

Mary Baldwin University
Department of Social Work
SOWK 317
Social Work Research - Online
Fall 2021

Professor: Erika Bischof, LCSW

Office Hours: None. If needed, email and set up a time to meet.

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Course Description

This course is designed to increase skills and knowledge of research as a tool for social work practice. Students will acquire basic skills and knowledge to utilize existing social research for practice-related decision making as well as the capacity to carry out systematic methods of inquiry in their practice setting. *Prerequisite: INT 222.*

Required Texts

Yegidis, B.L., Weinbach, R.W., & Myers, L.L. (2011). *Research methods for social workers* (7th ed.). Allyn & Bacon.

National Association of Social Workers (2017). Code of ethics. Washington, DC: NASW.
<https://www.socialworkers.org/about/ethics/code-of-ethics>

Course Competencies and Practice Behaviors (P.B.)

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to demonstrate achievement of the following:

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| Competency 2.1.1 | Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly |
| P.B. 2.1.1.a: | Advocate for client access to the services of social work |
| P.B. 2.1.1.b: | Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development |
| P.B. 2.1.1. c: | Attend to professional roles and boundaries |
| P.B. 2.1.1. d: | Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance and communication |
| P.B. 2.1.1. e: | Engage in career-long learning |
| P.B. 2.1.1. f: | Use supervision and consultation |
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| Competency 2.1.2. Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice | |
| P.B. 2.1.2.a: | Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice |
| P.B. 2.1.2.b: | Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, and, as applicable, International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles |
| P.B. 2.1.2.c: | Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts |
| P.B. 2.1.2.d: | Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions |

Competency 2.1.3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments

- P.B. 2.1.3.a: Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge and practice wisdom
- P.B. 2.1.3.b: Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention and evaluation
- P.B. 2.1.3.c: Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities and colleagues

Competency 2.1.4. Engage diversity and difference in practice

- P.B. 2.1.4.a: Recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate or enhance privilege and power
- P.B. 2.1.4.b: Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups
- P.B. 2.1.4.c: Recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences
- P.B. 2.1.4.d: View themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants

Competency 2.1.5. Advance human rights and social and economic justice

- P.B. 2.1.5.a: Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination
- P.B. 2.1.5.b: Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice
- P.B. 2.1.5.c: Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice

Competency 2.1.6. Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research

- P.B. 2.1.6.a: Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry
- P.B. 2.1.6.b: Use research evidence to inform practice

Competency 2.1.9. Respond to contexts that shape practice

- P.B. 2.1.9.a: Continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services
- P.B. 2.1.9.b: Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services

Definition of social work practice

The generalist approach to social work practice supported by concepts drawn from social systems theory and utilizing ecosystems prospective is attentive to person and environment and their interactions. Generalist practice is based on research-guided knowledge and uses a planned change process to determine the level or levels of intervention – individuals, family, group, organization, and/or community – appropriate to addressing the issues presented. It recognizes the profession’s dual purpose and responsibility to influence social as well as individual change. Particular attention is given to work with diverse populations incorporating ideologies of democracy, humanism and social justice. Overarching and influencing the generalist approach are the values and ethics of the profession.

Writing

Professional social workers keep case records, write treatment reports for referral sources and managed care companies, correspond with judges and other professionals, develop policy, and advocate for their clients. All of these tasks require excellent writing skills. Therefore proper grammar, syntax, spelling, and appropriate referencing are expected for all assignments and will be factored into your grade. You must adhere to the style guidelines of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th Edition – please note the change to the 7th edition manual as of 1/6/2020)*.

Learning

We all learn differently. If you have a documented learning disability and need additional accommodations in learning, please let me know at the beginning of the semester. Students are encouraged to contact the Learning Skills Center for additional support in this area.

Personal and Professional Behavior

Students are expected to use learning time to foster the use of professional behavior and practice skills used as a social worker. Lesson work offers students the opportunity for self-reflection, experimentation with unfamiliar ways of thinking and acting, the challenge of dependability and timeliness in completing assignments, and appreciation of the mutual accountability between instructor and student. This includes your ability to uphold the requirements in the MBU Honor Code. *Please be aware that your professors will be documenting your success in these areas as you progress through the BSW program.*

Extended Time (ET) Policy

ET requests are not recommended; however, may be granted under certain circumstances. ET requests **MUST** be discussed with and approved by the instructor. In order to qualify for an ET, students must have completed at least seven quizzes and the written literature analysis.

Course Requirements

Students must complete **all assignments** (quizzes, discussions, papers, exams, etc.) in order to receive a grade of “C” or higher.

Assignments

Chapter Quizzes

Due: Weekly

Questions assess identification and comprehension of concepts. Quizzes may also include application questions. Quizzes will be given to make sure students understand the material. Please note that of the thirteen quizzes, the ten best scores will compose your quiz grade calculation. Quizzes are timed. Students are expected to read the material before taking the quiz online and refrain from using their textbook.

Literature Analysis

Due: 10/9/21

Using library resources and approved social work journals, locate and read five published social work articles on a selected topic of interest to you. Examples of professional journals include but are not limited to: *Social Work, Clinical Social Work, Health & Social Work, Journal of Family Social Work, Social Service Review, Journal of Gerontological Social Work, and Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*. You may choose to utilize additional articles, textbooks, or legitimate resources to supplement your analysis. One of the chosen research articles will be submitted online with your paper.

Write a 3–4-page literature analysis that is selective to describe and analyze your topic. Your analysis will include the following:

- What is the identified topic?
- How does this topic apply to social work?
- Why is this topic of interest to you?
- What are the most current/relevant issues related to your topic?
- How has your topic been researched?
- What are the research findings?
- Are research findings consistent?
- What needs continued research?
- What significant questions are you raising?

For example, child abuse is an appropriate area of research but has extensive information. Consider what specifically about child abuse you are interested in (type of abuse, predictors, protective factors, treatment modalities, etc.) and analyze relevant published research accordingly. Compose an overview and analysis of your topic by using research to raise significant questions.

⇒ Papers are worth 80 pts and will be graded according to: submission of article (10%), composition, format, APA (10%), identification of topic (20%), integration of information and summary of research (30%), organization of ideas and use of research (20%), and critical thinking (10%).

⇒ Please note that the format for this paper should answer the questions listed above in a narrative format not a question/answer format. Students will be graded on their ability to synthesize the information into this research paper. APA format will include a title page and reference page.

Research Proposal

Due: 12/10/21

I. Problem statement (1/2 page)

Utilize seven professional social work journal articles and other relevant information to introduce your research topic. Familiarize the reader with your topic by summarizing key issues and past research findings.

II. Justification (1/2 page)

Describe your topic's relationship and significance to social work practice.

III. Research question and related hypothesis (1/2 page)

Based upon your problem statement (Part I), identify one researchable question that you would like to answer. Identify your study as qualitative or quantitative and the nature of your research. Clearly indicate your research hypothesis (your tentative answer to your question).

IV. Variables (1/2 page)

Describe the concepts and variables pertinent to your hypothesis. Identify and describe the independent and dependent variables. Provide conceptual and operational definitions of each variable.

V. Measurement (1 page)

Locate or develop the measurement instrument you will use to collect data about these variables. Discuss why you chose such instrument and how the validity and reliability are ensured. Describe the instrument in detail and attach a copy as Appendix A. Identify the level of measurement (i.e., nominal, ordinal, interval, ratio) that will occur.

VI. Target population and sampling approach (1/2 page)

Discuss your sampling frame, approach, and method. Identify your population if applicable and your target population (i.e., the group to whom the study's results are expected to apply). Explain how you will draw your sample from your population. Discuss and justify your anticipated sample size.

VII. Design (1/2 page)

Describe the research design you will use. Identify your design as a case-level or group-level design and the general type (exploratory/descriptive) as well as specific type of design (i.e., longitudinal, pre-posttest, cross-sectional, etc.). Explain if your study would be an 'ideal' experiment and discuss ethical issues that need to be considered.

VIII. Data collection (1/2 page)

Describe how you will collect data and what type of data you will utilize. Identify if your study would protect confidentiality and/or anonymity. Justify your data collection strategy. Explain in detail one threat to internal validity.

IX. Summary and critique of your proposal (1/2 page)

Identify at least one strength and one limitation of your study. Will your results be generalizable? Identify any measurement or constant error. Address any ethical or social justice issues.

- ⇒ Proposals are worth 120 pts and will be evaluated according to: application and discussion of research concepts (70%), identification and justification of topic (5%), research question/hypothesis (10%), organization, composition/format, APA (5%) and critical thinking (10%).
- ⇒ APA format will include a title page and reference page.

Final Exam or Comprehensive Exam

Due: 8/20/21

According to MBU policy, all senior students are required to take the social work comprehensive exam. This exam will account for 10% of your research course grade. For example, if you earn 100% on your comprehensive exam, you will earn 50 of a possible 50 points toward your course grade (90% on comprehensive exam = 45/50 points, 80% = 40/50, etc.). Students who are not required to take the comprehensive MBU exam (such as junior status or non-social work majors) will complete the research course final exam. This exam will consist of multiple-choice questions that cover the entire course material and is due the last week of class.

Participation

Students will participate in class by turning in assignments on time, watching/listening to material posted online to Canvas, and completing discussion boards/reflections from online material. Each week will have opportunities for students to practice concrete skills related to research and understanding how to practically use research to support your work with clients. Canvas will have a detailed description of each week's expectations for participation. All assignments must be completed by the end of the course in order to earn at least a "C" grade in the class and receive all 50 points for participation.

Honor Code

Mary Baldwin students pledge to uphold the Honor Code. They pledge to refrain from cheating on assignments, papers, and tests. To refrain from plagiarism and to always be honest in their dealings with faculty, staff, and other students. To maintain the integrity of the system, students, faculty, and staff who witness Honor Code infractions are expected to report them. By participating in this class, students are agreeing to adhere to the MBU Honor Code and Code of Conduct.

Grading

Requirement	Points
1. Participation	50
2. Literature Analysis	80
3. Chapter Quizzes	200 (20 pts. per quiz, top 10/13)
4. Research Proposal	120
5. Final Exam/Comprehensive Exam	50
Total points:	500 points

Grading Scale

A 93–100
A- 90–92
B+ 87–89
B 83–86
B- 80–82
C+ 77–79
C 73–76
C- 70–72
D+ 67–69
D 63–66
D- 60–62
F under 60

Course Schedule

Week	Dates	Topic(s)	Due
1	8/30/21-9/4/21	Course Overview Toward Evidence-Based Practice	Obtain textbook; Read syllabus; Chapt. 1 Quiz See Canvas for additional work.
2	9/5/21-9/11/21	Research Problems and Questions	Chapt. 3 Quiz See Canvas for additional work.
3	9/12/21-9/18/21	Finding and Using Existing Knowledge	Chapt. 4 Quiz See Canvas for additional work.
4	9/19/21-9/25/21	Focused Research Questions and Research Hypotheses	Chapt. 5 Quiz See Canvas for additional work.
5	9/26/21-10/2/21	Group Research Designs	Chapt. 6 Quiz See Canvas for additional work.
6	10/3/21-10/9/21	Literature Analysis	Literature Analysis (LA) due; No material on Canvas this week so students can focus on the LA.
7	10/10/21- 10/14/21	Single-System Evaluation Designs	Chapt. 7 Quiz See Canvas for additional work.
8	10/19/21- 10/23/21	Qualitative Research Methods	Chapt. 8 Quiz See Canvas for additional work.
9	10/24/21- 10/30/21	Sampling Issues and Options	Chapt. 9 Quiz See Canvas for additional work.
10	10/31/21-11/6/21	Measurement Concepts and Issues Methods for Acquiring Research Data	Chapt. 10 & 11 Quizzes See Canvas for additional work.
11	11/7/21-11/13/21	Data Collection Instruments	Chapt. 12 Quiz See Canvas for additional work.
12	11/14/21- 11/20/21	Analyzing Data/Disseminating Research Findings	Chapt. 13 & 14 Quiz See Canvas for additional work.
13	11/21/21- 11/23/21	Ethical Issues in Research	Chapt. 2 Quiz
14	11/29/21-12/4/21	Course Review	Outline for Research Proposal (RP) due; No

			material on Canvas this week so students can focus on the RP.
15	12/5/21-12/10/21	Course Review	Final Exam/Comprehensive Exam due Research Proposal due

All coursework due 12/10/2021.

* Please note: the instructor reserves the right to adjust the class syllabus to meet the needs of the students. There will be no extensions permitted for the final exam and research proposal.