

Study Guide

SASS 426 Research Methods in social work

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the research methods and tools used in social work. It includes qualitative and quantitative research content that provides understanding of a scientific, analytic, and ethical approach to building knowledge for practice. The content prepares students to develop, use and effectively communicate empirically based knowledge, including evidence-based interventions. Research knowledge is used by students to provide high-quality services; to initiate change; to improve practice, policy and social service delivery; and to evaluate their own practice.

The class will employ a critical perspective with the goal that students will be able to judge the strengths and weaknesses of research designs and the degree to which ethical standards have been met. Students are introduced to the formulation of scientifically testable research questions and hypotheses of importance in social work. They will learn how to design studies so that they are effective in addressing social work research questions. The concept of validity is introduced and the course examines measurement, sampling and research design from the point of view of the degree of confidence that can be placed in research findings that are produced by these methods. The importance of conducting research in ways that respect cultural diversity and are valid across diverse populations will be emphasized. The course will include qualitative and quantitative methods.

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Course Objectives

1. Critically evaluate the validity of research designs used in social work research.
2. Critically evaluate the measures used in social work research.

3. Interpret basic statistics and draw conclusions about effect sizes and statistical and clinical significance.
4. Interpret quantitative & qualitative research for practice.
5. Determine whether research has been conducted ethically & whether the research methods were culturally appropriate and competent.
6. Critically summarize research findings & evaluate the quality of the evidence & implications for social work practice.

Texts: Required

Grinnell, R. M., Williams, M., & Unrau, Y. A. (2016). *Research Methods for Social Workers: An Introduction*, 11th Edition. Kalamazoo, MI: Pair Bond Publications.

Galvan, J. L. (2014). *Writing Literature Reviews: A Guide for Students of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 6th Edition. Glendale, CA: Pyczak Publishing.

Skloot, R. (2011). *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. NY: Broadway Paperbacks.

Texts: Recommended

Faulkner, C. A. & Faulkner, S. S. (2014). *Research Methods for Social Workers: A Practice-Based Approach*, 2nd Edition. Chicago: Lyceum Books.

Harris, S. R. (2014). *How to Critique Journal Articles in the Social Sciences*. Los Angeles: Publication.

Shon, P.C.H. (2013). *How to Read Journal Articles in the Social Sciences: A Very Practical Guide for Students*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Strunk, W., & White, E. B. (2000). *The Elements of Style* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Trochim, W.M. *The Research Methods Knowledge Base*, 2nd Ed. Internet WWW page at URL <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb> (version current as of October 2006). This is a free online text!