

**University of Texas at Arlington School of Social Work
Fall 2009**

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Office hours: Tues 1-3 pm

Course Number, Section Number and Course Title: SOCW-5322-002-82982, Research and Evaluation Methods in Social Work I

Class Time and Location: Tuesday 9am -11:50am, Social Work Building A 219

EPAS Policy Statement (Research): Qualitative and quantitative research content provides understanding of a scientific, analytic, and ethical approach to building knowledge for practice. The content prepares students to develop, use and effectively communicate empirically based knowledge, including evidence-based interventions. Research knowledge is used by students to provide high-quality services; to initiate change; to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery; and to evaluate their own practice.

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE CONTENT: Catalogue Description: Introduction to the methods of scientific inquiry and their relevance to social work. Topics include problem formulation, single subject and group research design, elementary statistics such as chi squares, correlations, analyses of variance, and report writing. Required of all students.

Additional Description: This course is designed to provide the student with the necessary knowledge base and skills for using research and evaluation methods in social work practice. The course focuses on the processes of both quantitative and qualitative research methods, the logic of data analysis, and the use of statistics in social work research and practice. Attention will be paid to both the broad questions regarding the place of scientific inquiry in social work practice and to more specific aspects of research design. The fundamental skills of critical thinking and evidence-based practice are presented with applications across the disciplines and wide variety of literature addressing social work practices, policy, and theories of human behavior and social environment. A primary emphasis of the course is the development of knowledge and skills needed for practice evaluation at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Identify elements of an evidence-based practice model, the research process and social work research methods with application to the process of evidence-based practice and evaluation of social work practice and programs.
2. Use and critically examine existing literature with emphasis on issues regarding cultural diversity, gender, sexual orientation, and sensitive topics (i.e., social and economic justice, oppression, and populations at risk).
3. Apply relevant social, cultural, economic and other diversity factors in the selection of topics, the methods employed, the nature of analysis, and the conclusions drawn in the research endeavor.
4. Apply scientific methods to issues of concern for social workers, including how to formulate meaningful research questions, select appropriate research designs, develop and employ basic methods of data collection and conduct quantitative and qualitative analysis.
5. Use empirical studies as a knowledge base to support professional interventions and decisions for the enhancement of client well-being.
6. Interpret statistical concepts and present results as they apply to social work.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (2008). *Research methods for social work* (6th Ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.

Additional required readings may be added throughout the semester and can be on the exams.

COMPUTER SOFTWARE

We will use SPSS for statistical analyses in this class.

Although the use of SPSS will be demonstrated on many occasions in class, this is not a technology course. The focus of this class will be on the implementation, understanding, and interpretation of statistical findings used in practice and program evaluation research, not on instruction on how to work the SPSS software. Those students who are totally unfamiliar with SPSS software may also want to consider:

1. The Office of Information Technology at UTA offers an Introduction to SPSS course and an Introduction to EXCEL course free to UTA students. For more information about these courses and other technology courses go to: <http://oit.uta.edu/cs/training/index.html>
2. An online SPSS tutorial—There are many. Google SPSS and choose the ones that fit your needs; some are more advanced than others.

SPSS Access:

The SPSS Software, though not available on every public computer on campus, is available at many different computer sites.

1. The School of Social Work Computer Lab (**Technology Classroom**). For information about the hours this lab is available for student use go to: <http://www2.uta.edu/ssw/lab/>
2. The School of Social Work E-Library (SWEL). For information about the hours this site is open see: <http://library.uta.edu/swel/>
3. Additional Computer Labs on Campus for SPSS:
Fine Arts Building rms. 404/411/411A/412/412A
Business Building rms. 338/340
University Hall rm. B004. For more information about these labs go to: <http://oit.uta.edu/clientservices/labs/software/index.asp>

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS, QUIZZES AND OTHER CLASS REQUIREMENTS

Expectations for written work: Text citations and reference lists must be in correct APA (5th ed. OR 6th ed.) format. All sentences should be carefully comprised of a student's own words. Ideas, information, and concepts that originated with any other source, as well as quotations (which should be used sparingly) must be correctly cited in APA style. Material that is not correctly cited is considered to be plagiarized and provides grounds for academic discipline. Assignments should be carefully proofed for spelling and grammar.

NOTE: To receive full credit, all assignments should be typed, clearly written, doubled-spaced, structurally sound, APA style referencing, and turned in on time.

Failure to turn in any part of the assignments and final paper on the due date at the beginning of class will result in an immediate loss of 5 points. A continued loss of 5 points for each day late will be calculated. The paper will not be accepted later than a week following the due date, resulting in an automatic zero for the assignment. It is important to proofread carefully before submission and always to keep a copy for you. If you have a compelling reason for needing an extension, please see your instructor well before the due date.

1. Attendance and Participation (10 points): Students are expected to be on time and attend all class sessions, complete reading assignments and be prepared to participate in class discussions and small group activities. **NOTE:** Excessive absences (3 or more), leaving early and tardiness exceeding 15 minutes will result in the significant reduction of a student's participation grade. Attendance will be taken each class session. There is a limit of two excused absences for the class. An excused absence is limited to health and family emergencies. Three (3) points will be lost for each unexcused absence or for any absence not discussed and approved by the instructor ahead of time. More than three (3) absences including excused absences will be automatically failed.

(No absence – 10pts, 1 absence – 7pts, 2 absences -4pts, 3 absences – 1 pt, 4 absences –Fail).

To avoid a failing grade due to absences, it is the student's responsibility to withdraw from the class according to the University guidelines and time frame.

2. CITI Training for Ethical Issues: Students are required to complete the CITI Training. Please visit the following website (<http://www.uta.edu/ra/oric/training/cititraining.htm>) and follow to the direction. Please turn in your certification after completing all modules (5 points). If you already have done this training from previous classes, please see me after the second class(9/1/2009).

3. Two in-class exams will be given, each of which will count for 25% (25 points) of the grade for this course. The exams will cover material from the readings, lectures, class discussion, and homework assignments. Each exam will focus primarily on content presented since the previous exam but may also include material covered earlier. The format of the exams will be mixed, potentially including multiple choices, true/false, matching, fill-in-the-blank, and short-answer essay. Such exams tend to be pretty challenging, requiring memorization of concepts and understanding nuances of research terms, including the application of concepts to situations. Like any language, if you don't know the vocabulary, you will not be able to get far. Students who arrive late will not be permitted extra time to take the quiz. Make up exams will not be given unless proof of a true emergency at the time of the quiz is provided. Students who cannot be present for an exam due to illness or emergency must contact the instructor prior to the start of the examination.

4. Class presentation (Group or Individual): Students will draw from the empirical research articles for an in-class oral critique. For this assignment you will participate in the process of critically reviewing articles. Students will work in groups of 2 or 3.

Students may work **alone** if it fits your life structure. Groups should be no larger than **3 people**.

Students are responsible for 1) selecting the article, 2) screening with the instructor, and 3) copying and distributing the abstract to classmates before presenting it. This will count for 15% of the grade.

Guidelines for this are attached at the end of the syllabus.

5. Final Paper: Students may choose to either complete an analysis of a research article (OPTION A) or prepare a proposal for a research project (OPTION B) for the final paper. This assignment will be **20%** of the final grade. **Guidelines for this are attached at the end of the syllabus.**

Summary of Points for Assignments (All assignments must be submitted)

Attendance and Participation	10
Exam 1 on 9/29/2009	25
Papers (analysis of research articles) are due on 10/20	15
In class Presentations (analysis of research articles) 10/20	
CITI training certificate due on 11/24	5
Exam 2 on 11/24/2009	25
Final Paper (Option A or Option B) due on 12/1	20
Total	100

Grading Scale: A = 90-100 or above

B = 80%-89.99%

C = 70%-79.99%

D = 60%-69.99%

Fail = 59.99 points or lower

COURSE OUTLINE: Class session dates, outline of topics and reading assignments

Session # & Date	Probable Topics	Required Readings
Session 1: August 25 Tuesday	Course overview - Introduction to social work research, Levels of measurement After a break, meet in Social Work Computer Lab or Technology class (if available).	Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 20
Session 2: 9/1	Measurement functions; variables; measurement error; validity & reliability.	Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 8
Session 3: 9/8	Group designs: Pre-experimental, quasi-experimental, & experimental; Internal & external validity <u>Q & A Analysis of Research Articles and Final Paper</u>	Rubin & Babbie, Chapters 10 & 11
Session 4: 9/15	Scientific method; theory in research studies; methods of social inquiry; paradigms Evaluation and accountability and Evidence-based or Evidence-informed practice Scientific method; theory in research studies; methods of social inquiry; paradigms	Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 1 Chapters 2 & 3
Session 5: 9/22	Research approaches and cultural competence.	Chapter 5
Session 6: 9/29	EXAM 1 (1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 10, 11, levels of measurement from Ch.20)	
Session 7:10/6	Developing a research question. Process and problem formulation, conceptualization.	Rubin & Babbie, 6, & 7
Session 8: 10/13	Sampling theory; Probability/ non-probability; Sampling errors; Non-sampling errors. Survey design; Instrumentation & method selection. <u>Reading empirical articles</u>	Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 14 & 15
Session 9: 10/20	Analysis of Research Articles Due In class presentations (Group or Individual)	
Session 10: 10/27	Qualitative research methods; Observational techniques; participatory research; unobtrusive measures. Qualitative analysis.	Rubin & Babbie, Chapters 17 & 18 Chapter 19
Session 11: 11/3	Quantitative analysis; Bivariate analysis; Descriptive statistics; Measures of association. Inferential data analysis SPSS - After a break, meet in Social Work Computer Lab or Technology class (if available).	Rubin & Babbie, <u>Chapters 20</u> & 21
Session 12: 11/10	Inferential data analysis. SPSS - After a break, meet in Social Work Computer Lab or Technology class (if available).	Rubin & Babbie, Chapters 21 & 22

Session 13: 11/17	Library Work The Ethics and Politics of SW research CITI Training	Rubin & Babbie, Chapters 4
Session 14: 11/24	CITI training certificate due Exam II (4, 6, 7, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22)	
Session 15: 12/1	Final Paper Due Wrap-up, course evaluations	

***Dates and schedule are subject to change.**

Other Important Information:

Attendance Policy: Students are expected to attend classes. Exam material will come, in part, from lecture material not necessarily covered in the book. It is the student's responsibility to obtain lecture notes. The Professor does not hand out copies of his lecture notes or PowerPoint presentations.

Drop Policy: See the University handbook or catalogue for this information. Students are expected to be familiar with University policies regarding dates and reasons for drops.

Americans with Disabilities Act: The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 93112-The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens. As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty at the beginning of the semester and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels.

Academic Integrity: It is the philosophy of the University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion for the University.

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. (Regents Rules and Regulations, Part one, Chapter VI, Section 3, Subsection 3.2, Subdivision 3.22).

Student Support Services: The University supports a variety of student success programs to help you connect with the University and achieve academic success. They include learning assistance, developmental education, advising and mentoring, admission and transition, and federally funded programs. Students requiring assistance academically, personally, or socially should contact the Office of Student Success Programs at 817-272-6107 for more information / appropriate referrals.

Librarian to Contact: John Dillard, 817-272-7518, room A-111.

E-Culture Policy: The University of Texas at Arlington has adopted the University email address as an official means of communication with students. Through the use of email, UT-Arlington is able to provide students with relevant and timely information, designed to facilitate student success. In particular, important information concerning registration, financial aid, payment of bills, and graduation may be sent to students through email.

All students are assigned an email account and information about activating and using it is available at www.uta.edu/email. New students (first semester at UTA) are able to activate their email account 24 hours after registering for courses. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, and it remains active as long as a student is enrolled at UT-Arlington. Students are responsible for checking their email

regularly. For this course, however, email shall NOT be considered an official means of communication for this class. Changes in the syllabus and or class schedule may be announced in class and students are expected to find out about them from other students if they are unable to attend a particular class session.

Make-up exam Policy: It is strongly suggested that the exams not be missed as they build upon each other and missing any assignment will put the student behind in the course. No make-up exams will be given unless a true, verifiable, emergency exists at the time of the quiz.

Grade Grievance Policy: Information may be found in the catalogue.

4. Analysis of Research Articles and In Class Presentations and paper (Group or Individual) (15 Points) -

This assignment is designed to: (1) Help you start applying the concepts covered in reading & class discussions, (2) Begin to familiarize you with scholarly journals & other information sources in a substantive of interest to you, & (3) Get you started on the final class project.

<p>First: Try to get a fairly clear idea about a subject that interests you. Your ideas will probably be vague until you start to look at published studies on the topic. (Very Good – 3, Fair -2, Ok -1, not clear – 0) Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does tobacco cessation intervention program lead the cessation without relapse? • Does an educational intervention program on rape prevention decrease rape on a college campus? • Do adopted children who establish ties with their biological parents fare better psychologically than those who do not? • Is a school-based behavior modification program for children with ADD effective? • Do the religious beliefs of clients with severe mental disorders influence treatment outcomes? 	3 pts
<p>Second: Locate at least 3 articles that inform your research question(s). At least 2 of these should be reports of empirical studies. You may start with:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A search of recent (2000– present) journals in your substantive area in the library stacks 2. An entry in a reference text (e.g. Encyclopedia of Social Work), especially to get an overview 3. You will also find Ageline, Psych-Info, ERIC (educational abstracts), and MEDILINE. <p>Browse the titles and abstracts of articles, choose several that look promising, then check UTA library website for the location of the journal. Read and answer the following questions for each article (please give full citations in proper APA format ant attach a copy of the abstract for each of your articles):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Briefly describe the research study. What was the author’s purpose in conducting the study? Is the main purpose of the study Exploratory? Descriptive? Explanatory? B. What are some of the broader theoretical aspects of the study? C. What hypothesis (es) does the author(s) test? D. What are the major independent variables? Major dependent variable(s)? E. How are the independent and dependent variables operationalized for measurement? 	5 pts
<p>Third: Synthesize these articles in a coherent review. (Synthesize is combining elements to create new structures and/or alternative solutions to problems – from Active Learning workshop)</p>	3 pts
<p>Fourth: Two Class Presentations (Excellent -4, Very good – 3, Fair – 2, Poor -1) As part of this assignment you or your group will prepare a class presentation using Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation to present your Analysis of Research Articles. Your group is responsible for copying and distributing ABSTRACTs of the selected articles to your classmates. Presenters are expected to excel not only in mastering the studies, its strengths, flaws, and nuances, but also in leading its thoughtful, interesting, and smoothly organized discussion.</p>	4 pts

All members of the group are expected to participate equally in the project and presentation and will be asked to submit collectively a report. The total score for each student will be used to calculate group member’s grades for the assignment based on peer evaluation form on the last page of this syllabus.

5. Final paper (20 Points) Option A: Critique a Study

Based on your understanding of the material presented in class and the textbook, answer each of the following questions regarding one of the **four (4)** listed articles.

Your answers should be clear and concise, demonstrating your ability to think critically about this piece of research. Respond to each question individually; each question will be worth **2 points**.

1.	Describe the type of research used in this study. (Exploratory or Descriptive or Explanatory). Provide the reference.	
2.	What was the research problem and was it clearly defined?	
3.	Were there research questions or hypotheses? If so, identify.	
4.	Briefly describe the methodology used. Was the methodology appropriate? Why or why not?	
5.	Was the population studied clearly identified? Who were they? What sampling method was used? Was the sampling appropriate? Why or why not?	
6.	What concerns related to validity and reliability (measurement) faced the researcher?	
7.	What concerns related to validity (internal and external) may have faced the researcher?	
8.	Were the conclusions consistent with the findings? Are the findings generalizable beyond the study? Why or why not?	
9.	Does this research contribute to social work knowledge? Do you think it is useful for social work practitioners? Why or why not?	
10.	All quotations should be appropriately cited according to the 5 th Edition of the APA Manual.	

Abe-Kim J, Takeuchi D, Hong S, Zane N, Sue S, Spencer M, et al. (2007). [Use of Mental Health Related Services Among Immigrants and US Born Asian Americans: Results from the National Latino and Asian American Study](#). *American Journal of Public Health*.97 (1):91-98. (NOT APA STYLE)

Bench, L. & Allen, T. (2003). Investigating the stigma of prison classification: An experimental design. *The Prison Journal*, 83(4), 367-382.

Flippen, C. A. (2001). Residential segregation and minority home ownership. *Social Science Research*, 30, 337-362.

Treatment for Adolescents with Depression Study (TADS) Team. (2004). Fluoxetine, cognitive-behavioral therapy, and their combination for adolescents with depression: Treatment for adolescents with depression study (TADS) randomized controlled trial. *JAMA: the Journal of the American Medical Association*, 292(7), 807-820. (NOT APA STYLE)

5. Final paper (20 points) - Option B

Please address the following points in the given order. Clear and succinct writing is essential in proposal writing so work toward that goal.

General Information: The final paper is to be written using APA format for cover page, citations, references and general appearance. Do not include an abstract. Papers should be written in formal, standard English (no first person). Please consider submitting your assignment to the Writing Center before turning it in for grading. Use headings for each section of your paper, preferably as used below. This paper does not have a set page size. Do it well and the length takes care of itself. **Option B** is designed to approximate the process of evidence-based practice as much as possible.

The steps of the **evidence-based practice model** taught in this class are:

<p>I. Introduction - Convert information needs into answerable questions. (1 point). Convert an information need about a client (individual, group, or community) into an answerable question. That is, identify a topic of interest to you. The introduction should lay the ground for the topic, by indicating how the general topic of the paper is important. This can be established using general statistics about the problem to be addressed, or specific information about the individual, group or community that is involved. This section should end with the identified information need about the client and the specific question you will answer.</p>	
<p>II. Description and Appraisal of the Evidence This section is where you apply everything you know about how to judge the worth of a research article or book, and any other evidence that you have at hand. This should be a rather exhaustive compilation and synthesis of the literature, focusing on answering the question you pose at the end of the previous section. In the end, you should have at least two treatment/policy approaches that would assist in alleviating the client issue you started with. Each approach will have more or less evidence of better or worse quality, supporting it. It may be useful to include a chart laying out the options and supporting information. Comments regarding the availability or lack of availability of evidence regarding specific populations should be included here.</p> <p>a. Track down with maximum efficiency the best evidence with which to answer the question. Critically appraise the evidence for its validity and usefulness. After locating at least 15 empirical research articles related to your information need, appraise the evidence for validity and usefulness in answering your need for information. Reflect both on what is present in the literature and what is missing from the literature in regards to issues of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc., depending on your information need (4 points)</p> <p>b. Provide the client with appropriate information about the efficacy of different interventions and allow them to make the final decision. Apply the results of your appraisal and the client's choice to policy/practice decisions Develop a handout that would be appropriate for showing your client (individual, group or community) two different approaches to address the issue you are working on. This handout should provide a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of each of the two approaches, and the empirical support (or lack of support) for the options. You may make a recommendation, if you feel strongly about which option should be chosen, but this should be heavy-handed. (4 points).</p>	
<p>III. Choice of Approach and Protocol for Assessing Implementation of Approach Support the choice of one approach (or a mix of approaches) based on the evidence you discussed in Section II. Show a protocol for determining how well that approach has been put into place. In other words, create a protocol for determining the strength of the dosage of the chosen option's implementation. Discuss possible barriers to implementation of the approach and how they might be overcome. (4 points)</p>	
<p>IV. Evaluation Plan Discuss and develop a short evaluation plans for evaluation of the effectiveness of the chosen approach. Specifically, provide 3-4 changes in the client (individual, group or community) that should ensue after the chosen intervention is implemented. Describe how you will measure if the changes occur. Be as specific as possible. (5 points)</p>	
<p>V. Conclusion This section ends the paper with a summary and a short description of what we know now that we didn't know before. It should also include one or two "next steps" such as calling for additional research or implementation of well-supported interventions. (1 point)</p>	
<p>All quotations should be appropriately cited according to the 5th Edition of the APA Manual. (1 point)</p>	

Peer Evaluation Form

Your name: _____

The purpose of this form is for you to evaluate the contributions made by each of your group members to the overall performance and success of your group's paper and presentation for analysis of research articles. In making your assessments, you might take into account such factors as:

1. Effort,
2. Quantity of contributions,
3. Quality of contributions,
4. Evidence of advance preparation for meetings,
5. Meeting deadlines set by the group, and
6. Degree of cooperation with other group members.

DIRECTIONS:

1. In the space provided below, write in the names of all group members (EXCEPT YOURSELF).
2. Allocate a total of 100 points among your group members (EXCLUDING YOURSELF) such that the points awarded indicate your judgment of the overall value of each member's relative contributions. That is, absent your contributions, what part of the remaining group work did each of your other group members contribute? **The total points awarded must add up to 100.**

For example, if you have three group members, you will rate only the other two members. If, in your judgment, all the other members made equal contributions, you would allocate 50 points to each of the other four members. For example, if you have two members, you will rate only the other member. If, in your judgment, the other member made equal contributions, you would allocate 100 points to the other member.

If you award someone 10 points and someone else 30 points, this would indicate that you valued the latter person's contribution three times more than the first person's contributions. If you assign points that represent unequal contributions for your team members, you need to provide comments on the back of this page.

<u>GROUP MEMBERS' NAMES</u> (excluding yourself)	<u>POINTS ALLOCATED</u>
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
<u>TOTAL (must equal to 100)</u> _____	

While you and your other group members will be entitled to know and dispute your total score, your instructor will keep the information on this form confidential. The total score for each student will be used to calculate group member's grades for the assignment. As a professional, you should seek your group members' feedback about your contributions throughout the project; conversely, you should keep your team members informed of your evaluations of their inputs periodically throughout this project. Thus, group members' final rating should not surprise anyone.