Social Work 562  
Section 60461R  
Social Work Research  

3 units  

Spring 2013

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Office Hours: by Appointment

I. COURSE PREREQUISITES

None

II. CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION

SOWK 562 Social Work Research (3 units). Introduction to research methods, including conceptualization of research problems, literature review, research design, sampling, measurement, data collection and data analysis.

III. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This foundation course is designed to provide an introduction to research methods and to produce an appreciation of the research process. It will explore general issues that are related to the conduct of social work research as applied to social work practice and service delivery in complex, urban environments as well as program evaluation, and policy development.

In this course, students will review the characteristics and logical processes of social work research and understand the applicability of scientific and scholarly inquiry in advancing professional knowledge and improving social work practice to diverse clientele in numerous settings. Students will gain a conceptual and operational understanding of the various quantitative and qualitative methodologies used in the conduct of social work related research. Students will be prepared to participate in a range of research activities including (a) conceptualization of research problems; (b) review of the literature; (c) evaluation of research design; (d) sampling; (e) selection of measurement tools; (f) data collection; (g) interpretation of data analyses and (h) ethical considerations in the conduct of research with human participants. Attention will also focus on how racial, ethnic, gender, and lifestyle issues impact each stage of the research process.
Students will not be expected to carry out an actual study; however, they will complete a series of assignments, which prepare them to utilize research as professional social workers. Students are coached to achieve a level of disciplined conceptual and analytical thinking in the process of developing their assignments and critiquing existing empirical literature.

IV. COURSE OBJECTIVES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective #</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teach basic research principles and concepts within the framework of ethical practice of professional social work. Identify the ethical issues involved in professional social work research, including informed consent, confidentiality, use and abuse of sensitive data, the issue of withholding treatment to control groups, and the honest disclosure of findings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Provide opportunities for students to increase awareness of and be sensitive to issues in the research process as they relate to various diverse populations such as gender, race, sexual orientation, social class, religion, and vulnerable and oppressed groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teach and demonstrate the importance of the role of social work empirical research and evidence-based practice research as they apply to social work practice and policy. The principles of evidence-based practice research will be presented and students will have opportunity to apply the principles to evidence search, review of the literature, evidence appraisal and assessing the strengths and limitations of published research, and implementation of evidence in the context of individuals, groups or communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Present foundation-level research concepts and build student skills including the use research terms and vocabulary, the skill of identifying relevant social work research questions and hypotheses, identifying independent, dependent and other variables, the measurement of variables including describing the concepts of reliability and validity, methods for sample selection, the exploration of research design options and key foundation-level statistical concepts including descriptive and inferential statistics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Provide students with the opportunity to solidify their skills and knowledge by developing introductory level reviews of the literature that follow a professional writing style and prepare students for analytic writing in the concentration year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V. COURSE FORMAT / INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Two primary learning/teaching modalities will be used in class: (1) didactic presentation by the instructor and (2) critical discussion, interaction, and transaction among the instructor and students. Please note that it may be necessary for the instructor to make adjustments to the syllabus during the semester.
VI. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Student learning for this course relates to one or more of the following ten social work core competencies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Work Core Competencies</th>
<th>SWK 562</th>
<th>Course Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Professional Identity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Ethical Practice</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Critical Thinking</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>3-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Diversity in Practice</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Human Rights &amp; Justice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Research Based Practice</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>3-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Human Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Policy Practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Practice Contexts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Engage, Assess, Intervene, Evaluate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Highlighted in this course

The following table explains the highlighted competencies for this course, the related student learning outcomes, and the method of assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies/ Knowledge, Values, Skills</th>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Method of Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Ethical Practice—Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice. Social workers competent in Ethical Practice:  
  - Fulfill their obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making.  
  - Are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law. | 1. Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to identify ethical issues that are present in research contexts and be able to discuss strategies that could be used to address ethical concerns. Standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and Belmont principles will serve as frameworks for considering ethical issues. | Quiz Questions Literature Review (Students’ Ethical Dilemmas) |
**Critical Thinking**—Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.

Social workers competent in Critical Thinking:
- Are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment.
- Use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity.
- Understand that critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge to conduct an up-to-date literature review on any social work research, practice, or policy topic, informed by research based-knowledge and practice wisdom.</th>
<th>Literature Review Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Demonstrate effective oral and written communication by accurately and consistently utilizing foundation-level research terms in both speaking and writing.</td>
<td>Quiz Questions Written Assignments Class Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Identify key elements, interpret, and describe the meaning of results presented in research tables utilizing foundation-level statistical concepts.</td>
<td>Quiz Questions Final Course Assessment Exam Article Critique Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Identify specific strengths and limitations in published research (e.g., journal articles, reports, and other communication forms) and describe how such issues affect interpretation of findings.</td>
<td>Final Course Assessment Exam Literature Review Article Critique Assignment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Diversity in Practice**—Engage diversity and difference in practice.

Social workers competent in Diversity in Practice:
- Understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity.
- Recognize that the dimensions of diversity reflect intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.
- Appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim.

| 6. Utilizing an understanding of the fact that culture can shape the power structures faced by individuals and groups, articulate and promote attention to issues in the research process as they relate to diverse populations, such as racial and ethnic minorities, gays and lesbians, women, and a range of other groups. | Quiz Questions Literature Review Assignment |
Research Based Practice—Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.

Social workers competent in Research Based Practice:

- Use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery.
- Comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge.

7. Articulate, orally and in writing, reasoned and relevant conclusions based on research findings that can inform practice, policy, and/or further research. This includes the ability to describe the relevance of research to the discipline of social work.

8. Identify and accurately describe the purpose of foundation-level research concepts and techniques utilized in published research. This includes the ability to:
   a. Identify research questions and related hypotheses.
   b. Identify independent and dependent variables and describe how the concepts of reliability and validity affect the measurement strategies chosen.
   c. Identify and describe other foundation-level research techniques used in research such as methods for sample selection and research design options.

9. Utilize foundation-level research concepts and techniques (as in student learning outcome 8) to develop introductory level research reviews of the literature that follow a professional proposal development style. This includes the ability to discuss how theoretical or conceptual frameworks inform research choices.

VII. Course Assignments, Due Dates & Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Written Assignments (Literature Review parts A-C)</td>
<td>2/24; 3/31; 4/28</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Quizzes (Four Quizzes, 5% each)</td>
<td>2/3;3/14,4/11;5/2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Article Critique</td>
<td>4/18</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Sequence Final Assessment Exam</td>
<td>Finals Week</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Class Participation, Other Assignments &amp; Homework</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Written Assignments — Literature Review (30% of Course Grade)

The ability to locate and summarize research around specific problem areas is a key skill you will need to develop. The purpose of this assignment is to locate, summarize and synthesize existing theoretical and empirical knowledge about a social work problem area or population related to your field placement. If you do not yet have a field placement, then you may choose to focus on a topic related to mental illness, homelessness, military social work or child welfare, all areas of research focus for faculty at the USC School of Social Work.

The Literature review Assignment will be submitted in three stages: Section 1: Problem Formulation (20%) Section 2: Intervention Evaluation (20%) and Section 3: Revised Problem Formulation and Intervention Evaluation (60%)

1. A Problem Formulation: For this assignment, the content is focused on description of the problem area, its causes, and consequences, and not focused around interventions or treatments. Be sure to consult early with the course instructor about how you intend to conceptualize your problem area, which will facilitate your search for relevant literature. Suggested length: 7 to 10 pages.

1. B. Intervention Evaluation: Social workers are often involved in direct treatment or intervention to address problems. The purpose of this assignment is to locate and analyze research around a social work intervention or treatment related to the topic you selected for the Problem Formulation paper. To complete this assignment, you will need to conduct a review of the literature around interventions that have been evaluated to treat or address the problem area identified in your first paper. You will need to briefly discuss the kinds of interventions you locate that have been used to address your problem area and to more carefully evaluate 3-5 articles directly addressing one specific intervention or treatment approach. Suggested length: 6 to 8 pages.

1. C Revised Problem Formulation and Intervention: This assignment expects you to build on and refine your (Assignments 1.A and 1.B) and to address feedback from the instructor.

Note: Additional details for each of the assignments are included in the Syllabus Addendum.

2) Quizzes (20% of Course Grade)

There will be 4 quizzes, each worth 5% of the course grade. Quiz 2 will consist of multiple choice, short answer items and vignette-based questions. Quizzes 1, 3 and 4 will be short assignments.

Q1: Literature Search and Bibliography: Utilizing the literature search tools and skills presented in the course material, conduct a search for articles about your topic. This is not meant to be a comprehensive review of the literature. The bibliography you generate should contain a well-structured list of resources pertaining to the problem you have selected. Suggested length: Between 10 and 15 articles.

Q3: Measurement and Operationalization: As a professional social worker, it is very likely that you will have responsibility for understanding and/or using specific tools for measuring outcomes of interest to you, your clients, or an agency where you work. You will need to understand what it means to “measure a variable” of interest and you will want to be able to assess the strengths and weaknesses of a measurement process. This will often involve you selecting measurement instruments and utilizing other data collection techniques. The purpose of this assignment is to teach you how to find, evaluate and critique appropriate testing and measurement tools in social work. To complete this assignment, you must identify two variables that you will operationalize for the assignment. You will measure one variable with a known scale or instrument and one variable
with any other data collection technique (client self-report, observation, archival/known data or biological/physiological techniques).
Suggested Length: 2 to 3 pages.

Q4: Comprehensive Self-Evaluation: Take home review for the final exam

3) Article Critique (20% of Course Grade)

Professional social workers are expected to be critical consumers of social work and other related literature. The ability to read and evaluate the methodology and conclusions from an empirical article is a key skill you will need to develop. The purpose of this assignment is to read and describe an article including a critical analysis of the literature review, the sampling, methods, the research design, the measures chosen, the statistical analysis, and the outcomes and conclusions. Suggested length: 2 to 3 pages.

4) Final Assessment Exam (20% of Course Grade)

Students will complete a final assessment exam, which will measure their ability to apply the knowledge acquired during the course. Vignettes and descriptions from published research articles will be presented and students will be asked to answer questions about specific aspects of research methodology including ethics, research design, sampling, measurement, and interpretation of statistical results. The exam will be administered during Finals Week, as per the USC Finals Week Schedule. Please check the date of the Final Assessment Exam to ensure your availability.

5) Class Participation, Completion of any Homework or Presentations (10% of Course Grade)

Students are expected to contribute to the development of a positive learning environment and to demonstrate their learning through written and oral assignments and through active class participation. Class participation should consist of meaningful, thoughtful, and respectful participation based on having completed required readings and assignments prior to class. This includes completion of any required homework. When in class, students should demonstrate their understanding of the material and be prepared to offer comments about the material, or alternatively, to have a set of thoughtful questions about the material. Failure to meet these expectations will result in the reduction of grades. There will be six scheduled homework practice assignments. Homework is worth 5 of the 10 points =10% of the grade. The remaining 5 points are based on class participation as described above.

Class grades will be based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Grades</th>
<th>Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.85–4</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.60–3.84</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.25–3.59</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.90–3.24</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.60–2.89</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.25–2.59</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.90–2.24</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70–72 C-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within the School of Social Work, grades are determined in each class based on the following standards which have been established by the faculty of the School: (1) grades of A or A- are reserved for student work which not only demonstrates very good mastery of content but which also shows that the student has undertaken a complex task, has applied critical thinking skills to the assignment, and/or has demonstrated creativity in her or his approach to the assignment. The difference between these two grades is determined by the degree to which these skills have been demonstrated by the student; (2) 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; (3) 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; (4) 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; (5) a grade of C reflects a minimal grasp of the assignments, poor organization of ideas and/or several significant areas requiring improvement; (6) grades between C- and F are applied to 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 Textbooks

Suggested Additional Resources
Guides for APA Style Formatting

APA formatting and style guide. (1995-2011). The OWL at Purdue. Retrieved from http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/ (Instructor Note: Note: this popular site for students—it is free, has switched to 6th edition.)


Recommended Websites
Writing & Reading - Reminders, Hints and Commandments (Posted on Black Board)
National Association of Social Workers. Available at http://www.naswdc.org


USC Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism. Available at http://libguides.usc.edu/content.php?pid=83009&sid=616087

FQS: Forum qualitative research – An online journal of qualitative research. Available at http://www.qualitative-research.net

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

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

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

Note: Additional required and recommended readings will be assigned by the instructor throughout the course.
The Table below describes the topics for each Session of Instruction. Your instructor may need to make adjustments to this schedule, including dates of in-class Quizzes and assignment due dates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | 1/17 | Course Introduction and Overview  
Social Work Research: Finding Relevant Research |             |
| 2    | 1/24 | Literature Review: EBP | HW1         |
| 3    | 1/31 | Concepts &Variables: Research Building Blocks  
*Reading Descriptive Tables: Describing Variables using Statistics* | HW2  
2/3 Quiz 1 due (Bibliography) |
| 4    | 2/7  | Social Work Research Models to Assess Practice and Policy (Single Subject Designs, Evaluation)  
*Cultural Considerations* | HW3         |
| 5    | 2/14 | Selecting Participants to Take Part in Research  
Sampling | HW4         |
| 6    | 2/21 | Introduction to Group Research Design | 2/24 Assignment 1.A  
Due (Problem Formulation) |
| 7    | 2/28 | Group Designs Continued | HW5         |
| 8    | 3/7  | Measurement Methods | HW6         |
| 9    | 3/14 | Location of Measurements  
*Intervention Methodological Critique* | Quiz 2 in class |
|      | 3/21 | Spring Break |             |
| 10   | 3/28 | Assessment of Measurements  
*Introduction to Inferential Statistics* | 3/31 Assignment 1.B  
Due (Intervention) |
| 11   | 4/4  | Inferential Statistics and Hypothesis Testing  
Descriptive Statistics -part 2 | Quiz 3(Measurement) |
| 12   | 4/11 | Inferential Statistics Continued  
*Ethical Practice* |             |
| 13   | 4/18 | Qualitative Research  
Intervention Methodological Critique | 4/18 Article Critique  
Due |
Due |
| 15   | 5/2  | Course Wrap-Up and Evaluation  
Review for Final Assessment Exam | Quiz 4 due |

**FINAL ASSESSMENT EXAMINATION:** During Finals Week
University Policies and Guidelines

IX. ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend every class and to remain in class for the duration of the unit. Failure to attend class, arriving late, or lack of active participation may impact your ability to achieve course objectives which could affect your course grade. Students are expected to notify the instructor by email (amyamada@usc.edu) of any anticipated absence or reason for tardiness.

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.

In consideration of classmates and the instructor, students are asked to keep external distractions that might interfere with class to a minimum. Please refer to Scampus and to the USC School of Social Work Student Handbook for additional information on attendance policies.

X. STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/.

Additionally, it should be noted that violations of academic integrity are not only violations of USC principles and policies, but also violations of the values of the social work profession.

XI. STATEMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the instructor as early in the semester as possible. Instructors are not permitted to provide accommodations without this letter. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

XII. EMERGENCY RESPONSE INFORMATION

Note: The following Emergency Response Information pertains to students on campus, but please note its importance should you be on campus for a temporary or extended period. When not on campus: Call the 911 listing in your local community for any emergency.
To receive information, call the main number (213) 740-2711, press #2. “For recorded announcements, events, emergency communications or critical incident information.”

To leave a message, call (213) 740-8311
For additional university information, please call (213) 740-9233
Or visit university website: http://emergency.usc.edu

If it becomes necessary to evacuate the building, please go to the following locations carefully and using stairwells only. Never use elevators in an emergency evacuation.

Students may also sign up for a USC Trojans Alert account to receive alerts and emergency notifications on their cell phone, pager, PDA, or e-mail account. Register at https://trojansalert.usc.edu.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIVERSITY PARK CAMPUS</th>
<th>ACADEMIC CENTERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City Center Front of Building</td>
<td>Orange County Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12th &amp; Olive)</td>
<td>Parking Lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRF Lot B</td>
<td>San Diego Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWC Lot B</td>
<td>Skirball Front of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VKC McCarthy Quad</td>
<td>Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WPH McCarthy Quad</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Do not re-enter the building until given the “all clear” by emergency personnel.

**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**

Papers are due on the day and time specified. Extensions will be granted only for extenuating circumstances. If the paper is late without permission, the grade will be affected. Your instructor will provide you with details about this policy regarding late papers, but generally, it is a half a grade per day.

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

It may be necessary to make some adjustments in the syllabus during the semester in order to respond to unforeseen or extenuating circumstances. Adjustments that are made will be communicated to students both verbally and in writing.

**XVI. CODE OF ETHICS OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS**

Approved by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly and revised by the 2008 NASW Delegate Assembly [http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/Code/code.asp]

**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.

XVII. 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 your advisor. If you do not receive a satisfactory response or solution, contact Dr. Paul Maiden, Vice Dean and Professor of Academic and Student Affairs, at rmaiden@usc.edu. Or, if you are a student of the VAC, contact June Wiley, Director of the Virtual Academic Center, at (213) 821-0901 or june.wiley@usc.edu for further guidance.

XVIII. TIPS FOR MAXIMIZING YOUR LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN THIS COURSE

- Be mindful of getting proper nutrition, exercise, rest and sleep!
- Come to class.
- Complete required readings and assignments BEFORE coming to class.
- BEFORE coming to class, review the materials from the previous Unit AND the current Unit, AND scan the topics to be covered in the next Unit.
- Come to class prepared to ask any questions you might have.
- Participate in class discussions.
- AFTER you leave class, review the materials assigned for that Unit again, along with your notes from that Unit.
- If you don’t understand something, ask questions! Ask questions in class, during office hours, and/or through email!
- Keep up with the assigned readings.

Don’t procrastinate or postpone working on assignments.