



GRACE ABBOTT SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

RESEARCH METHODS IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

SOWK 4400 | 3 credit hours

Spring Semester 2020

Class Meetings: Mondays, 4:00–6:00 P.M., 126 CPACS

Instructor: Professor C.J. Washington (Dr. Washington; *She / Her / Hers*)

Office: 206 CPACS

Office Phone: 402.554.2792

Email: cjwashington@unomaha.edu

NOTE: Students should contact the instructor via email rather than by phone. Email messages will be responded to within 24 hours, excluding weekends, holidays, and breaks.

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:00–3:00 P.M. or by appointment

Online Office Hours: Wednesdays, 6:30–8:00 P.M. or by appointment

Department: Grace Abbott School of Social Work

Main Office: 206 CPACS

Dept. Phone: 402.554.2972

COURSE INFORMATION

Description

Focus will be on the scientific method as it is applied to social work research. The purpose of all social work research is to answer questions or solve problems. The six phases of the research process will be identified and the basic tasks to be accomplished in each phase will be learned. Special attention will be given to evaluating social work practice.

Rationale/Overview

In this research course, students learn about different types of research: pure, program evaluation, needs assessments, and single subject. Students also come to understand the usefulness of the qualitative, quantitative, and mixed approaches. Research methodology is taught, including sampling, design, and measurement. As students develop research skills, they also learn about social work values and ethics, and the role of research to evidence-informed practice. Skills for analyzing professional social work literature are developed as well as an appreciation for the role of diversity and populations at risk as it relates to research.



Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

1. Explain social work values and ethics as it relates to research.
2. Discuss diversity and populations at risk as it relates to research.
3. Explain the different types of research: pure, program evaluation, needs assessments, and single subject.
4. Compare the usefulness of the qualitative, quantitative, and mixed approaches in social work research.
5. Demonstrate skill in participating in a research project.
6. Demonstrate knowledge of research methodology, including sampling, design, and measurement.
7. Explain role of research to evidence-informed practice.
8. Analyze professional social work literature.

REQUIRED TEXT(S)/SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

Required Text(s)

All textbook chapters, journal articles and other reading materials will be provided through the UNO Library Course Reserves. Other readings will be provided through Canvas

Recommended Text(s)

Ruane, J. M. (2016). *Introducing social research methods: Essentials for getting the edge*. West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons.

COURSE STRUCTURE/FORMAT

Lecture, discussion, experiential learning experiences, video and Internet resources, and guest presentations.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Session/Date	Topic	Assignment
Session 1 [date]	Introduction to the course and review syllabus	
Session 2 [date]	Lecture: Formulating research questions and purpose, research proposals and grants, how to read research articles	Read: Ch. 2 and 4 (Ruane)
Session 3 [date]	Lecture: Research ethics, culturally competent research, culture and measurement/scientific knowledge	Read: posted on Canvas
Session 4 [date]	Lecture: Quantitative, Qualitative, and mixed methods research	Read: posted on Canvas
Session 5 [date]	Lecture: Measuring instruments and developing survey questions	Read: Ch. 5, 8, and 9 (Ruane)
Session 6 [date]	Lecture: Sampling, selecting research participants, dissemination, research bias	Read: Ch. 11 (Ruane)
Session 7 [date]	Lecture: Data collection, quantitative vs. qualitative, selecting a data collection method, and more on bias	Read: posted on Canvas



Session/Date	Topic	Assignment
Session 8 [date]	Lecture: Other forms of research –single subject designs, group designs, randomized control trials, randomized control trials, quasi experimental designs, and program evaluation	Read: Posted on Canvas
Session 9 [date]	Lecture: Data cleaning and analysis, and content analysis	Read: Ch. 12 (Ruane)
Session 10 [date]	Lecture: Data analysis, analyzing quantitative data, and stats programs	Read: posted on Canvas
Session 11 [date]	Lecture: Data analysis (cont.)	Read: posted on Canvas
Session 12 [date]	In class: Data analysis assignment	Read: Posted on Canvas
Session 13 [date]	Lecture: Discussions and implications of research	Read: Ch. 13 (Ruane)
Session 14 [date]	Student presentations	
Session 15 [date]	Student presentations (cont.)	

IMPORTANT DATES

Last day to drop a course (via MavLink) and receive a 100% refund

January 19, 2020

Last day to withdraw from a course (via MavLink) with a grade of “W”

April 3, 2020

NOTE: This syllabus is written as an expectation of class topics, learning activities, and expected learning outcomes. However, the instructor reserves the right to make changes in this schedule that may result in enhanced or more effective learning for students. These modifications will not substantially change the intent or objectives of this course.

ASSESSMENTS (ACTIVITIES, ASSIGNMENTS, AND EXAMS)

Assignments and Quizzes

150 points (total)

Various assignments and quizzes worth various points each.

Mixed methods project (1)

150 points (total)

One mixed methods project worth 150 points.

Group Participation

50 points (total)

Attendance and Participation

150 points (total)

500 points (total)



GRADING SCALE

Percent	Final Grade	Quality Points
98–100%	A+	4.00
94–97.9%	A	4.00
91–93.9%	A-	3.67
88–90.9%	B+	3.33
84–87.9%	B	3.00
81–83.9%	B-	2.67
78–80.9%	C+	2.33
77–77.9%	C	2.00
71–73.9%	C-	1.67
68–70.9%	D+	1.33
64–67.9%	D	1.00
61–63.9%	D-	0.67
Below 60.9%	F	0.00

WRITING GUIDELINES

Students should make sure that writing assignments are free of grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors. Papers should adhere to the most recent citation style outlined by the American Psychological Association (APA).

PLAGIARISM STATEMENT

In this course, students will submit written work by making use of information and ideas found in print or online sources. Whenever material from another writer is used, it is important that students quote or paraphrase appropriately and cite the source.

The UNO Academic Integrity policy defines plagiarism as "presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source) and submitting academic work in whole or in part as one's own when such work has been prepared by another person or copied from another person."

Failure to cite sources appropriately is plagiarism, a serious academic offense. Plagiarized work will not be accepted. Consequences for plagiarism are up to the discretion of the instructor; they may range, for example, from rewriting all or part of a paper to a grade of F for the course. Students who plagiarize more than once are subject to disciplinary action, which may include expulsion from the university.

Students SHOULD NOT GUESS when it comes to using or citing another writer's work. Students should contact the instructor or a consultant at the UNO Writing Center with questions. Students should take a printout of the original source as well as the paper that is being written to the consultation.



ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

The maintenance of academic honesty and integrity is a vital concern of the University community. Any student found responsible for violating the [policy on Academic Integrity](#) shall be subject to both academic and disciplinary sanctions. Violations of the policy on Academic Integrity include, but are not limited to, the following: cheating, fabrication and falsification, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials and/or equipment, complicity in academic dishonesty, falsifying grade reports, and/or misrepresentation to avoid academic work. More information about these areas and the procedures addressing academic integrity is available from the Office of Academic and Student Affairs (EAB 202 | 402.554.2262).

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to arrive on time to class meetings. Students should come to class well prepared, meaning readings and other assignments have been completed. Students are expected to be respectful of their classmates and the instructor. Distracting and/or disrespectful behaviors will not be tolerated.

CELL PHONES, MOBILE DEVICES, AND LAPTOPS

Students are welcome to use cell phones, mobile devices, and/or laptops in class provided they are used for academic purposes such as note taking, accessing course materials, or researching course concepts and their use does not disrupt fellow classmates. Please silence devices if at all possible. A student who receives a phone call or text, should step outside the classroom to respond. DO NOT take pictures or video during class.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Students will be expected to have access to a computer frequently, as all writing assignments used will be typed out and not handwritten. The software students use to write assignments is irrelevant, as long as the writing guidelines outlined in this syllabus are followed. It is recommended that students have access to a computer weekly. Public computers are available on the UNO campus. Consult [Information Technology Services](#) and the [Criss Library](#), for more information on equipment locations and availability.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Technical support for common university systems, including Canvas and email, is available from Information Technology Services [technical support](#) located in Eppley Administration Building (EAB) 104.

ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

Reasonable accommodations are provided for students who are registered with Accessibility Services Center (ASC) and make their requests sufficiently in advance. For more information, contact ASC (Location: H&K 104, Phone: 402.554.2872, Email: unoaccessibility@unomaha.edu)



CRISS LIBRARY

UNO's Criss Library offers a wide variety of resources that support student learning. Subject specialist librarians have in-depth knowledge of researching within specific disciplines and can provide guidance for a specific area of study. Students are encouraged to explore customized resources featured on the [Criss Library](#) website.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The University of Nebraska at Omaha is prepared for a wide range of emergencies. Students should familiarize themselves with procedures and assistance available on UNO's [emergency information page](#). If travel to campus is not feasible due to a declared emergency, a combination of Canvas, teleconferencing, and other technologies will be used to facilitate academic continuity. Students will be notified of procedures through Canvas course site announcements and email as appropriate.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of inclement or threatening weather, students should use his/her best judgment regarding travel to and from campus. Students who are not able to attend class due to adverse weather conditions, should contact the instructor as soon as possible. Similarly, if the instructor is unable to reach the class location, students will be notified of any cancellation or change as soon as possible (by approximately 1 hour before class starts and by posting an announcement in Canvas). Students who cannot get to class because of weather conditions, will be provided allowances relative to attendance policies as well as any scheduled tests, quizzes, or other assessments.

PREFERRED NAME AND PREFERRED GENDER PRONOUNS

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. The instructor will gladly honor a student's request to be addressed by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise the instructor of this preference early in the semester so that instructor records may be changed appropriately.

WRITING CENTER

The UNO Writing Center offers free one-on-one consultations with trained consultants to all students, faculty, and staff. Their goal is to help writers improve their writing skills and confidence in all types of writing, in all subject areas, and at all stages of the writing process. For more information about their hours and locations or to schedule an appointment, go to unomaha.edu/writingcenter or visit their main location in Arts and Sciences Hall (ASH) 150.



SPEECH CENTER

The [UNO Speech Center](#) provides free consulting and coaching services to all UNO students, faculty, and staff in preparing oral presentations. The Speech Center Consulting Room can help students with presentation preparation, outlining, effective delivery techniques, along with any other presentational needs. Speech consulting will help at any stage in the speech-making process. For more information, visit the UNO Speech Center in Arts and Sciences Hall (ASH) 183 and 185.

STUDENT SAFETY

A variety of resources are available to support student safety and security. Students have experienced or are experiencing a difficult personal situation, should consult the resources available through the [Division of Student Success](#).

OUTCOMES MAP AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Competencies

The student learning outcomes for this course are built upon the following nine social work core competencies set forth by the CSWE's 2015 Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) which is required for all accredited social work programs.

1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.
2. Engage diversity and difference in practice.
3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.
4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.
5. Engage in policy practice.
6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.
9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

This map is intended to show how course topics, content, and activities align to the student learning outcomes outlined above. Course objectives are italicized to distinguish them from the core competencies set forth by the CSWE's 2015 EPAS.

Course Objective/Student Learning Outcome	EPAS Competency	Assignment	Dimension*
1. Explain social work values and ethics as it relates to research.	1 and 2	Class participation and mixed-methods project	K, S, V, and CAP
2. Discuss diversity and populations at risk as it relates to research.	1 and 2	Lectures, class participation, and mixed-methods project	K, V, and CAP
3. Explain the different types of research: pure, program evaluation, needs assessments, and single subject.	1, 4, and 9	Homework assignments, quizzes, and mixed-methods project	K, S, and CAP



Course Objective/Student Learning Outcome	EPAS Competency	Assignment	Dimension*
4. Compare the usefulness of the qualitative, quantitative, and mixed approaches in social work research.	1 and 4	Homework assignments, quizzes, and mixed-methods project	K, S, and CAP
5. Demonstrate skill in participating in a research project.	1 and 4	Mixed-methods project	K, S, and CAP
6. Demonstrate knowledge of research methodology, including sampling, design, and measurement.	1 and 2	Homework assignments, quizzes, and mixed-methods project	K, S, and CAP
7. Explain role of research to evidence-informed practice.	1 and 4	Mixed-methods project and presentation	K, S, and CAP
8. Analyze professional social work literature.	1 and 4	Homework assignments	S and CAP

*Dimensions Key:

K = Knowledge

S = Skills

V = Value

CAP = Cognitive and Affective Processing

REFERENCES AND SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

References

- Campbell, A., Taylor, B. J., & McGlade, A. (2016). *Research design in social work: Qualitative and quantitative methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Charmaz, K. (2017). The power of constructivist grounded theory for critical inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 23(1), 34-45.
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- Fetterman, D. M., Rodriguez-Campus, L., & Zukoski, A. P. (2018). *Collaborative, participatory, and empowerment evaluation: Stakeholder involvement approaches*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Grinnell, R. M., & Unrau, Y. A. (2018). *Social work research and evaluation: Foundations of evidence-based practice* (9th ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Leavy, P. (2017). *Research design. Quantitative, qualitative, arts-based, and community-based participatory approaches*. New York, NY: Guilford.
- Lee, S., Dinis, M. C. D. S. N., Lowe, L., & Anders, K. (2016). *Statistics for international social work and other behavioral sciences*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.



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- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) (2018). *Evidence-based practices resource center*. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/ebp-resource-center>
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Classic References

- Bauer, D. G. (2011). *The “how to” grants manual: Successful grantseeking techniques for obtaining public and private grants* (7th ed.). Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Berg, B. (2011). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Cooley, S. M., & Scheinberg, C. A. (2008). *Proposal writing: Effective grantmanship* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
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- Yin, R. K. (2008). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

