

USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck

School of Social Work

Science of Social Work

SOWK 546

Section #60564

3 Units

“Most of the world will make decisions by either guessing or using their gut. They will be either lucky or wrong.” ~ Suhail Doshi

Spring 2020

SYLLABUS



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Office Location: MRF 307 University Park Campus (UPC)
Los Angeles, CA 90089-0411

Office Hours Days & Times: Thursday 7:00 – 9:00 pm PST by appointment
Friday 1:00 – 3:00 pm PST by appointment

Course Day & Time: Tuesday 7:10 – 10:00 pm PST

Course Location MRF 204 University Park Campus (UPC)
Los Angeles, CA 90089-0411

I. COURSE PREREQUISITES

None

II. CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION

Introduction to the role of scientific inquiry in advancing social work goals. Inspires students to include science in their social work identity and professional decision-making.

III. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students taking this course will develop an appreciation for the historical and contemporary roles of the science of social work, that is the use of empirical evidence and inquiry to advance the goals of professional social work. They also will develop a strong understanding of how the science of social work can inform and improve their own professional practice.

The course is designed to provide students with inspiration and training on harnessing their own critical and creative thinking. Emphasis is placed on the process of conceptualizing social work practice problems and questions (or “practice dilemmas”) that can be addressed by the science of social work.

Students will enhance their ability to effectively and efficiently locate the best available evidence for informing their professional practice, with a focus on locating evidence presented in articles published in high-impact journals. They also will develop strategies for appraising the level, quality, and applicability of empirical evidence as it relates to their practice questions and areas of professional interest. Additionally, students will strengthen their ability to translate and apply the best available evidence while considering their clients’ values and wishes, their own practice knowledge and abilities, and contextual factors. Throughout the course, students will reflect on and come to better understand the role that cultural diversity and difference play in the location, appraisal, and application of social work evidence.

By the end of the course students will be well-versed in the concept of the science of social work and in how to apply the concept as consumers of social work knowledge. They will be prepared to enter subsequent courses designed to enhance their ability to use the science of social work to evaluate professional practice (including their own) in a specialized area of practice.

IV. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Objective #	Objective
1	Appreciate how the science of social work is integral to professional social work and to one’s own identity and development as a professional social worker.
2	Use reflection and self-assessment as part of routine professional practice in order to identify practice problems and questions (i.e., practice dilemmas) that could be addressed by enhancing one’s own professional knowledge. Formulate practice questions and effectively and efficiently locate the best available evidence for addressing specified practice questions.
3	Apply critical and creative thinking when appraising the strength of quantitative and qualitative research findings.
4	Use the best available empirical evidence to address practice problems and questions. Consider context, diversity and difference, and ethical and political considerations when adapting and translating empirical evidence in professional practice.
5	Be prepared to enter more advanced courses that provide training in the use of the science of social work to evaluate professional practice in a specialized area of practice.

V. COURSE FORMAT / INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Delivery of this course assumes that student interests and active participation are fundamental to a dynamic, high-functioning learning environment that promotes discussion, questions, self-reflection, and critical thinking. Operating from this basic assumption, this course will utilize multiple formats, including:

- (a) self-reflection;
- (b) didactic and interactive presentation of material;
- (c) small and large group discussion;

- (d) student-led discussions; and
- (e) experiential activities.

Overall, students will have substantial involvement in the shared identification of materials for discussion in the course as instructor and students work together to address meaningful practice and policy questions. A number of course assignments and activities ask students to address practice problems and questions of interest to them. Through task-centered assignments and activities, students will assume responsibilities for learning and for creating an engaging learning environment that responds to their passions, interests, goals, and abilities, and that address some of the challenges related to the application of the science of social work in professional practice. Online teaching and learning environments and platforms will support and facilitate student learning, communication and interaction, as well as access to instructor support.

Please note that it may be necessary for the instructor to adjust the syllabus and/or course during the semester.

Instructor’s Oath

“As your instructor, to each of you, I pledge the following:

- *To appreciate you, your time and your effort;*
- *To be available and responsible;*
- *To be encouraging and supportive;*
- *To be objective and fair;*
- *To be prompt and timely;*
- *To be respectful, professional and appropriate;*
- *To accommodate when appropriate and within reason;*
- *To try to be an engaging and effective instructor; and*
- *To strive for excellence in carrying out my responsibilities as an instructor as described in the USC Faculty Handbook.*

If at any time you feel I have not honored this oath, please contact me so that I am aware of your concerns and have an opportunity to address them.”

VI. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

Social Work Competencies	
1	Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior*
2	Engage in 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*

* Indicates competencies 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 and methods for assessing whether the outcomes have been achieved.

Competency	Objectives	Behaviors	Dimensions	Content
<p>Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice</p> <p>Social workers 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. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice.</p>	<p>1. Appreciate how the science of social work is integral to professional social work and to one's own identity and development as a professional social worker.</p>	<p>4a. Identify ways in which professional interests and goals can be enhanced through reflection, the use of empirical evidence, and inquiry.</p>	<p>Values, Knowledge, Skills, and Cognitive and Affective Processes</p>	<p>Units 1 - 4</p> <p>Assignment 1</p> <p>Class Participation</p>
	<p>2. Use reflection and self-assessment as part of routine professional practice in order to identify practice problems and questions (i.e., practice dilemmas) that could be addressed by enhancing one's own professional knowledge. Formulate practice questions and effectively and efficiently locate the best available evidence for addressing specified practice questions.</p>	<p>4b. Use professional knowledge and experience to inform the use of empirical evidence and inquiry.</p> <p>4c. Apply critical and creative thinking to engage in appraisal of types and sources of empirical evidence.</p>		
	<p>3. Apply critical and creative thinking when appraising the strength of quantitative and qualitative research findings.</p>	<p>4d. Apply critical and creative thinking to engage in appraisal of the strength of quantitative and qualitative research findings.</p>	<p>Knowledge, Skills</p>	<p>Units 5 - 15</p> <p>Assignment 2</p> <p>Assignment 3</p> <p>Class Participation</p>
	<p>4. Use the best available empirical evidence to address practice problems and questions. Consider context, diversity and difference, and ethical and political considerations when adapting and translating empirical evidence in professional practice.</p>	<p>4e. Use and translate empirical evidence to inform and improve social work practice, policy, and service delivery.</p>		

Competency	Objectives	Behaviors	Dimensions	Content
<p>Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities</p> <p>Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.</p>	<p>4. Use the best available empirical evidence to addressing practice problems and questions. Consider context, diversity and difference, and ethical and political considerations when adapting and translating empirical evidence in professional practice.</p> <p>5. Be prepared to enter more advanced courses that provide training in the use of the science of social work to evaluate professional practice in a specialized area of practice.</p>	<p>9a. Apply evaluation findings to improve professional practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.</p>	<p>Knowledge, Skills</p>	<p>Units 13 - 15</p> <p>Assignment 3</p> <p>Class Participation</p>

VII. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS, DUE DATES & PERCENT OF FINAL GRADE

Assignments

Assignments for the course consist of 3 written assignments, including (1) a Practice Knowledge Critical Reflection and Self-Assessment, (2) a Professional Resource Collection and Research Article Appraisal, and (3) an Evidence-Based Practice Brief. All assignments are designed to relate to and build on one another. As such, it is imperative that assignments be submitted by their due dates. Assignments should be submitted as described in the guidelines for the assignment.

The table below presents all course assignments, due dates, and the percent of the final grade comprised of by each assignment.

Assignment	Unit and Date Due ¹	% of Final Grade
Assignment 1 <i>Practice Knowledge Critical Reflection and Self-Assessment</i>	Unit 5 <u>Tuesday</u> , Feb 11	20%
Assignment 2 <i>Professional Resource Collection and Research Article Preliminary Appraisal</i>	Unit 10 <u>Tuesday</u> , Mar 24	35%
Assignment 3 <i>Research Article Comprehensive Appraisal and Application</i>	Exam Week <u>Friday</u> , May 8	35%
Active and Proactive Learning, & Meaningful Class Participation	Units 1-15	10%

Assignment 1 - Practice Knowledge Critical Reflection and Self-Assessment (20% of course grade)

The overarching aim of Assignment 1 is to increase your appreciation of the science of social work by helping you to identify ways in which personal passions and professional interests and goals can be nurtured and enhanced through reflection and self-assessment. The assignment consists of three parts. The first part of the assignment addresses the connection between your cultural characteristics, life experiences and professional identity as a social worker. The second part of the assignment relates to current areas of professional interest and the professional knowledge you currently have in your specified area of interest. Finally, in the third part of the assignment, you will develop practice questions related to your specified areas of interest.

Assignment 2 - Professional Resource Collection and Research Article Preliminary Appraisal (35% of course grade)

The overarching aim of Assignment 2 is to enhance your ability to effectively and efficiently locate information and empirical evidence relevant to specialized practice in areas that are consistent with your professional goals and interests. The assignment consists of three parts. The first part of the assignment involves locating different kinds of information relevant to the

¹ Please note that in some instances assignment due dates may differ among sections of this course. In those instances, due dates have been adapted to reflect the number of lesson weeks and University holidays for particular course sections.

effectiveness practice question that you formulate in Part 3 of Assignment 1. The second part of the assignment focuses on locating academic articles describing empirical research studies relevant to the effectiveness practice question that you formulated. During the course, you will learn a core set of concepts and terminology related to scientific inquiry that you will be expected to understand and apply in the final part of the assignment, which consists of a critical appraisal of a research article and study.

Assignment 3 – Research Article Comprehensive Appraisal and Application (35% of course grade)

Assignment 3 builds on Assignment 2. The assignment consists of a critical appraisal of a research article and study. Whereas the previous assignment focuses on appraisal of design and sampling methods, Assignment 3 focuses on appraisal of measurement methods and analyses. Additionally, Assignment 3 aims to prepare you for professional practice by enhancing your ability to integrate, translate, apply, and adopt the empirical evidence offered by the appraised article and study, taking into account limitations of the article and study and client characteristics and goals, your professional knowledge and expertise, and contextual factors.

Active and Proactive Learning, & Meaningful Class Participation (10% of course grade) Units 1 – 15

You are expected to be active participants in your learning and proactive. This will require mental, physical and perhaps emotional effort from you, both inside and outside the formal classroom. **Active learning** involves assuming responsibility for learning; completing required readings and materials prior to class; and coming to class with thoughtful comments, reflections or questions about concepts, readings and assignments. **Proactive learning** involves anticipating workload and challenges, and taking the initiative to reach out to the instructor when concerned about possible challenges in the class.

Along with active and proactive learning, you are expected to participate meaningfully in class and to contribute to the development of a positive learning environment. **Meaningful participation** consists of thoughtful and respectful participation based on having completed required readings and assignments prior to class. For our purposes, “contributing to the development of a positive learning environment” refers to the extent to which you participate in or help create an environment that is open, professional, engaging, fun, challenging, supportive, and effective. “Environment” refers to the formal classroom, small group settings, other settings in which learning or teaching might occur, and the overall climate and culture of the class.

Please refer to the rubric below for the criteria that will be used to determine the participation grade. For each of five criteria, between 0 and 2 points can be earned, for a maximum of 10 points.

Criteria	Never or Rarely	Regularly	Often or Always
<input type="checkbox"/> Student demonstrates active and proactive learning.	0	1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Student communicates with the instructor about (a) the course, (b) her/his/their performance in the course, and (c) the instructor’s performance in the course.	0	1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Student’s communication, behavior, and participation are respectful, professional, and appropriate (this includes appropriate use of	0	1	2

desktops/laptops and mobile devices during class).			
<input type="checkbox"/> Student participates in a meaningful way and helps to maintain a positive learning environment.	0	1	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Student helps <i>create</i> a positive learning environment.	0	1	2

Grading

Class grades will be based on the following:

Grade Point Average / Letter Grade		Corresponding Numeric Grade / Letter Grade	
3.85 – 4.00	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
1.89 & below	C- (Failing Grade)	70 – 72	C- (Failing Grade)

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:

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 demonstrated by the student.

A grade of B+ is 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.

A grade of B is 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.

A grade of B- denotes that a student's performance was less than adequate on an assignment, reflecting only moderate grasp of content and/or expectations.

A grade of C reflects a minimal grasp of the assignments, poor organization of ideas and/or several significant areas requiring improvement.

Grades between C- and F denote a failure to meet minimum standards, reflecting serious deficiencies in all aspects of a student's performance on the assignment.

VIII. REQUIRED AND SUPPLEMENTARY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS & RESOURCES

Required Textbook

Drisko, J. W., & Grady, M. D. (2012). *Evidence-Based Practice in Clinical Social Work*. NY: Springer.

Required and recommended course readings are presented in the detailed course schedule. **All required readings, including those from the required textbook, are available through ARES.**

Recommended Supplements

Kirk, S., & Reid, W. J. (2012). *Science and social work: a critical appraisal*. Columbia University Press.

Pyrzczak, F. (2012). *Evaluating research in academic journals: a practical guide to realistic evaluation*. Pyrczak Publishing.

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (2016). *Essential research methods for social work* (4th ed). Boston, MA: Engage Learning.

Rubin, A., & Bellamy, J. (2012). *Using research for evidence-based practice* (2nd ed). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Wheelan, C. (2013). *Naked statistics: stripping the dread from the data*, New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Guides for Academic Integrity, APA Style Formatting, Writing & Research

American Psychological Association (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

APA formatting and style guide. (1995-2015). The OWL at Purdue. Retrieved from <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/08/>

USC guide to avoiding plagiarism:

<http://www.usc.edu/libraries/about/reference/tutorials/avoiding-plagiarism/story.html>

USC Libguides

Sample papers using APA style: http://libguides.usc.edu/ld.php?content_id=9235241

APA citation guide: <http://libguides.usc.edu/APA-citation-style>

Evidence-Based practice resources: <http://libguides.usc.edu/socialwork/socialworkEBP>

Tests and measures: <http://libguides.usc.edu/socialwork/measurements>

Writing guide: <http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide>

Recommended Social Work Organizations

National Associate of Social Workers. Available at <http://www.naswdc.org>

Society for Social Work and Research. Available at <http://www.sswr.org>

American Evaluation Association. Available at <http://www.eval.org>

Course Overview

The table below presents the topics for each unit of instruction. You are expected to attend class having already completed the required reading and material.

Unit	Topic	Due
PART I – THE ROLE OF SCIENCE IN SOCIAL WORK		
1 Jan 14	Introduction to the Science of Social Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Welcome and Introductions ▪ Overview of Course and Syllabus ▪ Introduction to the Science of Social Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Social Work Values and Empirical Evidence ▪ Exploring Your Professional Interests and Goals 	
2 Jan 21	Engaging in Evidence-Based Social Work Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction to Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) in Social Work ▪ Assessing Clients and Identifying Professional Knowledge Needs ▪ Specifying Practice Dilemmas 	
3 Jan 28	Formulating Practice Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Using the PICO Framework to Formulate Answerable Practice Questions ▪ Using Evidence and Research Hierarchies to Determine the “Best Available Evidence” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Levels of Empirical Evidence ▪ Appraising Levels of Evidence 	
4 Feb 4	Searching for Empirical Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multi-disciplinary sources of Information, Professional Knowledge, and Empirical Evidence ▪ Finding Relevant Empirical Knowledge and the Best Available Evidence ▪ Appraising Sources of Evidence 	
PART II – APPRAISING THE QUALITY AND APPLICABILITY OF RELEVANT EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE		
5 Feb 11	Appraising Research Articles and the Quality of Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understanding the Research Process ▪ <u>Research Article Appraisal:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Identifying Goals of Research Studies ▪ Appraising Quality of Evidence 	<u>ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE</u> Practice Knowledge Critical Reflection and Self-Assessment
6 Feb 18	Group-Based Design Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Causality and Criteria for Inferring Effectiveness ▪ Research Designs ▪ Ethical and Cultural Issues 	

Unit	Topic	Due
7 Feb 25	Appraising Internal Validity and Group-Based Design Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Internal Validity and Threats to Internal Validity ▪ <u>Research Article Appraisal:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying and Appraising Design Methods 	
8 Mar 3	Sampling Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nonrandom and Random Sampling Methods ▪ Ethical and Cultural Issues 	
9 Mar 10	Appraising Sampling Methods, External Validity and Applicability of Evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ External Validity and Threats to External Validity ▪ <u>Research Article Appraisal</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying and Appraising Sampling Methods Appraising Applicability of Evidence	
Mar 15 - 22 SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS!!		
10 Mar 24	Measurement Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Qualitative and Quantitative Measurement ▪ Characteristics of Variables ▪ Ethical and Cultural Issues 	<u>ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE</u> Professional Resource Collection and Research Article Preliminary Appraisal
11 Mar 31	Measurement Methods (Continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data Collection Techniques ▪ Locating Testing and Measurement Tools ▪ Ethical and Cultural Issues (Continued) 	
12 Apr 7	Appraising Measurement Methods and Instruments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Validity and Reliability ▪ Research Article Appraisal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying and Appraising Measurement Methods ▪ Appraising and Selecting Instruments for Professional Social Work Practice 	
PART III – USING EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE TO INFORM PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE		
13 Apr 14	Understanding and Synthesizing Results from Research Articles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Qualitative Data and Analyses ▪ <u>Research Article Appraisal:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interpreting Results from Qualitative Studies - Adapting and Translating Qualitative Evidence into Interculturally-Responsive and Competent Practice 	

Unit	Topic	Due
14 Apr 21	Understanding and Synthesizing Results from Research Articles (Continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quantitative Data and Analyses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Statistical Tests ▪ Results from Quantitative Studies and Meta-Analyses ▪ Findings from Systematic Reviews ▪ <u>Research Article Appraisal:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interpreting Results from Quantitative Studies - Adapting and Translating Quantitative Evidence into Interculturally-Responsive and Competent Practice 	
15 Apr 28	Using the Science of Social Work to Improve Practice, Policy, Services, and Organizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preparing for Implementation and Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practice Decision-Making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engaging Clients in Decision-Making ▪ Course Review and Wrap-Up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Next Steps for the Science of Social Work 	
May 2 - 5	Study Days	
<u>Friday</u> May 8	EXAM WEEK	<u>ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE</u> Research Article Comprehensive Appraisal and Application

Detailed Course Readings and Topics

PART I – THE ROLE OF SCIENCE IN SOCIAL WORK

Introduction to the Science of Social Work

UNIT 1

Jan 14

Objectives

- 1) To provide an overview of the course.
- 2) To deepen your understanding of the mission of the social work profession and to enhance your identification with the profession, including the profession's emphasis on social work knowledge and science.
- 3) To introduce the Science of Social Work and establish its value and role in professional social work practice.

Topics

- Welcome and Introductions
- Overview of Course and Syllabus
- Introduction to the Science of Social Work
 - Social Work Values and Empirical Evidence
- Exploring Your Professional Interests and Goals

Required Readings

Please carefully review the Course Syllabus.

Brekke, J. S. (2012). Shaping a science of social work. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 22(5), 455-464.

Gehlert, S. (2015). Social work and science. *Research on Social Work Practice*, February 2015, 1-6.

Longhofer, J., & Floersch, J. (2014). Values in a science of social work: values-informed research and research-informed values. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 24(5), 527-534.

Recommended Readings

Council on Social Work Education (2015). *Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards, Competencies 4 and 9*. Washington, DC.

National Association of Social Work (2017). *Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers*. Washington, DC.

Sherraden, M., Stuart, P., Barth, R. P., Kemp, S., Lubben, J., Hawkins, J.D., Coulton, C., McRoy, R., Walters, K., Healy, L., Angell, B., Mahoney, K., Brekke, J., Padilla, Y., DiNitto, D., Padgett, D., Schroepfer, T., & Catalano, R., (2014). *Grand Accomplishments in Social Work*. (Grand Challenges for Social Work Initiative, Working Paper No. 2). Baltimore, MD: American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare. <http://aaswsw.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/FINAL-Grand-Accomplishments-4-2-2015-formatted-final.pdf>

Engaging in Evidence-Based Social Work Practice

UNIT 2
Jan 21

Objectives

- 1) To introduce Evidence-Based Practice and its relationship to the Science of Social Work.
- 2) To illustrate the diverse ways in which EBP are integral to professional social work practice.

Topics

- Introduction to Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) in Social Work
- Assessing Clients and Identifying Professional Knowledge Needs
- Specifying Practice Dilemmas

Required Reading

Drisko, J. W., & Grady, M. D. (2012). *Evidence-Based Practice in Clinical Social Work*:
Chapter 1 – Introduction and overview (pp. 3–18).

Rubin, A., & Bellamy, J. (2012). *Practitioner's Guide to Using Research for Evidence-Based Practice*:
Chapter 2 – Steps in the EBP process (pp. 28-49).

Recommended Reading

Drisko, J. W., & Grady, M. D. (2012). *Evidence-Based Practice in Clinical Social Work*:
Chapter 3 – The steps of Evidence-Based Practice in clinical practice: An overview (pp. 31–53).

Rubin, A., & Bellamy, J. (2012). *Practitioner's Guide to Using Research for Evidence-Based Practice*:
Chapter 2 – Steps in the EBP process (pp. 28-49).

Soydan, H., & Palinkas, L. A. (2014). *Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work: Development of a New Professional Culture*:
Chapter 2 – Evidence-Based practice (pp. 11-35).

Formulating Practice Questions

UNIT 3
Jan 28

Objectives

- 1) To strength your ability to accurately assess clients, identify professional knowledge needs, and formulate practice questions.
- 2) To enhance your capacity to use evidence and research hierarchies to determine what type of evidence is considered the most appropriate for enhancing professional knowledge.

Topics

- Using the PICO Framework to Formulate Answerable Practice Questions
- Using Evidence and Research Hierarchies to Determine the “Best Available Evidence”
 - Levels of Empirical Evidence
- Appraising Levels of Evidence

Required Reading

Rubin, A., & Bellamy, J. (2012). *Practitioner’s Guide to Using Research for Evidence-Based Practice*:

Chapter 3 – Research hierarchies: Which types of research are best for which questions? (pp. 50-67).

Recommended Reading

Drisko, J. W., & Grady, M. D. (2012). *Evidence-Based Practice in Clinical Social Work*:

Chapter 4 – Assessment in clinical social work and identifying practice information needs (pp. 55–77).

Searching for Empirical Evidence

UNIT 4

Feb 4

Objectives

- 1) To expand your ability to use different resources to locate information, knowledge and evidence efficiently and effectively.

Topics

- Multi-disciplinary sources of Information, Professional Knowledge, and Empirical Evidence
- Finding Relevant Empirical Knowledge and the Best Available Evidence
- Appraising Sources of Evidence

Required Reading

Drisko, J. W., & Grady, M. D. (2012). *Evidence-Based Practice in Clinical Social Work*:

Chapter 5 – Locating practice research (79-89).

Erren, T. C., Cullen, P., & Erren, M. (2009). How to surf today’s information tsunami: On the craft of effective reading. *Medical Hypotheses*, 73(3), 278-279.

Rubin, A., & Babbie, R. (2016). *Essential Research Methods for Social Work*:

Appendix A – Using the Library (pp. 373-380).

PART II – APPRAISING THE QUALITY AND APPLICABILITY OF RELEVANT EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE

Appraising Research Articles and the Quality of Evidence

UNIT 5

Feb 11

Objectives

- 1) To provide you with a foundational understanding of the logic and process of scientific inquiry.
- 2) To strengthen your ability to identify research goals and questions and to determine the methods appropriate for addressing different types of goals and questions.

Topics

- Understanding the Research Process
- Research Article Appraisal:
 - Identifying Goals of Research Studies
- Appraising Quality of Evidence

Required Reading

Cohen, J. A., Mannarino, A., Perel, J. M., & Staron, V. (2007). A pilot randomized controlled trial of combined trauma-focused CBT and Sertraline for childhood PTSD symptoms. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 46(7), 811-819.

Nadeau, J., & Camp, S. (2006). Interpreting research studies. *In Brief*, 2, 1-4
(https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/ib_interpreting.pdf).

Recommended Reading

Soydan, H., & Palinkas, L. A. (2014). *Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work: Development of a New Professional Culture:*

Chapter 3 - Evidence and its sources (pp. 35-65).

DUE: ASSIGNMENT 1 – PRACTICE KNOWLEDGE CRITICAL REFLECTION AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

Group-Based Design Methods

UNIT 6
Feb 18

Objectives

- 1) To enhance your understanding of different kinds of group-based design methods, including their strengths and weaknesses in terms of addressing different kinds of research aims and questions.

Topics

- Causality and Criteria for Inferring Effectiveness
- Research Designs
- Ethical and Cultural Issues

Required Reading

Drisko, J. W., & Grady, M. D. (2012). *Evidence-Based Practice in Clinical Social Work:*

Chapter 6 – Evaluating research: Research designs in Evidence-Based medicine/Evidence-Based practice (91-104).

Appraising Internal Validity and Group-Based Design Methods

UNIT 7
Feb 25

Objectives

- 1) In terms of its relevance to specific practice and policy questions, to strengthen your ability to critically appraise group-based design methods as presented in published research articles.

Topics

- Internal Validity and Threats to Internal Validity
- Research Article Appraisal:
 - Identifying and Appraising Design Methods

Required Reading

Drisko, J. W., & Grady, M. D. (2012). *Evidence-Based Practice in Clinical Social Work:*

Review Chapter 6 – Evaluating research: Research designs in Evidence-Based medicine/Evidence-Based practice (91-104).

Review Cohen, J. A., Mannarino, A., Perel, J. M., & Staron, V. (2007). A pilot randomized controlled trial of combined trauma-focused CBT and Sertraline for childhood PTSD symptoms. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 46(7), 811-819.

Recommended Reading

Rubin, A., & Bellamy, J. (2012). *Practitioner's Guide to Using Research for Evidence-Based Practice:*

Chapter 4 – Criteria for inferring effectiveness: How do we know what works? (pp. 71-98).

Sampling Methods

UNIT 8

Mar 3

Objectives

- 1) To enhance your understanding of different kinds of strategies for obtaining research participants, including their strengths and weaknesses.

Topics

- Nonrandom and Random Sampling Methods
- Ethical and Cultural Issues

Required Reading

Drisko, J. W., & Grady, M. D. (2012). *Evidence-Based Practice in Clinical Social Work:*

Chapter 7 – Evaluating research: Other issues of research methodology in Evidence-Based medicine/Evidence-Based practice (pp. 107-113).

Appraising Sampling Methods, External Validity and Applicability of Evidence

UNIT 9

Mar 10

Objectives

- 1) To deepen your understanding of external validity and how it impacts the use of science in social work practice and policy.
- 2) To clarify how the selection of research participants impacts interpretation of results and applicability of results to practice questions.

Topics

- External Validity and Threats to External Validity
- Research Article Appraisal
 - Identifying and Appraising Sampling Methods
- Appraising Applicability of Evidence

Required Reading

Murray, L. K, Skavonski, S., Michalopoulos, L. M., Bolton, P. A., Bass, J. K., Familiar, I., Imasiku, M., & Cohen, J. (2014). Counselor and client perspectives of trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy for children in Zambia: A qualitative study. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 43(6), 902-914.

SPRING BREAK	MAR 15 - 22
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NO CLASS!!

Measurement Methods	UNIT 10 Mar 24
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Objectives

- 1) To strengthen your ability to understand conceptualization and measurement in research as presented in published research articles.

Topics

- Qualitative and Quantitative Measurement
- Characteristics of Variables
- Ethical and Cultural Issues

Required Reading

Drisko, J. W., & Grady, M. D. (2012). Evidence-Based Practice in Clinical Social Work: Chapter 7 – Evaluating research: Other issues of research methodology in Evidence-Based medicine/Evidence-Based practice (pp. 113-125).

DUE: ASSIGNMENT 2 – PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE COLLECTION AND RESEARCH ARTICLE PRELIMINARY APPRAISAL

Measurement Methods - Continued	UNIT 11 Mar 31
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Objectives

- 1) To strengthen your ability to understand conceptualization and measurement in research as presented in published research articles.

Topics

- Data Collection Techniques
- Locating Testing and Measurement Tools
- Ethical and Cultural Issues (Continued)

Required Reading

Drisko, J. W., & Grady, M. D. (2012). Evidence-Based Practice in Clinical Social Work: Chapter 7 – Evaluating research: Other issues of research methodology in Evidence-Based medicine/Evidence-Based practice (pp. 113-125).

Appraising Measurement Methods and Instruments **UNIT 12**
Apr 7

Objectives

- 1) To enhance your ability to appraise the strengths and limitations of measurement methods as presented in published research articles.
- 2) To enhance your ability to appraise the strengths and limitations of instruments in terms of professional social work practice.

Topics

- Validity and Reliability
- Research Article Appraisal
 - Identifying and Appraising Measurement Methods
- Appraising and Selecting Instruments for Professional Social Work Practice

Required Reading

Drisko, J. W., & Grady, M. D. (2012). *Evidence-Based Practice in Clinical Social Work*: Review Chapter 7 – Evaluating research: Other issues of research methodology in Evidence-Based medicine/Evidence-Based practice (pp. 113-125).

Ji, J., Brooks, D., Barth, R. P., & Kim, H. (2010). Beyond preadoptive risk: the impact of adoptive family environment on adopted youth’s psychosocial adjustment. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 80(3), 432-442.

Recommended Reading

Rubin, A., & Bellamy, J. (2012). *Practitioner’s Guide to Using Research for Evidence-Based Practice*. Chapter 11 - Critically appraising and selecting assessment instruments (pp. 275-298).

PART III – USING EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE TO INFORM PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Understanding and Synthesizing Findings from Research Articles **UNIT 13**
Apr 14

Objectives

- 1) To increase your understanding of different approaches to analyzing qualitative and quantitative data and your ability to interpret results from analyses of data with respect to specified research aims and questions.
- 2) To enhance your ability to synthesize results of qualitative and quantitative data analysis to address professional questions and to inform professional practice.
- 3) To strengthen your capacity to summarize qualitative and quantitative data and results in ways accessible to appropriate clients and constituencies.

Topics

- Qualitative Data and Analyses
- Research Article Appraisal:
 - Interpreting Results from Qualitative Studies
 - Adapting and Translating Qualitative Evidence into Interculturally-Responsive and Competent Practice

Required Reading

Cheng, F. K. (2018). Dilemmas of Chinese lesbian youths in contemporary mainland China. *Sexuality & Culture*, 22, 198-208.

Understanding and Synthesizing Results from Research Articles (Continued)

UNIT 14
Apr 21

Objectives

- 1) To increase your understanding of different approaches to analyzing quantitative data and your ability to interpret results from analyses of data with respect to specified research aims and questions.
- 2) To enhance your ability to synthesize results of quantitative data analysis to address professional questions and to inform professional practice.
- 3) To strengthen your capacity to summarize quantitative data and results in ways accessible to appropriate clients and constituencies.
- 4) To strengthen your capacity to summarize findings from meta-analyses and systematic reviews in ways accessible to appropriate clients and constituencies.

Topics

- Quantitative Data and Analyses
 - Statistical Tests
- Results from Quantitative Studies and Meta-Analyses
- Findings from Systematic Reviews
- Research Article Appraisal:
 - Interpreting Results from Quantitative Studies
 - Adapting and Translating Quantitative Evidence into Interculturally-Responsive and Competent Practice

Required Reading

Abdou, C. M., & Fingerhut, A. W. (2014). Stereotype threat among black and white women in health care settings. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnicity Minority Psychology, 20*(3), 316-323.

Drisko, J. W., & Grady, M. D. (2012). *Evidence-Based Practice in Clinical Social Work: Chapter 7 – Evaluating research: Other issues of research methodology in Evidence-Based medicine/Evidence-Based practice* (pp. 125-135).

Recommended Reading

Drisko, J. W., & Grady, M. D. (2012). *Evidence-Based Practice in Clinical Social Work: Chapter 8 – Meta-analysis and systematic reviews: Aggregating research results* (pp. 137-153).

Rubin, A., & Bellamy, J. (2012). *Practitioner's Guide to Using Research for Evidence-Based Practice:*

Appendix B – What you do and don't need to know about statistics when critically appraising studies (pp. 327-333).

Using the Science of Social Work to Improve Practice, Policy, Services, and Organizations

**UNIT 15
Apr 28**

Objectives

- 1) To improve your ability to synthesizing evidence from multiple studies and to use the best available evidence to inform professional social work practice, including engagement of clients in the decision-making process.
- 2) To critically reflect on the science of social work and the EBP process, including strengths and limitations, with an emphasis on understanding how to use research evidence in complex, real-world contexts.
- 3) From the perspective of life-long learning, to prepare you to evaluate implementation and impact of evidence-based practice decisions in the context of professional social work practice.

Topics

- Preparing for Implementation and Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practice Decisions
 - Engaging Clients in Decision-Making
- Course Review and Wrap-Up
 - Next Steps for the Science of Social Work

Required Reading

Brekke, J. S. (2014). A science of social work, and social work as an integrative discipline: have we gone too far, or not far enough? *Research on Social Work Practice, 24*(5), 517-523.

Recommended Reading

Drisko, J. W., & Grady, M. D. (2012). *Evidence-Based Practice in Clinical Social Work:*

Chapter 9 – Shared decision-making with the client (pp. 155–164).

Chapter 10 – Finalizing the treatment plan and practice evaluation (pp. 165–175).

Rubin, A., & Bellamy, J. (2012). *Practitioner's Guide to Using Research for Evidence-Based Practice:*

Chapter 12 – Monitoring client progress (pp. 299-319).

EXAM WEEK

**Friday
May 8**

DUE: ASSIGNMENT 3 – RESEARCH ARTICLE COMPREHENSIVE APPRAISAL AND APPLICATION

University & School Policies and Guidelines

IX. ATTENDANCE POLICY

As a professional school, class attendance is an essential part of your professional training and development. At the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work, you are expected to attend all class sessions for the full duration of class. Having three unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your final course grade by one grade segment. Additional absences will result in further grade deductions. For VAC students, attendance requires maintaining an active presence during live sessions with clear and reliable video and audio. Unless otherwise directed by your instructor, VAC students are expected to complete all asynchronous content and activities prior to the scheduled live session. Failure to complete three asynchronous units prior to the scheduled live session will result in the lowering of your final course grade by one grade segment. Not completing additional asynchronous units will result in further grade deductions.

University of Southern California policy permits students to be excused from class for the observance of religious holy days. This policy also covers scheduled final examinations which conflict with students' observance of a holy day. Students must make arrangements in advance to complete class work which will be missed, or to reschedule an examination, due to holy days observance.

Please refer to *SCampus* and to the USC School of Social Work Student Handbook for additional information on attendance policies.

X. ACADEMIC CONDUCT

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

XI. SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class.
equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and micro aggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations.
dsp.usc.edu

USC Support and Advocacy (USCSA) – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime. Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu

XII. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR VAC STUDENTS

Students enrolled in the Virtual Academic Center can access support services for themselves and their families by contacting Perspectives, Ltd., an independent student assistance program offering crisis services, short-term counseling, and referral 24/7. To access Perspectives, Ltd., call 800-456-6327.

XIII. STATEMENT ABOUT INCOMPLETES

The Grade of Incomplete (IN) can be assigned only if there is work not completed because of a documented illness or some other emergency occurring after the 12th week of the semester. Students must NOT assume that the instructor will agree to the grade of IN. Removal of the grade of IN must be instituted by the student and agreed to be the instructor and reported on the official “Incomplete Completion Form.”

XIV. POLICY ON LATE OR MAKE-UP WORK, EXTRA CREDIT, AND RE-GRADING ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments are due on the day specified by midnight PST. Prior to the due date, extensions may be granted for extenuating circumstances at the instructor’s discretion. Late submissions may be accepted by the instructor up to one week beyond the assignment due date, again at the instructor’s discretion. If accepted by the instructor, late submissions will be marked down by one grade segment for each day late, not to exceed one week. Assignments submitted beyond one week of the due date may be reviewed at the instructor’s discretion, but they will not be graded unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Extra credit is not permitted, nor is re-doing an assignment with the expectation that it will be re-graded. Grades may not be changed once they have been assigned unless there was an error in determining the grade.

XV. POLICY ON CHANGES TO THE SYLLABUS AND/OR COURSE REQUIREMENTS

It may be necessary to make some adjustments in the syllabus and/or course during the semester in order to respond to unforeseen or extenuating circumstances. Any such adjustments would be made for the express purpose of accommodating students and with input from students. Adjustments that are made will be communicated to students both verbally and in writing.

XVI. POLICY ON THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

For ground students, the use of laptops and tablets during class is not recommended. You may use these devices, however, if doing so contributes to your learning and is not disruptive to you or others in the class. For both ground and VAC students, permitted uses of technology include using laptops and tablets to access course readings and material, and to take notes. If you choose to use a laptop during class, typing on your keyboard should not be audible to others. Non-permitted uses of technology include using laptops and tablets to check email and social media, and to text or communicate with others.

Use of phones during class is not permitted except in an emergency or during a break. In order to minimize disruptions, please place your phone on mute or in airplane mode before you come to class.

Photos, videos, and recordings may not be taken or made in class without prior permission from the instructor.

Because our classroom is both an academic and professional setting, and out of respect for your colleagues, violation of any of the policies described above is grounds for being counted as absent. It can also result in reductions of your class participation grade.

XVII. CODE OF ETHICS OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

Approved by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly and revised by the 2017 NASW Delegate Assembly [<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics>]

Preamble

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

Social workers promote social justice and social change with and on behalf of clients. "Clients" is used inclusively to refer to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice. These activities may be in the form of direct practice, community organizing, supervision, consultation, administration, advocacy, social and political action, policy development and implementation, education, and research and evaluation. Social workers seek to enhance the capacity of people to address their own needs.

Social workers also seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities, and other social institutions to individuals' needs and social problems.

The mission of the social work profession is rooted in a set of core values. These core values, embraced by social workers throughout the profession's history, are the foundation of social work's unique purpose and perspective:

- service
- social justice
- dignity and worth of the person
- importance of human relationships
- integrity
- competence.

This constellation of core values reflects what is unique to the social work profession. Core values, and the principles that flow from them, must be balanced within the context and complexity of the human experience.

XVIII. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY SANCTION GUIDELINES

Some lecture slides, notes, or exercises used in this course may be the property of the textbook publisher or other third parties. All other course material, including but not limited to slides developed by the instructor(s), the syllabus, assignments, course notes, course recordings (whether audio or video) and examinations or quizzes are the property of the University or of the individual instructor who developed them. Students are free to use this material for study and learning, and for discussion with others, including those who may not be in this class, unless the instructor imposes more stringent requirements. Republishing or redistributing this material, including uploading it to web sites or linking to it through services like iTunes, violates the rights of the copyright holder and is prohibited. There are civil and criminal penalties for copyright violation. Publishing or redistributing this material in a way that might give others an unfair advantage in this or future courses may subject you to penalties for academic misconduct.

XIX. COMPLAINTS

If you have a complaint or concern about the course or the instructor, please discuss it first with the instructor. If you feel you cannot discuss it with the instructor, contact the appropriate Lead Instructor for SOWK 546—either Dr. Jan Nissly at nissly@usc.edu (VAC) or Dr. Devon Brooks at devon.brooks@usc.edu (Ground). If you do not receive a satisfactory response or solution, contact your academic advisor and/or MSW Program Chair Dr. Leslie Wind at wind@usc.edu for further guidance.

XX. TIPS FOR MAXIMIZING YOUR LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN THIS COURSE

- ✓ Be proactive! TOGETHER, let's do everything we can to make this an educational and enjoyable experience for you. Try to anticipate issues that could present challenges and PLEASE REACH OUT TO ME so that we can problem-solve before rather than after the fact.
- ✓ Be mindful of getting proper nutrition, exercise, rest and sleep!
- ✓ Complete required readings, assignments and activities before coming to class.
- ✓ Keep up with the assigned readings and assignments. Don't procrastinate!!
- ✓ Come to class and participate in an active, respectful and meaningful way.

- ✓ Come to class prepared to ask any questions you might have. If you don't understand something, ask questions! Ask questions in class, during office hours, and/or through email!
- ✓ Stay offline while in class.
- ✓ Form study groups with other students in the class or in another section of the class.
- ✓ Take advantage of office hours and extra review/discussion sessions offered by your instructor. Contact me if you are concerned about or are struggling in class.
- ✓ If you believe it is necessary to receive support from a content tutor or Writing Support, please inform or involve me. I want to be able to help and support you in any way possible, but I need to know that you want/need support!! I am also happy to meet with you and your tutor.
- ✓ Keep an open mind and positive attitude!