

University of Texas at Arlington
School of Social Work
SOCW 3305: Social Work Research (Section 003/004)
Dates: August 22nd through December 4th

Instructor and Contact Information:

Andrea N. Cimino, MSW, PhD

Email: acimino@uta

*Please list SOCW3305 in the subject heading for all emails

Office Location: 101D, Building A

Office Hours: By appt. via email

Accessing the Course

You will need a computer with a reliable Internet connection to access the course website. Go to <http://elearn.uta.edu/> and login using your UTA NETID.

Online 24/7 BlackBoard Technical Support Contact Information

Contact UTA BlackBoard Support if you have problems by calling 855-308-5542 or visiting <http://bbsupport.uta.edu/ics/support/splash.asp> to chat live with a technician

Read the FAQ: <http://bbsupport.uta.edu/link/portal/8272/8568/ArticleFolder/507/Students>

I. Class Descriptions/Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Educational Policy

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

Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information. Social workers:

- (a) Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom.
- (b) Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation; and

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

Social workers 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. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers:

- (a) Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry and
- (b) Use research evidence to inform practice.

II. Course Catalog Description

This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of and ability to use the evidence-informed practice process to identify, analyze and apply evidence-informed interventions. Students will be able to comprehend both quantitative and qualitative research and to synthesize strengths and weaknesses of the social work literature. Students will be able to synthesize and evaluate research in terms of its content, quality, and applicability to clients. Students will understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge to apply to and evaluate the impact of interventions on clients or clients' presenting problems.

III. Student Learning Outcomes

1. Identify elements of an evidence-based practice model, the research process and social work research methods with application to the process of evidence-based practice and evaluation of social work practice and programs.
2. Use and critically examine existing literature with emphasis on issues regarding cultural diversity, gender, sexual orientation, and sensitive topics (i.e., social and economic justice, oppression, and populations at risk).
3. Apply relevant social, cultural, economic and other diversity factors in the selection of topics, the methods employed, the nature of analysis, and the conclusions drawn in the research endeavor.
4. Apply scientific methods to issues of concern for social workers, including how to formulate meaningful research questions, select appropriate research designs, develop and employ basic methods of data collection and conduct quantitative and qualitative analysis.
5. Use empirical studies as a knowledge base to support professional interventions and decisions for the enhancement of client well-being.
6. Interpret statistical concepts and present results as they apply to social work.

IV. Required Readings

Maschi, T., & Youdin, R. (2012). *Social worker as researcher: Integrating research with advocacy*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

*Additional required readings are provided on the BlackBoard site.

V. UTA Policies

Students are responsible for reviewing and complying with all UTA policies including:

Academic Integrity: <http://www.uta.edu/conduct/academic-integrity/index.php>

Student Code of Conduct: <http://www.uta.edu/conduct/code-of-conduct/index.php>

Academic Regulations: Registration, adding/dropping/withdrawing, and grading policies http://www.uta.edu/catalog/content/general/academic_regulations.aspx

Financial Aid: <http://www.uta.edu/ses/fao>

Americans with Disabilities Act: www.uta.edu/disability or call the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364

IT Policies and Procedures: <http://www.uta.edu/oit/policy/index.php>

MavMail/Electronic Communication: <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>

Student Feedback Survey: UTA's efforts to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback data is required by state law; student participation in the SFS program is voluntary. <http://www.uta.edu/sfs/>

Social work students are responsible for complying with NASW's Code of Ethics: <http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>

*Academic dishonesty is completely unacceptable and is not tolerated in any form (UT System Regents' Rule 50101, §2.2). Suspected violations of academic integrity standards will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy and may result in suspension or expulsion from UTA.

VI. Evaluation of Performance and Assignments

A. Responsibilities

By enrolling in this course, you have joined an online community of adult learners. As such, you are invited to contribute to our learning community through discussion, comments, and questions related to course objectives and content during the semester. We jointly share the responsibility for maintaining a safe, respectful, and appropriate learning environment throughout the semester. Course discussion messages should remain focused on the assigned discussion topics. Students must maintain a cordial atmosphere and use tact in expressing differences of opinion. Inappropriate discussion board messages may be deleted if an instructor feels it is necessary. Students will be notified privately that their postings were inappropriate.

Students are expected to:

- Login to the class website with your UTA NETID **at least twice a week** by going to <http://elearn.uta.edu/>
- Complete all required readings, quizzes and activities in a timely manner
- Plan for inclement weather resulting in web/power outages that may affect your ability to complete assignments. Reliable access to the Internet is your responsibility
- Check Announcements posted on the course Blackboard and their UTA email daily
- Grant permission for her/his writing to be posted on a public forum to be available to peers enrolled in this course
- Ensure all written assignments are in your own words except where it was properly cited
- Communicate with peers and the instructor in a professional and courteous manner at all times. Rude, disruptive and/or discourteous behaviour is grounds for **Administrative Removal** (a grade of “W” on your transcript) from this class. The instructor has the option of giving you one warning before removing you from the class.
- **Contact Blackboard Support if you encounter problems taking the online tests:** <http://bbsupport.uta.edu/ics/support/splash.asp> or call: 855-308-5542
- **Contact librarian for assistance writing papers.** John Dillard (dillard@uta.edu) in the Social Work Electronic Library, room A-111, visit <http://libraries.uta.edu/dillard/>

Instructor/TA is expected to:

- a) be well-prepared for each course unit,
- b) be available to students to answer questions and comments about this course,
- c) provide constructive feedback as needed on student assignments and
- d) do his/her part to provide a classroom space that is intellectually and personally challenging and safe for discussing and critiquing controversial issues and ideas.

B. General Guidelines

This class is designed so that you can work at your own pace (i.e., everything is open now). However, timely completion of assignments is required for this course. **Late assignments will be accepted without penalty only in documented cases of emergency (e.g., hospitalization). Sorry, no exceptions.** No incompletes or additional extra credit will be given for this course.

Each week you should:

1. Check Blackboard at least twice; announcements will be updated on the home page.
2. View the lecture PowerPoints in each module to expand upon and explain content.

3. Complete all textbook and supplemental readings as noted in the course calendar.
4. Complete all assignments as listed in the course calendar. Links to the quizzes/assignments are available in the corresponding module folder in BlackBoard.
5. Evaluate whether you understand the course materials. If have questions about the course materials, then please email your questions to the professor (acimino@uta.edu).

The following standards apply to all written papers:

- Papers must be uploaded to *SafeAssign*, a plagiarism checker, by 11:55pm on Saturday the week they are due; **NO late papers will be accepted.**
- Unless noted otherwise, all assignments must be typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, and 12 point Times New Roman font
- All sources must be cited in accordance with the Publication Manual (6th Edition) of the American Psychological Association (APA)
- You are strongly encouraged to contact John Dillard (dillard@uta.edu) for assistance writing papers or have your peers proofread your papers. You will lose points for incomplete sentences and other basic grammatical errors.

*All assignments are available until the due date posted on the Course Calendar. No assignment can be taken after the deadline listed on the calendar—NO EXCEPTIONS!

C. Breakdown of Assignments and Points

1) Quizzes	20 points total
1.1 Assessment of Readiness (2.5 pts.)	
1.2 Syllabus Quiz (2.5 pts.)	
1.3 Human Subjects Training (5 pts.)	
1.4 Plagiarism (5 pts.)	
1.5 Ethics Quiz (5 pts.)	
2) Discussion Board	20 points total
2.1 Quant Designs (10 pts.)	
2.2 Qual Sampling (10 pts.)	
3) Research Proposal	60 points total
3.1 Research Question/Lit review (30 pts.)	
3.2 Study Design (30 pts.)	
4) Optional Final Exam (optional)	10 bonus points
<hr/>	
Total: 110 points possible (perfect score is 100)	

D. Course Assignments

Overview and Purpose: This online course consists of a combination of readings, PPT lectures and videos, as well as quizzes and written papers, which are designed to ensure that you will meet core competencies for this and future courses. Students are encouraged meet with their instructor to discuss any difficulties they have with the class or assignments. By request, the instructor can provide *general feedback* on an outline of your paper, but will *not read or edit* an early draft of an assignment. All assignments are due **Saturday at 11:55pm** each week as listed in the syllabus. **No late assignments will be accepted.**

1) Quizzes (five, 20 points total)

You will take **five quizzes** during the course consisting of true/false or multiple-choice questions, which are graded on whether you completed them or not (i.e., not by a score). Please see the specific module and quiz for details and instructions. You may refer to your textbook or other materials, but **not another student**. Reading the assigned materials will assist you in learning the material and being successful on the quizzes.

2) Discussion Board (two, 20 points total)

There are two DB assignments, which are graded on whether or not you completed them. Students will read the assigned material and respond to questions (5 points). Students must then reply to another student's post to complete the assignment (5 points). Please see the specific module and quiz for details and instructions.

3) Research Proposal (two parts, 60 points total)

Students will develop 1) a research question/hypothesis with a lit review and 2) propose a research study (i.e., qualitative, quantitative, or mixed/both) to answer the question. In general, the first part should address broad purpose/research question, present relevant literature, ethics, and strengths and limitations of current research. The second part of the proposal should cover study design and appropriateness for the question posed, sampling, reliability and validity, generalizability, and implications for social work. Please see the "Grading Rubric" at the end of the syllabus for details. **Review the rubric** before turning in your paper to ensure you have covered all areas. ***All research questions must be reviewed/approved in week 6.**

Both parts of the paper should be **3-5 pages long each** (double-spaced, 6-10 pages total) and must include the grading rubric pasted at the end of your paper. Students will **upload a copy to SafeAssign and follow APA guidelines**. As a rule, sentences should be carefully comprised of a student's own words. Incorrectly cited material is considered plagiarized and is grounds for academic discipline—when in doubt, cite! Review the plagiarism/APA module if needed.

4) Optional Final Exam (10 bonus points).

Students have the option of taking a final exam to earn bonus points. The exam is cumulative, meaning that it includes all content covered during the class. Any points earned will be added to your final grade. There are **no other extra credit** opportunities or ways to earn additional credit. ****Once you start the exam, you must complete it in one sitting** (cannot stop and restart) and it is timed to **stop after two hours** (120 minutes).

E. Grading Scale and Policies

Points	Grade	Points	Grade
100 – 90	A	69 – 60	D
89 – 80	B	59 – 50	F
79 – 70	C		

*Final exam bonus points are added to your score, meaning you can earn over 100 points.

Grade Descriptions

An 'A' grade means that a student is doing **outstanding** or **excellent** work, attends class regularly, hands in all of the course assignments and demonstrates a thorough grasp of the material. Students must go well above and beyond the basic expectations for the course.

A 'B' grade means that a student is doing **at least satisfactory** to **very good** work, and meeting the minimum requirements for the course. The student attends class regularly, hands in all of the course assignments, and demonstrates a basic level of understanding of the course concepts. In most courses, **a majority of students would be expected to achieve at the B level.**

A 'C' grade means that a student is doing **adequate** or **inconsistent** work. The student does not attend class regularly, fails to hand in some of the course assignments, and/or fails to demonstrate a basic level of understanding of the course concepts.

A 'D' grade means that a student is doing **barely adequate** work. Although a grade of 'D' may be sufficient for an undergraduate to earn credit in a course, a cumulative University grade point average of at least 2.0 is necessary for satisfactory progress toward a degree.

A 'F' grade means that a student is doing **unacceptable** work, demonstrating a serious lack of understanding of course concepts.

When to Expect Grades: Grades are posted in the "MyGrades" section on BB. In most cases, expect the professor to grade assignments 2 weeks after the due date (note: the department requirement for grading is within 3 weeks of the due date).

Incompletes: I do not grant incompletes for the course. Your options are to drop the class or take it again to earn a higher grade (repeats allowed for grades of D or F only).

Suggestions for Earning a Good Grade. I took great care in designing the class to facilitate your learning. In other words, I didn't assign something (reading, quiz, paper) because I wanted to waste your time; I assigned it because you need to know it. Please read and listen to all assigned materials carefully. Additionally, the attached rubric is used to grade your proposal and should help you understand what I expect to see in your work.

Please note that simply meeting the assignment's minimum requirements will likely result in a 'C' grade (see grade descriptions above). For example, mentioning 'there are no ethical issues in this study' will get you the minimum points. Instead, saying that there are no ethical issues because the participants are adults and the study is anonymous (e.g., explaining *why*) will likely score a 'B' grade. An even better response will provide an answer, explain how and why that is the "right" answer, and will *demonstrate a sophistication of thought by exploring all aspects* of the given issue. So, there may be no ethical issues because the participants are adults and the study is anonymous, however, because the study asks about sensitive information, participants may become upset and counseling resources are provided upon request—this shows a deep, and thoughtful consideration of potential issues, and goes above and beyond expectations, thus earning an 'A' grade.

VII. Course Outline

Readings are listed for the classes they are due. Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are available on BlackBoard. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus and calendar as deemed necessary and will notify students via UTA email and BB announcements.

#	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
1	8/22 to 8/24	Introduction Review syllabus Role of Research & Evaluation Foundation in human rights and social justice	Maschi ch. 1	Online learning & syllabus quiz Sat. 11:55p
2	8/25 to 8/31	Values & Ethics in Research Rights & Responsibilities; Deadly Deception http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCYdI2b_9Vs	Maschi ch. 2 *Malone 2003	Ethics quiz Sat. 11:55p
3	9/1 to 9/7	Critical Thinking & EBP The Scientific Method Evidence-Based Practice Research Questions	Maschi ch. 3 *Gambriel, 2010	IRB training Sat. 11:55p
4	9/8 to 9/14	Problem Formation & Methods Study Types (Qual/Quant) Research, Practice & Theory	Maschi ch. 4	
5	9/15 to 9/21	Literature as Source Evidence Case examples, Practice & Empirical Literacy Scholarly Literature	Maschi ch. 5	Plagiarism and APA quiz Sat. 11:55p
6	9/22 to 9/28	Writing for Change Commitment & Purpose Writing Lit Reviews	Maschi ch. 12	Research question due Sat. 11:55p
7	9/29 to 10/5	Sampling in EBP Generalizable, Homogenous & Representative Sampling methods	Maschi ch. 6	Lit review due Sat. 11:55p
8	10/6 to 10/12	Quantitative Research Overview Anatomy of a quant study	Maschi ch. 7 *Walker, 2005	
9	10/13 to 10/19	Quantitative Designs Causation Experimental, Quasi, Non-exp.	Maschi ch. 8 *Rubin, 2008	
10	10/20 to 10/26	Quant: Measurement & Data Reliability & Validity Describing Data	*Rubin, 2008 *Bloom et al., 2009	Design DB Sat. 11:55p
11	10/27 to 11/2	Single Subject Designs Purpose Elements	Maschi ch. 9	

12	11/3 to 11/9	Qualitative Research pt. 1 Nature, Philosophy Sampling	Maschi ch. 10 *Creswell et al., 2007 *Patton, 1990	
13	11/10 to 11/16	Qualitative Research pt. 2 Data collection & Analysis Trustworthiness	Maschi ch. 10 (again) *Lietz et al., 2007	Qualitative DB Sat. 11:55p
14	11/17 to 11/23	Review Week Review all the Modules in preparation for your paper	*Rubin, 2008 MODULES 6-12	
15	11/24 to 11/30	Evaluation as a Theory of Change Conceptualizing Change Logic Models & Evaluation	Maschi ch. 11	Study design/ proposal due Sat. 11:55p
16	12/1 to 12/4	Review Week Prepare for optional Final Exam	ALL MODULES	Final exam (optional) Sat. 11:55p

Grading Rubric

Research Question and Lit Review—Research Proposal, Part 1 (30 pts.)

Students will develop a research question or hypothesis and provide a literature review including broad purpose/research question, present relevant literature, ethics, and strengths and limitations of current research. ***All research questions must be reviewed/approved in week 6.**

The written paper should be **about 3-5 pages long** (double-spaced) and must include the grading rubric pasted at the end of the assignment. Students will **upload a copy to SafeAssign, cite SIX articles and follow APA guidelines**. As a rule, sentences should be carefully comprised of a student's own words. Incorrectly cited material is considered plagiarized and is grounds for academic discipline. Review the plagiarism module if needed.

Research Question & Lit Review Grading Rubric	Unacceptable (D/F)	Adequate (C)	Proficient (B)	Exemplar (A)
Grammar & Organization *Writing free of grammar errors, meets limits. *Material is well organized & easy to follow. *Followed APA citations	1	2	3-4	5-6
Current Knowledge of the Problem: *Existing knowledge extensively discussed *Strengths and limitations of current research *Used at least SIX journal articles	1	2	3-4	5-6
Problem Statement or Research Question: *Stated simply *Identified variables being investigated	1	2	3-4	5-6
Ethics: *Identified potential ethical issues *IRB and NASW code of ethics discussed (Cite NASW code of ethics and Malone article)	1	2	3-4	5-6
Relevance to Social Work Practice: *Explained why the study is important to the field *Identified gap being filled *Described social worker's typical role with clients experiencing this issue	1	2	3-4	5-6
Checklist of Required Steps (1pt bonus) *Research question approved? *Submitted to SafeAssign? *Attached the rubric? *Has smiled at least once today?	.25	.25	.25	.25
Instructor Comments:				

Grading Rubric

Study Design—Research Proposal, Part 2

(30 pts.)

Students will design a study to answer their research question developed in part 1. The study should cover study design and appropriateness for the question posed, sampling, reliability and validity, generalizability, and implications for social work. The study design part should be **about 3-5 pages long** (double-spaced, 6-10 pages total), and will be **uploaded to SafeAssign**.

*Students must include the first half of the assignment (lit review) to the beginning of this assignment AND paste the 2nd grading rubric at the end of your paper. In other words, you will **turn in the FULL PROPOSAL** (parts 1 & 2) and the second rubric. It is recommended that you correct errors the first half of the paper at this time, as you might get bonus points.

Study Design Grading Rubric	Unacceptable (D/F)	Marginal (C)	Proficient (B)	Exemplar (A)
Grammar & Organization *Writing free of grammar errors, meets limits. *Material is well organized & easy to follow. *Followed APA citations	1	2	3-4	5-6
Purpose and Design *State the study's specific research question/hypothesis. *What is the type (qual/quant), study design, and why is it appropriate for the question/hypothesis? *Strengths/weakness thoroughly discussed.	1	2	3-4	5-6
Sampling Plan *What is the sampling plan and why is it appropriate for the questions/hypotheses posed? *How generalizable are the results? *Strengths/weakness thoroughly discussed.	1	2	3-4	5-6
Measurement & Instrumentation *What are the constructs and how are they defined? *How will data be collected (i.e., measures, observations, interviews, etc.) *Are they appropriate for the population/topic (e.g., culturally sensitive, developmentally appropriate, etc.)? *Address the strengths and limitations of the measures (i.e., reliability and validity) OR trustworthiness	1	2	3-4	5-6
Implications *What are the implications of the findings for social work practice and/or policy?	1	2	3-4	5-6
Checklist of Required Steps (1pt total) *Submitted to SafeAssign? *Pasted the 1 st half of the assignment? *Attached the rubric? *Corrected errors in 1 st half of the assignment?	.25	.25	.25	.25
Instructor Comments:				

Want to know more? Recommended Resources

- Beebe, L. (1993). *Professional writing for the human services*. Washington, D.C.: NASW Press.
- Anastas, J. W. & MacDonald, M. L. (1994). *Research design for social work and the human services*. NY: Lexington Books.
- Rubin, A. & Babbie, E. (1997). *Research methods for social work (3rd ed.)*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Davis, L. (1986). A feminist approach to social work research. *Affilia*, 1(1), 32-47.
- DePoy, E., Hartman, A. & Haslett, D. (1999). Critical action research: A model for social work knowing. *Social Work*, 44(6), 560-568.
- Harding, S. (1991). *Whose science? Whose knowledge?* Ithaca, NY: Cornell.
- Maynard, M. & Purvis, J. (1994). *Researching women's lives from a feminist perspective*. Bristol, PA: Taylor & Francis.
- Stanfield, J. H. (1993). *Race and ethnicity in research methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Thyer, B. A. (1993). Social work theory and practice research: The approach of logical positivism. *Social Work and Social Sciences Review*, 4(1), 5-26.
- Tyson, K. B. (1992). A new approach to relevant scientific research for practitioners: The heuristic paradigm. *Social Work*, 37(6), 541-556.
- Waller, M.A., Risley-Curtiss, C., Murphy, S., Medill, A., & Moore, G. (1998). Harnessing the positive power of language: American Indian women, a case example. *Journal of Poverty*, 2, 63-81.
- Herek, G. H., Kimmel, D. S., Amaro, H., & Melton, G. B. (1991). Avoiding heterosexist bias in psychological research. *American Psychologist*, 46(9), 957-963.
- McMahon, A. & Allen-Meares, P. (1992). Is social work racist? A content analysis of recent literature. *Social Work*, 37(6), 533-540.
- Sieber, J. E. (1992). *Planning ethically responsible research: A guide for students and internal review boards*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Luey, H.S., Glass, L., & Elloit, H. (1995). Hard-of-hearing or deaf: Issues of ears, language, culture and identity. *Social Work*, 40(2), 177-182.
- Rubin, A., Bischofshausen, S., Conroy-Moore, K. Dennis, B., Hastie, M., Melnick, L., & Reeves, D. (2001). The effectiveness of EMDR in a child guidance center. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 11(4), 435-457.
- Shapiro, S.L., Brown, K.W., & Beigel, G.M. (2007). Teaching self-care to caregivers: Effects of mindfulness based stress reduction on mental health therapists in training. *Training and education in professional psychology*, 1(2), 105-115.
- Cervantes, R. C., & Arroyo, W. (1994). DSM-IV: Implications for Hispanic children and adolescents. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 16(1), 8-27.
- Phinney, J. S. (1992). The multigroup ethnic identity measure: A new scale for use with diverse groups. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 7(2), 156-176.
- Becerra, R. M. & Zambrana, R. E. (1985). Methodological approaches to research on Hispanics. *Social Work Research & Abstracts*, 2(2), 42-49.
- Berg, B.L. (2009). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Ferguson, K.M. & Islam, N. Conceptualizing outcomes with street-living young adults: Grounded theory approach to evaluating the social enterprise intervention. *Qualitative Social Work*, 7(2), 217-237.
- Green, J., & Leigh, J. W. (1989). Teaching ethnographic methods to social service workers. *Practicing Anthropology*, 11(3), 8-10.
- Messing, J. T. (2006). From the child's perspective: A qualitative analysis of kinship care placements. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 28(12), 1415-1434.
- Riessman, C. K. (1994). *Qualitative studies in social work research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sherman, E. & Reid, W.J. (1994). *Qualitative research in social work*. NY: Columbia University Press.
- Wolcott, H. F. (1990). *Writing up qualitative research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Gilgun, J.F. (1994). A case for case studies in social work research. *Social Work*, 39(4), 371-380.
- Landrine, H., Klonoff, E. A., & Brown-Collins, A. (1992). Cultural diversity and methodology in feminist psychology. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 16, 145-163.