SW 308 SOCIAL RESEARCH METHODS FOR SOCIAL WORK
FALL 2014 SEMESTER
3 CREDIT HOURS
Pre-requisites: MTH 209, SW 220, and ENGL 311

Days, Time and Location of class: Mondays: 6:20 – 9:00 pm Room C 07
Instructor: Dr. Komla S. Ganu
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Email: kganu@earthlink.net
Office: ADJ
Office Hours: 5:45 – 6:15 pm before Class or by appointment

Course Description

This is an introductory course in social work research methods in which students are exposed to the use of the scientific method. The course includes ethical and political issues in social work research; exploration of the treatment of populations at risk by researchers; the formulation of research problems/questions and hypotheses; review of relevant literature, the role of theory in research, qualitative and quantitative research designs; analysis of data; and reporting of findings. Students are introduced to the use of research in identifying available best practices for application to practice.

Mission Statement of the Bachelor of Science in Social Work Program
The mission of the social work program is to prepare students at the baccalaureate level for entry into social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities, to work with diverse populations as well as for continued study at the graduate level.

Bachelor of Science in Social Work Program’s Definition of Generalist Social Work Practice
The Bachelor of Science in Social Work Program uses the definition of generalist social work practice adopted by the Association of Baccalaureate Program Directors which is as follows: Rev. Spring 2011 SW 308 p. 53
Generalist social work practitioners work with individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations in a variety of social work and host settings. Generalist practitioners view clients and client systems from a strengths perspective in order to recognize, support, and build upon the innate capabilities of all human beings. They use a professional problem solving process to engage, assess, broker services, advocate, counsel, educate, and organize with and on behalf of client and client systems. In addition, generalist practitioners engage in community and organizational development. Finally, generalist practitioners evaluate service outcomes in order to continually improve the provision and quality of services most appropriate to client needs.

Generalist social work practice is guided by the NASW Code of Ethics and is committed to improving the well being of individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations and furthering the goals of social justice. (Discussed and advanced by the BPD Social Work Continuum Committee and approved by the Board of Directors, 2006)

Program Goals
The goals of the Bachelor of Science in Social Work Program are:
1. To prepare students for beginning generalist social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.
2. To prepare students for social work practice with diverse populations and cultures.
3. To prepare students in the use of social work research to inform and evaluate practice.
4. To prepare students for development of a professional identity in concert with social work ethics.
5. To prepare students to promote social and economic justice for disenfranchised groups through social change and advocacy.

Program Objectives
Upon completion of the Bachelor of Science in Social Work, students will be able to:
1. Demonstrate critical thinking in social work practice.
2. Support and uphold professional social work standards, values and ethics in social work practice.
3. Practice with respect and skill related to clients’ age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation and demonstrate knowledge of regional special populations including the elderly and those who are physically or mentally challenged.
4. Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and practice without discrimination use appropriate social work interventions including political and case advocacy to advance social and economic justice.
5. Understand the history of the social work profession and its current structures and issues.
6. Use the knowledge and skills of generalist social work practice in assessing the strengths, needs, and challenges of systems of all sizes and apply empirically based interventions to facilitate planned change.
7. Use empirically based theories of bio/psychosocial/spiritual/cultural development to understand human behavior in the social environment with individuals, families, groups and communities.

Rev. Spring 2011 SW 308 p. 54
8. Analyze the adequacy and effects of social policy on client populations, colleagues, agencies and communities to formulate appropriate policies in response to human needs.
9. Utilize social work research skills and knowledge to evaluate practice and program effectiveness.
10. Exercise effective communication skills with a variety of client populations, colleagues and members of the community.
11. Exercise use of supervision and consultation to guide social work practice.
12. Understand and function within the structure of public or private organizations and service delivery systems, seeking organizational change when necessary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Course Objectives</th>
<th>Linkage of program goals and objectives to course objectives (student learning outcomes)</th>
<th>Assessment tools used for evaluating student performance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At the conclusion of this course students should be able to:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Define what is meant by the —scientific methodl</td>
<td>Goal 3</td>
<td>Objective 9</td>
<td>1. Quiz</td>
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<td>2. Critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the —scientific methodl as a means of obtaining knowledge about human beings and their patterns of behavior and interactions.</td>
<td>Goal 3</td>
<td>Objective 9</td>
<td>2. Exam</td>
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<td>3. Search the professional literature by accessing library holdings and electronic data bases</td>
<td>Goal 3</td>
<td>Objective 9</td>
<td>1. Research Paper</td>
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<td>4. Present the essential interrelationship between theory and research methods used in social work</td>
<td>Goal 3</td>
<td>Objectives 1, 9 and 10</td>
<td>1. Research Paper</td>
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<td>5. Demonstrate progression from a general research question to the formulation of a tight, well constructed research design</td>
<td>Goal 3</td>
<td>Objectives 1 and 9</td>
<td>2. Poster Board Presentation</td>
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<td>6. Critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of various methods of data collection.</td>
<td>Goal 3</td>
<td>Objectives 1 and 9</td>
<td>1. Quiz</td>
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<td>7. Critically evaluate reported findings in terms of the research methods employed in social work research studies.</td>
<td>Goal 3</td>
<td>Objectives 1 and 9</td>
<td>2. Exam</td>
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<td>8. Interpret descriptive statistics.</td>
<td>Goal 3</td>
<td>Objectives 1, 9 and 10</td>
<td>1. Research Paper</td>
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<td>4. Poster Board Presentation</td>
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Course Requirements

1. A 7-page minimum Research paper on two variables (independent and dependent variables) of choice from class survey research project replete with all aspects of the quantitative research methods (i.e., statement of the problem, review of literature, theoretical framework and hypotheses formulation, research design, data molding and manipulation in quantitative research, findings and interpretations, conclusions and programmatic recommendations) learned during the course of the semester. A draft can be voluntarily presented in class towards ending of semester for extra credit. Final paper (electronic only) due on or before the last day of class.  

20%

2. Class participation (be aware that you cannot participate if you do not attend classes; please be on time, come prepared!).  

15%

3. Two written assignments (if in the event we are unable to do both, part of this mark will be Re-assigned to the term paper).  

15%

4. Midterm Exam  

25%

5. Final Exam – departmental & comprehensive  

25%

Required Texts


ISBN: 0-205-48422-0

A minimum 2GB Flash Drive is required!

A scientific Calculator (i.e. TI-34 or above) is required and must be brought to class at all times. There will be no substitution of cellular phone calculators for this requirement!

**CLASS SESSIONS**

**Week 1; September 8th**

Overview of Course

Relevance of Research in Social Work

Discoveries and use of Evidence-Based Practice

**Assignments.**

a) Read Rubin & Babbie Chapters 1 - 3; Weinbach & Grinnell pp. 1-10
b) **Students visit their respective Community Boards to ascertain the ff:** the most salient issue(s) currently confronting their community district; what is the level of residents’ participation in the process of community self-governance? Students prepare a two-page paper addressing these issues in their respective community boards (paper due by ending of week 4)

**Week 2; September 15th**

The Scientific Inquiry in Social Work –

a) logic and observation
b) statistics as a tool

Other Processes of Inquiry and Knowledge; Definitions.

Introduction to **APA Format**; it is mandatory for students to take this online tutorial: **APA EXPOSED**, complete the online poll at the end of the tutorial and print the Certificate of Completion to submit for credit.
Week 3; September 22nd

Research Resources

Use of The library; Research Institutions and Centers; Historical and Cultural Institutions (museums, civic centers, media, nodes, archives etc.); The Internet and other Electronic Databases

The nature of Evidence-based Practice;

Logical Reasoning: Deductive and Inductive

Week 4; September 29th

The Wheel of Science

Visit to the Library

*Community board assignment due.

Readings: Rubin & Babbie Chapters 4 - 6; and NASW Code of Ethics.

Week 5; October 6th

The Tuskegee Experiment: From Yale Courses

The Video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3KL7tcWMkz0

Ethical, Political and Cultural Issues of Social Work Research;

a discussion of research issues posed by the Tuskegee Experiment;

practices in culturally competent research. Introduction to SPSS

Examination of the various paradigms, propositions and traditional assertions on the issue(s) of your research interests.

Statement of the problem: formulating your research questions

Literature Review- epistemology and methodology in social work research; what is out there?

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses
a) Variables: Independent and Dependent (cause and effect)
b) Differences between causality and association
c) Operationalization of variables and definitions
d) Drawing out of hypotheses

**NB: No Classes Scheduled on October 13th – Columbus Day**

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**Week 6; October 20th**

Research Design

a) Sample design: limitations and rationale
b) Probability & non-probability sampling
   Video: [http://www.learner.org/courses/againstallodds/unitpages/unit18.html](http://www.learner.org/courses/againstallodds/unitpages/unit18.html)
c) Survey design & techniques

Readings: Rubin & Babbie Chapters 7 -9; Chpt.10 pp. 231-232 (box).

*APA assignment due*

*Written Assignment: Students develop a 10-variable questionnaire and create a workable database structure out of it to submit in class.*

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**Week 7; October 27th**

The Data

a) More on survey design – Questionnaire design techniques
b) Data collection instruments and methods
c) Data processing and statistical applications
d) Introduction to SPSS – Computer Lab visit

*Review For Midterm Exam*

Readings: Weinbach & Grinnell Chapter 1

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**Week 8; November 3rd (Black Solidarity Day)**

**Descriptive Statistics:**

Types of Variables; measurement levels of variables.

*Midterm Exam*
**Week 9; November 10\textsuperscript{th}**

**Descriptive Statistic** - categorization of variables; categories of statistical analysis (i.e. univariate, bivariate & multivariate); frequency distributions and graphs. Calculating proportions, percentages, ratios and rates.

Frequency Distributions for Variables Measured at the Nominal and Ordinal levels.

**Week 10; November 17\textsuperscript{th}**

Measures of Central Tendency & Positions; The Mode, The Median and The Mean;

Video:

http://www.learner.org/courses/againstalodds/unitpages/unit04.html

Percentiles, Deciles and Quartiles

**Week 11; November 24\textsuperscript{th}**

Frequency Distributions for Variables Measured at Interval/Ratio levels

Constructing Frequency Distributions for variables Measured at Interval/Ratio levels.

Using Frequency Distributions to Analyze Data;

**Week 12; December 1\textsuperscript{st}**

**Measures of Dispersion:**

Index of Qualitative Variations (IQV); The Range & Interquartile Range; The Standard Deviation; Interpreting the Standard Deviation.
Week 13; December 8th

The normal distribution; estimation parameters – constructing the confidence interval

Video:

http://www.learner.org/courses/againstallodds/unitpages/unit07.html

Findings and interpretations; analyzing relationships between variables (in crosstabulations); measuring against your hypotheses

Readings: Weinbach & Grinnell Chapter 4; Chapter 6 pp.115-118

Week 14; December 15th

Empirical Generalizations; conclusions and recommendations for further research; recommendations for programmatic implementations; other research questions; Review for Final Exam

*Term paper due

Week 15; December 22nd

Final Exam