USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck
School of Social Work

Science of Social Work

SOWK 546

Section #67028

Section #67029

3 Units

Spring 2023

Syllabus

(Subject to Change)

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

Instructor:	Devon Brooks
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Office Hours Days & Times:	Monday	3:00 – 6:00 pm PST by appointment
	Friday	1:00 – 3:00 pm PST by appointment

Office Hours Meeting Link: https://zoom.us/my/devon.brooks.sowk.usc

Course Day & Time:	Tuesday	4:45 – 6:00 pm PST (Section #67028)
		6:30 – 7:45 pm PST (Section #67029)

Course Location: Virtual Academic Center (Zoom)

Course Folder: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1uoQZj0zkmg8Qgwp-gntXnqGJssNLWHJ9?usp=sharing

I. COURSE PREREQUISITES AND CO-REQUISITES

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 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. LEARNING 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.   CSWE CORE COMPETENCIES ADDRESSED BY THE COURSE

The following table lists the nine Social Work competencies as established by the Council on Social Work Education's 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards. The competency in **bold** is the competency highlighted in this course and the basis for the course's student learning outcomes.

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Core Competencies	
1	Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2	Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice
3	Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice
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

Competency	Objectives	Behaviors	Dimensions	Content
Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice 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	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	**4a.** Identify ways in which professional interests and goals can be enhanced through reflection, the use of empirical evidence, and inquiry. **4b**. Use professional knowledge and experience to inform the use of empirical evidence and inquiry. **4c.** Apply critical and creative thinking to engage in appraisal of types and sources of empirical evidence.	Values, Knowledge, Skills, and Cognitive and Affective Processes	**Units 1 - 4** **Assignment 1** **Class Participation**

Competency	Objectives	Behaviors	Dimensions	Content
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.	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.	4d. Apply critical and creative thinking to engage in appraisal of the strength of quantitative and qualitative research findings.	Knowledge, Skills	**Units 5 - 15** **Assignment 2** **Assignment 3** **Class Participation**
	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.	4e. Use and translate empirical evidence to inform and improve social work practice, policy, and service delivery.	Knowledge, Skills	**Units 13 - 15** **Assignment 3** **Class Participation**
Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities 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,	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.	9a. Apply evaluation findings to improve professional practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.	Knowledge, Skills	**Units 13 - 15** **Assignment 3** **Class Participation**

Competency	Objectives	Behaviors	Dimensions	Content
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.	**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.			

VI.   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

(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."

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

Assessment of 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	Week & Unit Due[1]	% of Final Grade
Assignment 1	Unit 5	20%

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[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.

Practice Knowledge Critical Reflection and Self-Assessment		
Assignment 2 *Professional Resource Collection and Research Article Preliminary Appraisal*	Unit 10 **SUNDAY, APRIL 2**	35%
Assignment 3 *Research Article Comprehensive Appraisal and Application*	Unit 15	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 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 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
❑ Student demonstrates active and proactive learning.	0	1	2
❑ 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
❑ Student's communication, behavior, and participation are respectful, professional, and appropriate (this includes appropriate use of desktops/laptops and mobile devices during class).	0	1	2
❑ Student participates in a meaningful way and helps to maintain a positive learning environment.	0	1	2
❑ Student helps *create* a positive learning environment.	0	1	2

Grading Scale

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 USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck 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.

Assignment Submission Policy

By the specified deadlines, assignments should be submitted through the course's learning management system. Students are responsible for ensuring successful submission of their assignment and are encouraged to maintain a copy of the submission for their records.

Grading Timeline

Students should expect grading and feedback from the instructor within two weeks of assignment submission.

Attendance

As a professional school, class attendance and participation are essential to your professional training and development at the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work. You are expected to attend every class and to remain in class for the duration of the class. Students are expected to notify the instructor by email of any anticipated absence or reason for tardiness.

For Ground and hybrid courses, having more than 2 unexcused absences in class may result in the lowering of your grade by a half grade. Additional absences can result in additional deductions. For VAC courses, meaningful participation requires active engagement in class discussions and maintaining an active screen. Having more than two unexcused absences in class may result in the lowering of your grade by a half grade. Additional absences in the live class can result in additional deductions. Furthermore, unless directed by your instructor, you are expected to complete all asynchronous content and activities prior to the scheduled live class discussion. Failure to complete two asynchronous units before the live class without prior permission may also lower your final grade by a half grade. Not completing additional units can result in additional 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.

Classroom Norms and Zoom Etiquette

Your instructor will discuss behaviors that are encouraged and discoursed during class, including recommended communication and behavior of online communication and interactions.

Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the USC Student Handbook. All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see the student handbook or the Office of Academic Integrity's website, and university policies on Research and Scholarship Misconduct.

Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies

USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. (Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook, page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been

displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. (Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook, page 13).

Course Evaluations

Course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester university-wide. This evaluation is an important review of students' experience in the class. The process and intent of the end-of-semester evaluation will be discussed in class by your instructor. In addition to the end of semester evaluation, a mid-semester evaluation is implemented in the School of Social Work. The process and intent of the mid-semester evaluation will also be discussed by your instructor.

VIII.   REQUIRED READINGS AND SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS & RESOURCES

Required Textbook

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

In addition to the Rubin & Babbie text, other required and recommended readings are available through ARES or the USC Libraries.

Recommended Supplements

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

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

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

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 (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th 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

Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research. Available at http://www.iaswresearch.org

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

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

Course Schedule

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

Unit	Topic	Due
PART I – THE ROLE OF SCIENCE IN SOCIAL WORK		
1 **Jan 10**	**Introduction to the Science of Social Work** ▪ 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	
2 **Jan 17**	**Engaging in Evidence-Based Social Work Practice** ▪ Introduction to Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) in Social Work ▪ Assessing Clients and Identifying Professional Knowledge Needs ▪ Specifying Practice Dilemmas	
3 **Jan 24**	**Formulating Practice Questions** ▪ 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	
4 **Jan 31**	**Searching for Empirical Evidence** ▪ 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 7
	Appraising Research Articles and the Quality of Evidence; Research Design Methodology
	▪ Understanding the Research Process
	▪ <u>Research Article Appraisal:</u>
	  − Identifying Goals of Research Studies
	▪ Appraising Quality of Evidence
	▪ Introduction to Research Design [for Assessing Quality of Evidence]
	  − Group Based Design Methods
	  − Causality
		<u>**ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE**</u>
		
		Practice Knowledge Critical Reflection and Self-Assessment

Unit	Topic	Due
6 **Feb 14**	**Measurement Methods: Variables** ▪ Qualitative and Quantitative Measurement ▪ Characteristics of Variables ▪ Ethical and Cultural Issues	
7 **Feb 21**	**Measurement Methods: Data Collection** ▪ Data Collection Techniques ▪ Locating Testing and Measurement Tools ▪ Ethical and Cultural Issues (Continued)	
8 **Feb 28**	**Appraising Measurement Methods and Instruments: Reliability and Validity** ▪ Validity and Reliability ▪ Research Article Appraisal – Identifying and Appraising Measurement Methods ▪ Appraising and Selecting Instruments for Professional Social Work Practice	
9 **Mar 7**	**Sampling Methods** ▪ Nonrandom and Random Sampling Methods ▪ Ethical and Cultural Issues	
Mar 14	**SPRING RECESS – NO CLASS!**	
10 **Mar 21**	**Appraising Sampling Methods, External Validity and Applicability of Evidence** ▪ External Validity and Threats to External Validity ▪ <u>Research Article Appraisal</u> – Identifying and Appraising Sampling Methods ▪ Appraising Applicability of Evidence **<u>PLEASE NOTE ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE DATE: SUNDAY, APRIL 2</u>**	<u>**ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE SUNDAY, APRIL 2**</u> *Professional Resource Collection and Research Article Preliminary Appraisal*
11 **Mar 28**	**Group-Based Design Methods** ▪ Causality and Criteria for Inferring Effectiveness ▪ Research Designs ▪ Ethical and Cultural Issues	
12 **Apr 4**	**Appraising Internal Validity and Group-Based Design Methods** ▪ Internal Validity and Threats to Internal Validity ▪ <u>Research Article Appraisal:</u> – Identifying and Appraising Design Methods **Research Ethics** ▪ Historical examples of research involving human subjects and their impact ▪ Belmont Report ▪ Ethical guidelines for protecting human subjects	
**PART III – USING EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE TO INFORM PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE**	

Unit	Topic	Due
13 **Apr 11**	**Understanding and Synthesizing Results from Research Articles** ▪ Qualitative Data and Analyses ▪ <u>Research Article Appraisal:</u> – Interpreting Results from Qualitative Studies ▪ Adapting and Translating Qualitative Evidence into Interculturally-Responsive and Competent Practice	
14 **April 18**	**Understanding and Synthesizing Results from Research Articles (Continued)** ▪ Quantitative Data and Analyses – Statistical Tests ▪ Results from Quantitative Studies and Meta-Analyses ▪ Findings from Systematic Reviews ▪ <u>Research Article Appraisal:</u> – Interpreting Results from Quantitative Studies ▪ Adapting and Translating Quantitative Evidence into Interculturally-Responsive and Competent Practice	
15 **April 25**	**Using the Science of Social Work to Improve Practice, Policy, Services, and Organizations** ▪ Preparing for Implementation and Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practice Decision-Making – Engaging Clients in Decision-Making ▪ Course Review and Wrap-Up – Next Steps for the Science of Social Work	<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

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 Reading

Please carefully review the course syllabus.

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

- Chapter 1: Why Study Research [p. 3-21]

Recommended Reading

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

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.

National Association of Social Work (2021). *Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers.* Washington, DC.

https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English

Engaging in Evidence-Based Social Work Practice   UNIT 2

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

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

- Chapter 2: Evidence-Based Practice [p. 23-41]
- Chapter 4: Factors Influencing the Research Process (p.59-75)

Recommended Reading

Rubin, A., & Bellamy, J. (2012). *Practitioner's Guide to Using Research for Evidence-Based Practice:*
Chapter 1 - Introduction to evidence-based practice (pp. 3-27).
Chapter 2 – Steps in the EBP process (pp. 28-49).

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).

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Formulating Practice Questions   **UNIT 3**

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

- Chapter 7: Problem Formation 7.1-7.4 [p. 119-139]

USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work Library: Evidence Based Practice Resources

https://libguides.usc.edu/socialwork/socialworkEBP

Recommended 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).

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Searching for Empirical Evidence   **UNIT 4**

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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 and Level 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).

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

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

USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work Library: Finding Research Materials

https://libguides.usc.edu/socialwork/databases

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

Appraising Research Articles and the Quality of Evidence   **UNIT 5**

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.
3) 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

- Understanding the Research Process
- Research Article Appraisal:
    - Identifying Goals of Research Studies
- Appraising Quality of Evidence
- Causality and Criteria for Inferring Effectiveness
- Research Designs

Required Reading

Bohannon, J. (2013). Whose afraid of peer review? *Science, 342(*6154), *60-65.*

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

- Chapter 3: Quantitative, Qualitative & Mixed Methods of Inquiry (pp. 45-58).
- Chapter 12: Experiments and quasi-experiments (pp. 231-258).

Hierarchy of Social Work Evidence

https://libguides.usc.edu/socialwork/socialworkEBP

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

Measurement Methods: Variables	UNIT 6

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

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

- Chapter 7: Conceptualization in Quantitative Inquiry (125-134)

Measurement Methods – Measurement	UNIT 7

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

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

- Chapter 9: Quantitative and Qualitative Measurement Instruments (p.157-161)
- Chapter 10: Surveys (p.179-199)

Explore:

https://libguides.usc.edu/socialwork/measurements

Appraising Measurement Methods and Instruments	UNIT 8

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

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

- Chapter 8: Measurement in Quantitative and Qualitative Inquiry (pp. 141-156).

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).

Sampling Methods	UNIT 9

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

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

- Chapter 11: Sampling: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches (pp. 203-227).

Appraising Sampling Methods, External Validity and Applicability of Evidence	UNIT 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

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).

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

Group-Based Design Methods	WEEK 11 UNIT 11

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

Rubin, A., & Babbie, R. (2015): *Essential Research Methods for Social Work:*

> Chapter 12 - Experiments and quasi-experiments (pp. 231-258)**.**

Recommended 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 12

Objectives

1) In terms of its relevance to specific practice and policy questions, to strengthen your ability to critically appraised group-based design methods as presented in published research articles.
2) To enhance your awareness and understanding of social work ethics that guide research and evaluation involving human subjects

Topics

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

Research Ethics

▪ Historical examples of research involving human subjects and their impact
▪ Belmont Report
▪ Ethical guidelines for protecting human subjects

Required Reading

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

- Chapter 12: Experiments and Quasi Experiments (pp. 231-257).
- Chapter 13: Single-Case Evaluation Design (pp 259-282)

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).

Recommended 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).

PART III – USING EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE TO INFORM PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Understanding and Synthesizing Findings from Research Articles   UNIT 13

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

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

- Chapter 18: Qualitative data analysis (pp. 361-386).
- Chapter 15: Additional Methods in Qualitative Inquiry (pp. 303-324).

Understanding and Synthesizing Results from Research Articles (Continued)	UNIT 14

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

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

- Chapter 17: Quantitative data analysis (pp. 345-360).

Recommended 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. 125-135).

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

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.*

Mosley, J.E., Marwell, N.P., & Ybarra, M. (2019). How the "what works" movement is failing human service organizations, and what social work can do to fix it. *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance, 43*(4), 326-335.

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).

DUE: ASSIGNMENT 3 – RESEARCH ARTICLE COMPREHENSIVE APPRAISAL AND APPLICATION

IX. STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, comprises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see the student handbook or the Office of Academic Integrity's website, and university policies on Research and Scholarship Misconduct.

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

Students and Disability Accommodations

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems

Counseling and Mental Health - *(213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - *988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call*
The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP)](#) - *(213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call*
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX)](#) - *(213) 740-5086*
Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - *(213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS)](#) - *(213) 740-0776*
OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - *(213) 740-0411*
Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - *(213) 740-2101*
Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[USC Emergency](#) - *UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*
Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) - *UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call*
Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - *(213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)*
A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - *(323) 442-2850 or* otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

X. 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.

XI. 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."

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

Assignments are due at the end of 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.

XIII. 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.

XIV. POLICY ON THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

For campus-based ground students, the use of laptops and tablets during class generally 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. Typing on your keyboard should not be audible to others. For both ground and VAC students, permitted uses of technology include using laptops and tablets to access course readings and material, to take notes, and to complete small group activities and discussions. Non-permitted uses of technology include using laptops and tablets to check email and social media, and to text or communicate with others who are not members of the class.

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.

Apart from Live Sessions recorded by the instructor, photos, videos, and student 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.

XV. 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/Code-of-Ethics-English

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.

XVI. 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 Lead Instructor for

the course, Dr. Sara Schwartz at saraschw@usc.edu. If you do not receive an appropriate response or solution, contact the MSW Program Director, Dr. Jennifer Lewis at j.lewis@usc.edu for further guidance.

XVII. 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!