

**Social Work 635
Section #67134**

**Research and Evaluation for Social Work with Adults and
Older Adults**

(Research and Evaluation for Social Work in Adult Mental Health and Wellness)

3 Units

Spring 2018

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Course Location:	My room		

I. COURSE PREREQUISITES

SOWK 546

II. CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION

Critical analysis and application of health and mental health research evidence to inform, enhance and strengthen social work practice with adults and aging populations with a focus on evaluating published research, identifying and interpreting available sources of data, appraising practical measures/assessments and selecting appropriate evidence-based interventions.

III. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The United States is currently undergoing a changing demographic profile with the population becoming larger, older and more diverse. As practitioners, social work students will be faced with addressing and adapting their practice to the changing population profile as it relates to the overall health and well-being of populations ranging from emerging adulthood to aging clients. As such, students will need to have the knowledge and skills to draw upon and integrate diverse sources of research knowledge to inform everyday practice situations.

This course builds on the Science of Social Work course in the first semester of the MSW program. The course is designed to provide students with skills necessary to critically analyze and apply research evidence to inform, enhance and strengthen social work practice with adults and aging populations in health and mental health settings. Specifically, students will cultivate skills in 1) the systematic assessment and critical evaluation of data from published empirical research; 2) the identification and analysis of administrative and large data sets; 3) the identification and utilization of research based practical assessments and 4) the development of evidence informed decision making for effective clinical practice.

During the course of the semester students will gain familiarity with the range of social work and social work related research in the field of health/mental health and gain an awareness and understanding of methodological and substantive issues in the conduct of research with regard to adult and aging populations. Overall, the course is designed to provide students with the skills necessary to apply knowledge derived from research to enhance their practice with diverse adult clientele in health and mental health settings.

Students should come to this class with a strong knowledge of basic concepts and methods of social work research and a firm understanding of the methodological issues that confront social work researchers. This will provide the foundation knowledge that will now be applied in critically analyzing, communicating and effectively transfer empirically based research into practice.

IV. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Objective #	Objectives
1	Support students in developing a clear sense as to how scientific research and practice are interdependent and serve as a basis for their own professional identity.
2	Provide instruction in basic research methods to improve analytical skills.
3	Promote students' ability to critically assess the quality and clinical utility of empirically based studies to inform practice.
4	Familiarize students with the utilization of publicly available administrative and large datasets so that students are able to access basic research evidence to inform practice-based questions and communicate these to diverse clients and constituencies.
5	Prepare students to engage in the process of evidence informed decision making for effective clinical practice including the identification and critical evaluation of assessments and of evidence based interventions. Emphasis will be placed on the centrality of considering context, diversity, and ethical and political considerations in how research evidence is developed.

V. COURSE FORMAT / INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Delivery of this course will be learner-centered and progressive; it will value student autonomy, build upon students' field and class experiences, and promote discovery and group interaction. Class time will be divided among lectures, class discussions, case studies/guest speakers, and small group activities. Students will be grouped based on similar areas of interest and/or service settings (e.g., welfare department, homeless service center). Group members will have shared responsibility for the completion of weekly group tasks; however, each student retains individual responsibility for completing his or her own assignments. Through task-centered, small group activities, students will gradually assume more independent responsibilities for learning, and the role of the instructor will shift toward that of consultant, facilitator, and resource person.

VI. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The following table lists the nine Social Work core competencies as defined by the Council on Social Work Education's 2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards:

Social Work Core Competencies	
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 *

* Highlighted in this course

The following table shows the competencies highlighted in this course, the related course objectives, student learning outcomes, and dimensions of each competency measured. The final column provides the location of course content related to the competency.

Competency	Objectives	Behaviors	Dimensions	Content
<p>Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice. Using research, social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity and are able to apply this knowledge to work empathically and effectively with diverse populations. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political and cultural exclusions may oppress, marginalize, and/or alienate adults and older adults or create privilege and power. Social workers through self-reflection, continue to assess and address their ageist values, building knowledge to dispel myths regarding aging and stereotyping of older persons. Social workers are able to consistently identify and use practitioner/client differences from a strengths perspective. Social workers view themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants.</p>	<p>Teach students how to critically assess the quality and clinical utility of empirically based studies to inform health and mental health practice with adults and aging populations.</p>	<p>2a. Recognize and communicate understanding of how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and identity.</p>	<p>Values</p>	<p>Units: 1-15 Assignments: 1, 2, 3, 4</p>
	<p>Facilitate the utilization of available scientific evidence and administrative large datasets to engage in the process of evidence informed decision making for effective clinical practice.</p>	<p>2b. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of multiple theoretical perspectives through an intersectionality framework.</p>	<p>Exercise of judgment</p>	

Competency	Objectives	Behaviors	Dimensions	Content
<p>Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice. Social workers practicing in health, behavioral health, and integrated care settings understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. Social workers use the evidence-based practice process in clinical assessment and intervention with clients. Social workers use research methodology to evaluate practice effectiveness and/or outcomes. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice and participate in the generation of new clinical knowledge through research and practice.</p>	<p>Teach students how to critically assess the quality and clinical utility of empirically based studies to inform health and mental health practice with adults and aging populations.</p>	<p>4a. Have the capacity to critically assess the range of information based on research for the development of evidence informed decision-making for effective clinical practice.</p>	<p>Critical Thinking</p>	<p>Units: 1-3 Assignments: 1, 2, 3, 4</p>
	<p>Facilitate the utilization of available scientific evidence and administrative large datasets to engage in the process of evidence informed decision making for effective clinical practice.</p>	<p>4b. Gather, translate and utilize existing research evidence to bridge the gap between research and practice.</p>	<p>Skills</p>	<p>Units: 4-15 Assignments: 2, 3, 4</p>

VII. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS, DUE DATES & GRADING

Assignment	Due Date	% of Final Grade
Assignment 1: Evidence-Based Practice Problem	Unit 4	10%
Assignment 2: Appraisal and Critique of Available Evidence	Unit 8	30%
Assignment 3: Evidence-Informed Decision Making	Unit 11	25%
Assignment 4: EBP Project Summary Presentation	Units 13, 14 &/or 15	25%
Class Participation	Ongoing	10%

Each student will critically analyze and apply various types of data (administrative, public, empirical) in the development of three assignments related to effectively serving a client population in their field setting: 1) understanding client problems and service needs within an agency and community context; 2) identifying appropriate interventions for addressing problems within the agency setting and policy context that governs the provision of services; and 3) evaluating the effectiveness of interventions designed to meet the needs of adult and aging populations. The course will conclude with a fourth assignment that synthesizes and furthers the previous assignments in a final presentation. Brief descriptions of each assignment follow; specific guidelines will be distributed in class.

Assignment 1: Evidence-Based Practice Problem (10% of Course Grade)

Building upon what was learned in SOWK 546 or other basic research methods course, each student will need to formulate a health or mental health practice-based question that directly impacts an adult or aging population. The practice-based question should be related to an issue pertaining to effectively serving a client population in the field setting (if applicable). The question will be the basis for the remaining assignments in the class. Each student is expected to submit by **week 4** a brief written document that includes the practice-based question, description of the targeted population(s) and a brief rationale for the selection of the problem. Students will be expected to briefly present their respective problems during an in-class presentation.

Due: Unit 4

This assignment relates to student learning outcomes 1-3.

Assignment 2: Appraisal and Critique of Available Evidence (30% of Course Grade)

Using the practice-based research question in Assignment 1, students will prepare a paper that demonstrates their ability to critically appraise and apply research evidence to an existing practice-based problem. Students will be asked to interpret and critically assess existing peer-reviewed research evidence (including systematic reviews, meta-analyses, and/or other empirical research) and discuss how this evidence corresponds to the existing gap in service needs for the selected population. Students will be expected to communicate findings in a written and graphic format that is understandable to diverse clients and constituencies. More details will be provided in a separate document.

Due: Unit 8

This assignment relates to student learning outcome 4.

Assignment 3: Evidence Informed Decision Making (25% of Course Grade)

Building upon the previous two assignments, students will prepare a brief paper that will demonstrate the student's ability to seek out the best quality and practical assessments and evidence based intervention

relevant to the practice-based question. Building upon the skills learned in class, students will identify a minimum of two empirically-supported assessments/screening tools specific to their target population. Students will describe specific considerations in the selection of the assessment/tool including description, expected outcomes, administration/scoring, validity/reliability, and related costs. Students will have to provide a rationale for the selection of the assessment(s) as they relate to the evidence found in assignment 2 (i.e. limitations with other measures as described in existing research, lack of adaptations to diverse populations, etc.). In addition, students will identify an evidence based intervention (EBI) that can be applied to their specific practice-based problem. Students will have to identify the EBI and targeted key characteristics, overview of the EBI including type of treatment category, primary outcomes, adaptations (if any), assessment of costs including issues of sustainability, perceived strengths and limitations, and the clinical utility as perceived by all of the evidence collected. More details will be provided in a separate document.

Due: Unit 11

This assignment relates to student learning outcome 4.

Please Note: All written assignments will be graded not only on content, but also on professional presentation, adherence to the guidelines, grammar, spelling, mechanics, and APA format.

Assignment 4: EBP Project Summary Presentation (25% of Course Grade)

Each student will prepare a PowerPoint presentation of the cumulative work conducted over the course of the semester. More details will be provided in a separate document.

Presentation Due: Unit 13, 14 and/or Unit 15 – To be determined by instructor

This assignment relates to student learning outcomes 1-5.

Class Participation (10% of Course Grade)

Student participation is worth 10% of the overall course grade. Five percent will be determined based upon the student's critical summary of one research article from the class syllabus that will be presented during an in-class discussion during the respective class session. Students will select the reading at the beginning of the semester in collaboration with the course instructor. The other 5% will be based on the student's participation and engagement.

Class grades will be based on the following:

Class Grades		Final Grade	
3.85 – 4	A	93 – 100	A
3.60 – 3.84	A-	90 – 92	A-
3.25 – 3.59	B+	87 – 89	B+
2.90 – 3.24	B	83 – 86	B
2.60 – 2.87	B-	80 – 82	B-
2.25 – 2.50	C+	77 – 79	C+
1.90 – 2.24	C	73 – 76	C
		70 – 72	C-

Within the School of Social Work, grades are determined in each class based on the following standards which have been established by the faculty of the School: (1) Grades of A or A- are reserved for student work which not only demonstrates very good mastery of content but which also shows that the student has undertaken a complex task, has applied critical thinking skills to the assignment, and/or has demonstrated creativity in her or his approach to the assignment. The difference between these two grades would be determined by the degree to which these skills have been demonstrated by the student. (2) A grade of B+ will be given to work which is judged to be very good. This grade denotes that a student has demonstrated a more-than-competent understanding of the material being tested in the assignment. (3) A grade of B will be given to student work which meets the basic requirements of the assignment. It denotes that the student has done adequate work on the assignment and meets basic course expectations. (4) A grade of B- will denote that a student's performance was less than adequate on an assignment, reflecting only moderate grasp of content and/or expectations. (5) A grade of C would reflect a minimal grasp of the assignments, poor organization of ideas and/or several significant areas requiring improvement. (6) Grades between C- and F will be applied to denote a failure to meet minimum standards, reflecting serious deficiencies in all aspects of a student's performance on the assignment.

