Research Paper

Instructions. The objective of this Research paper is to stimulate a short research project, not more than 10 pages in length, typewritten, doubled space, using APA format, turn it in draft form and a final draft form. The purpose of the paper is for you or a group of not more than three members in a group, to identify a social work researchable problem that you or your group are particularly interested and prepare a research proposal. The individual or members of the group will receive credit based upon the overall quality of the final product.

Students who are planning to continue on to graduate school, especially to our Advance Standing program, it is possible that your paper will be revised and utilized again. An “A” paper must contain all or most of the following required areas. Please note that these areas are not only expected but also required, as you will see throughout the semester.

In your paper, please follow closely the guidelines set forth in the 5th edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. When typing your proposal, use third person, impersonal tense. Avoid using repetitious concept/language/terminology. For example, the words “I,” “the author,” or “this project,” appearing more than twice in a page is not acceptable. There will always be overlapping sections and words; therefore, it is imperative that you word the overlapping concepts/terms/repetitions differently when you repeat them.

In this Research Paper, you are asked to identify a prospective researchable area upon which you would like to conduct your study. Briefly, you are asked to introduce the problem area, provide a short literature to support your discussion, explain the methods you’ll use to complete this study, and finally, explain the results you obtained from a small group of prospective participants. At the end of the semester, you’ll present your study in class.

Your proposal is due in two parts. Your first draft on the Problem Statement is due by 10/19/2006; and, the final draft which consists of the Problem Statement, Literature Review, Methods and the dummy outcomes (based on SPSS Lab works) is due by 12/7/2006. Late papers will receive 5% deduction per day following the due date.

Please note that your instructor will evaluate your paper on quality work rather than quantity of pages. Therefore, the numbers of pages indicate on this guideline serve little purpose. Please also note that every type of term paper must always contain an introduction, a body and the conclusion.
PART I: Problem Statement/Introduction Section

The following discussions must be included in this section:

- **Introduction.** Give a background statement regarding the problem you want to explore, address your interest-why you become interested in this problem, and how your research topic may contribute to advance knowledge, practice or policy considerations.

- **Background.** Provide brief current statistical data concerning prevalence, antecedent, incidence, and other pertaining information that support your interest. Government documents tend to be very useful for this section. DO NOT overlap this section with the Literature Review Section.

- **Rationale/Reason.** Present several assumptions regarding your study. This sub-section has to be short but precise. State your goal(s) and objective(s) here. Write the significance of your proposal to the profession of social work.

- **Theoretical framework.** Identify the theory that you want to use as a guide. Describe the theory you select for your project and use one or more references of those who have created and developed the theory. Use the theory you have selected and describe how it applies or guides your research question. Theoretical understanding normally fosters critical thinking in general and within special reference to your proposal topic.

Suggested page length: 2-3 pages

PART II: Literature Review Section

Your literature review should include at least 10 sources that are primarily research and synthesis articles that relevant to your topic. DO NOT do a book report here. What you need to do is to state who conducted the research and what was/were found that relevant to your research aims and variables of interest. It might be helpful to report the major recommendations made by the author(s). Do not react to these outcomes or recommendations. Develop section headings for the literature review. Start with an introduction to your literature review and tell the reader what will be included in this section. That is, introduce your major themes. After the introduction, have an historical background section that reviews the history of the problem, then have your themes as section headings, and end with a section entitled, gaps in the literature. Your major themes (3-5 of them) are used as section headings. The themes are also connected to your questionnaire that you will develop and data analysis in that the themes will be the major sections of what questions will be asked in the questionnaire and later analyzed. So your section headings might look like this: Introduction, Historical Background,
Themes (e.g., Caretakers’ Abusing the Elderly, etc.), Gaps in the Literature, Summary. For the gaps in the literature, write a critique on the research design, sample size, type of sample, validity and reliability issues, generalizability, the weakness of the study noted by the authors themselves, and any premature conclusions drawn by the authors that are not grounded on findings of their study or literature including the theoretical framework.

Suggested page length: 2-5 pages (KEEP ALL OLD WORK FROM PARTS I AND II TO TURN IN WITH PART III)

PART III: Methodology Section

Organize your methods section by the following headings. Integrate the strategies we will go over in class. The section headings will be: Research Questions or Hypotheses, Study Design (which one), Variables (independent, dependent, conceptualization and operationalization), Study Population, Sampling Method, Measurement Instruments, Data Collection Procedures, Statistical Analysis Plan, and Human Subjects.

Notes. We will develop your research instrument in class. Use this instrument to collect your raw data. You’ll need to bring this instrument and perhaps your raw scores to class during the lab sessions.

Suggested page length: 2-3 pages

PART IV: Outcome Section

In no more than one full-page, display and interpret the outcomes of your study here. These are the outcomes that you have collected from your study participants based on the measurement instrument you developed for your researchable topic. Provide tables, graphs, or charts that are numerically identified in Table 1, Table 2, Graph 1, and so on, with your interpretation of your study results according to your major research question(s). You will collect the data for your study from the students (typically 22 of them) in the class. Then you will enter your data into the SPSS program. For each student data point, you enter the same data point 3 times (or 22x3= [N=66]) in order to obtain and represent an adequate sample size to be able to run some statistical tests. No data will be collected outside of class without prior approval from the human subjects committee. Discuss the limitations of your study! You will also need to provide a brief summary of your study here.

PART V: References

List all the sources used in your research paper.