California State University, Sacramento  
Division of Social Work

Social Work 111: Introduction to Research Methods and Program Evaluation  
Fall 2006

Section 1  Tuesday and Thursday 9-10:15 am  
Office Hours: Tuesday 10:30am-1:30 pm or by appointment (MRP 4021)

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Course Prerequisite

The successful completion of an undergraduate course in statistics with a grade of “C” or better and concurrent enrollment in S Wrk 140C and S Wrk 195B.

Course Description

The course is designed to provide social work undergraduate students with the logic, skills and methods of empirical research. Topics covered include: problem selection and formulation; hypothesis development, sampling techniques, research designs, statistical procedures; validity and reliability; measurement; data collection; data analysis; and ethical considerations.

It is the intent of the course to not only to encourage the student to be intelligent consumers of social research and become actively engaged in empirical investigations in professional practice.

Course Objectives

When students complete the expected requirements of the course, they will be able to:

1. To provide the student with a broad perusal of current methodological ideas common to the field of human behavior;

2. To provide the student with a system for properly framing and delineating a research problem;

3. To provide a foundation for the development of consumer research skills;

4. To provide a foundation for the development of scientific research directly applicable to social work practice;
5. To provide the student with the rudimentary tools necessary to undertake a research project.

6. Acquire knowledge and skills in the use of computer technology to analyze data using SPSS for Windows, to communicate using E-mail, to search electronic media using Library resources, and discover and utilize resources on the Internet using appropriate search engines and search strategies.

7. Examine and understand ethical issues in social research.

Instruction Methods and requirements

It is essential that you attend class and are prompt. Missing classes hurts your chances for achieving an “A” grade for the semester. Missing more than three classes without proper excuse from the instructor seriously jeopardizes your chance of receiving a passing grade for the course. Social Work major students, please note that a “C-“grade is not a passing grade for the course.

In order to enhance feelings of safety and to create a positive learning environment, the following must apply:

1. You attend class
2. You are prompt
3. You have read the assigned material
4. You get your needs met by interacting with classmates and by raising your concerns and criticisms with the instructor
5. You work hard
6. You do not ridicule others
7. You own expressions of bigotry. In other words, rather than attribute a negative characteristic to a social group or to a member of that group, you begin with, “this is how I have been taught to believe,” or “I hate to admit it but I do have the belief that …”
8. You are committed to growth and self-exploration
9. You behave in a non-violent manner.
Accommodation

The university is committed to providing every reasonable academic accommodation to students with disabilities. The Office of Services to Students with Disabilities provides university academic support services and specialized assistance to students with disabilities. Individuals who need such accommodation must notify the instructor to arrange said accommodation. This instructor is committed in every effort to accommodate all special needs.

Assignments and Grading

Each student’s final grade will result from averaging the grades obtained from all the required items as described below. Class attendance and participation is a prerequisite in receiving a passing grade. Every time a student accumulates two tardiness (10 minutes after class in session)/or leaving the classroom without the instructor’s permission will be counted as one absence. Each student is allowed one free absence without good cause. Additional absence(s) regardless of cause/or reason will receive 25% deduction from the attendance portion. Five absences in the semester will result in the student not getting any points at all on the attendance portion toward the final grade.

Course requirements

Your final grade will be based on the following evaluative criteria:

1. Examinations. Three midterm exams accounts for 60% of the final grade. One of the three exams with the lowest score will be dropped. Students may arrange to take the exam the day before it is given but make-up will not be allowed once the test is administered. Students who missed class on exam day will automatically be considered that the student wants to drop that test.

2. Term paper. The term paper is either individually or a group research project (not to exceed 3 members in a group). You’ll receive a detailed guideline on the second week of the semester. The term paper is accounted for 15% of your final grade. In a group project, each member will be judged based on the quality of his/her work, not the overall quality of the paper.

3. Attendance and participation is required as described above. Attendance will be accounted for 10% of the final grade.

4. Computer Lab. This Computer Lab will be accounted for 10% of your final grade. We will spend three sessions in the computer lab, MRP 1013. The lab work is mandatory for everyone. Each lab session will be accounted for 33% of the Computer Lab credit. Missing all three-computer lab sessions, you will receive zero points toward the final grade. There will be no makeup for the Computer Lab either.
5. In class group or individual presentations will account for 5% of your final grade. Each individual will present for 5 minutes on their project or 10 minutes for group presentations.

Table 1: List of Assignments, Percentage of Grade and Due Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>% of your Grade</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Exams (20% each) =</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>Exam 1: 9/28/06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exam 2: 10/26/06</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exam 3: 11/30/06</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Term Paper (50% each) =</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1st Draft: 10/19/06</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Final Draft: 12/7/06</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. SPSS Lab Participation =</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Session 1: 10/31 &amp; 11/2/06</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Session 2: 11/7 &amp; 11/9</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Session 3: 11/14 &amp; 11/16</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. In-Class Presentations =</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>12/5/06 &amp; 12/7/06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12/12/06 &amp; 12/14/06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Class Participation and Discussion = 10%</td>
<td>Every Session</td>
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</table>

Total = 100%

Grading scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-93%</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86-89%</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82-85%</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79-81%</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76-78%</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72-75%</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69-71%</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Below 68% not passing
Required Texts


Optional texts


Course Outline

Week 1. September 5 & 7, 2006
Introduction and overview of the course
Expectations, requirements, grading

Reading assignments: Marlow, Chapter 1

Week 2. September 12 & 14, 2006
Introduction and overview continue
The language of research

Reading assignments: Marlow, Chapters 1 & 2
Handout Research Paper Guideline

Week 3. September 19 & 21, 2006
The logic and typology of research
Problem statement formulation

Reading assignments: Marlow, Chapters 1-3
Week 4. September 26 & 28, 2006

Hypotheses formulation
Framing theoretical framework
Lecture by the instructor
No reading required

**Midterm exam #1 (September 28, 2006)**

Week 5. October 3 & 5, 2006

Literature review
Review of the literature pertaining to variables of interest, its levels of measurement, and their ethical issues

Reading assignments: Marlow, Chapters 3 & 4

Week 6. October 10 & 12, 2006

Research designs: Needs assessment & program evaluations
Measurements, validity, reliability issues

Reading assignments: Marlow, Chapters 5 & 6

Week 7. October 17 & 19, 2006

Protection of human subjects
Sampling methods

Reading assignments: Marlow, Chapter 8

**First draft of Research Paper due for feedback. The draft is accounted for 50% of the grade in this area. Late papers will receive 5% deduction per day following the due date including weekend.**
Week 8. October 24 & 26, 2006

Evaluations of practice
Single subject designs

Reading assignments: Marlow, Chapter 7

Midterm# 2 (October 26, 2006)

Week 9. October 31 & November 2, 2006

Data collection and procedures
Limitations

Reading assignments: Marlow, Chapter 9

SPSS (Session 1). Mandatory participation is required for all 3 sessions to get full 10% credit. For each session attended, you will receive one-third of the 10% credit. NO MAKE-UP SESSIONS AVAILABLE DUE TO UNAVAILABILITY OF LAB FOR THIS CLASS. OUR CLASS COMPETES WITH OTHER SPSS CLASSES FOR THE SAME LAB AND CLASS TIME. Class meets in MRP 1013.

Week 10. November 7 & 9, 2006

Organizing the data
Data cleaning
Labeling

Reading assignments: Marlow, Chapter 10

SPSS (Session 2). Meets in MRP 1013.

Week 11. November 14 & 16, 2006

Qualitative data analysis
Quantitative data analysis

Reading assignments: Marlow, Chapters 11 & 12

SPSS final session.

Qualitative data analysis and quantitative data analysis continue
Reviews descriptive and inferential statistics

Reading assignments: Marlow, Chapters 12 & 13

Research writing
Writing final report
Outcomes display

Reading assignments: Marlow, Chapters 11-14

November 23, 2006  (Happy Thanksgiving)-- Campus closed!!!


Practice effectiveness
Reading assignments: Marlow, Chapter 15

Midterm exam #3 (November 30, 2006)

Week 14. December 5 & December 7, 2006

Group/or individual presentations. Five minutes for individual, 10
minutes or less for group presentation.

Final Draft of Research Paper is DUE! This draft accounts for 50%
of the grade in this area. Late papers will receive a 5% deduction per
day following the due date including weekend.

Week 15. December 12 & 14, 2006

Students’ presentations continue
Congratulation Graduates!