

Grade appeal process for CPACS students:

Students who wish to appeal a grade which they feel was capriciously or prejudicially given shall first discuss the matter with the instructor within 30 days of the final course grade being posted. If the matter is not resolved, the student must meet with the department/school Chair/Director. If a satisfactory agreement cannot be reached the student must appeal, in writing, to the department/school curriculum committee. If a satisfactory agreement cannot be reached, the student may submit a written appeal to the Office of the Dean within 20 working days of the exhaustion of the departmental procedures.

9.0 RECOMMENDED READING

- Conner, P. T. (2004). *Woe is I: The grammarphobe’s guide to better English in plain English*, 2nd ed. Riverhead Books.
- Corcoran, K. & Fischer, J. (2000). *Measures for clinical practice: A sourcebook*. New York: Free Press. Volumes 1 and 2.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- DiLeonardi, J. W. , & Curtis, P. A. (1992). *What to do when the numbers are in: A user’s guide to statistical data analysis in the human services*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.
- Field, A. (2000). *Discovering statistics using SPSS for Windows*. London: Sage Publications.
- Galvan, J. L. (2006). *Writing literature reviews*, 3rd ed. Los Angeles: Pyczak Publishing.
- Green, S. B., Salkind, N. J., & Akey, T. M. (2000). *Using SPSS for Windows: Analyzing and understanding data*, 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Maxwell, J. A. (1996). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Patterson, D. A., & Basham, R. E. (2006). *Data analysis with spreadsheets*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Pyczak, F., & Bruce, R. R. (2000). *Writing empirical research reports*. Los Angeles: Pyczak Publishing.
- Rubin, A. & Babbie, E. (2005). *Research methods for social work*, 5th ed. Belmont, CA: Thomson/Brooks/Cole.
- Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2000). *Using multivariate statistics*, 4th ed. Allyn & Bacon.
- Weinbach, R. W., & Grinnell, Jr., R. M. (2007). *Statistics for social workers*, 7th ed. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, Pearson Education, Inc.

10.0 UNIVERSITY POLICIES

- 10.1 Student disabilities. Students who have a documented disability and need academic accommodation are encouraged to contact the instructor as early in the semester as possible to discuss their special needs.
- 10.2 Academic dishonesty and plagiarism. UNO policy reads: “The maintenance of academic honesty and integrity is a vital concern of the University community. Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty shall be subject to both academic and disciplinary sanctions.” *Plagiarism* is the appropriation of the work (be it ideas or words) of another without crediting the source. Such a practice is particularly reprehensible in a community dedicated to the pursuit and advance of knowledge. For more information, see the UNO Student Handbook.

Instructor’s notes on plagiarism:

Our APA manual has the following to say about plagiarism: “Do not claim the words and ideas of another as [your] own; give credit where credit is due. Quotation marks should be used to indicate the exact words of another. *Each time* you paraphrase another author, you will need to credit the source in the text” (*Publication Manual of the APA*, 5th ed., p. 349).

Plagiarism is a very serious offense. Believe it or not, I regularly find students who have cheated by plagiarizing large sections of their papers – don’t do it!! As the Instructor, I am authorized to give a very steep penalty for students who plagiarize, up to and including failure of the course. So take note: **write** your papers – do **not** simply assemble bodies of text from books, journals, and/or websites. Writing takes lots of hard work, thought, and time. Whenever possible, put things in your own words. Too many citations are better than too few. Use quotes sparingly. NOTE: Copying text word-for-word for anything more than 5 words requires **both** quotation marks and a citation (including a page number).

According to the UNO Graduate Catalog, “*By plagiarizing, a student is, in effect, claiming credit for another individual's thinking and expression. Whether the student has read or heard of the information used, the student must document the source of information. When utilizing written sources, a clear distinction should be made between quotations (which reproduce information from the source word-for-word within quotation marks) and paraphrases (which are restatements of the source information produced in the student's own words). Both direct quotations and paraphrases must be documented. Even though a student rephrases, condenses or selects from another person's work the ideas are still the other person's and failure to give credit constitutes misrepresentation of the student's actual work and plagiarism of another person's idea. Purchasing a paper or copying another person's work and handing it in as the student's personal work is plagiarism and misrepresentation*” (www.unomaha.edu/graduate/catalog/2004-2005/important_info/gen_policies/acahon.html).

You can read more on plagiarism and how to avoid it at:
<http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/hc/plagiarism.html>

11.0 OTHER UNO STUDENT RESOURCES

Resource	Phone#	Location
Bookstore	554-2336	MBSC, 1 st floor http://www.unobookstore.com/
Career Exploration and Outreach	554-3672	EAB 211 http://ceo.unomaha.edu/
Counseling	554-2409	EAB #115

		http://counseling.unomaha.edu
International Studies and Programs	554-2293	ASH #241 http://www.unomaha.edu/world
Library	554-3206	Library http://library.unomaha.edu
Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity	554-2872	EAB 117 http://www.unomaha.edu/diversity
Recreation	554-2539	HPER http://www.unomaha.edu/~wwwocr
Security (Emergencies)	554-2911	EAB 100 http://www.unomaha.edu/security
Services for Students with Disabilities	554-3799	EAB #115 http://www.unomaha.edu/disability
Student Health Services	554-2374	MBSC, 1 st floor http://studenthealth.unomaha.edu
Writing Center	554-2946	ASH 150 http://www.unomaha.edu/writingcenter