

**Texas A&M-Commerce
Department of Social Work**

**SWK 590: Research Literature and Techniques
Monday 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Commerce Campus**

FALL 2012

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

INSTRUCTOR	Brenda Moore, Ph.D., LMSW-AP
OFFICE LOCATION	Henderson 311
OFFICE HOURS:	Monday – 1:00 – 4:00 pm Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 9:00 – 3:00 pm Or by Appointment
CONTACT INFORMATION	EMAIL: Brenda.moore@tamuc.edu Office Number: 903-886-5398

COURSE DESCRIPTION: ***SWK 590 Research Methods in Advanced Social Work Practice***

This course provides students with information on advanced techniques of practice and program assessment. Both qualitative and quantitative research designs are taught. Evaluation research design, instrument selection and development, and techniques of data analysis are addressed. Ethical and behavioral issues in evaluation research are presented. Development of an evaluation research design based on a practicum assignment is required. Prerequisite: SWK 531 or admission to the Advanced Standing Program

PROGRAM GOALS & COMPETENCIES:

1. Prepare MSW graduates for professional advanced generalist practice that reflects application and integration of critical thinking, theoretical frameworks, and differential interventions.

Graduates will be able to:

- C 1.1 Apply critical and independent analysis of practice situations and effectively communicate their judgments, reasoning and decision-making processes (2.1.3)
- C 1.2 Apply and contribute to evidence-based and best practice approaches to continuously assess and improve the efficacy and effectiveness of practice (2.1.6)

2. Enable MSW graduates to apply ethical reasoning to advance equality, justice, and social change

Graduates will be able to:

- C 2.2 Apply social work ethical principles to resolve dilemmas and create positive change among individuals, families, groups, organizations & communities (2.1.2)

3. Promote leadership and service that is relevant to individual contexts of practice and enhances well-being and quality of life.

Graduates will be able to:

- C 3.1 Exemplify and model professional social work standards and strive to enhance their professional growth and development (2.1.1)

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course is designed to prepare students with knowledge, skills and abilities to evaluate research studies, apply research findings to practice, and evaluate their own practice interventions by employing research methods.

The course prepares students to plan interventions with measurable goals and outcomes, select appropriate measures, and prepare to conduct appropriate analytical and statistical methods in the evaluation process

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify the connection between empirical research and evidence based practice
- Locate, critique and evaluate evidence based research to support practice interventions and apply that critical perspective to the design and evaluation of one's own practice interventions
- Design and plan a research project (needs assessment, program or practice evaluation), including a comprehensive literature review, creation of a problem & purpose statement; development of a research question and/or hypothesis; design of methodology to be carried out in SWK 595.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER COURSES:

This course stresses the importance of evidence based theory and practice methods. Consequently, it supports the practice courses that emphasize the importance of demonstrating effectiveness in professional interventions. This course builds on research knowledge and skills learned in prior research methods courses taken in a student's BSW coursework or in the Foundation sequence. This course draws on materials from practice and HBSE to illustrate social work research principles, and it develops a professional model that utilizes practice evaluation to formulate a continuous improvement cycle in professional practice. The course prepares students to develop an advance generalist model that is ultimately autonomous and self-correcting.

TEXTS

Grinnell, R.M. & Unrau, Y.A. (2008). *Social work research and evaluation: Foundations of evidenced-based practice*. 9th ed. Oxford publications.

Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (2009). 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association

ADDITIONAL READINGS RECOMMENDED

Galvin, J.L. (2009). *Writing literature reviews: A guide for students of the social and behavioral sciences*. 4th ed. Pyczak Publishing

Rubin, A. (2008). *Practitioner's guide for using research for evidence-based practice*. New Jersey: Wiley & Sons

Salkind, N.J. (2007). *Statistics for people who think they hate statistics. Excel edition*. CA: Sage.

You will be expected to start to develop your own resource list in your research area. You should also include articles and resources that include ethical issues concerning research with your population/question under study. The reference list at the end of this syllabus may also provide some resources for your study.

OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS

- **COMPLETION OF ON-LINE ETHICS TRAINING (REQUIRED)**

Each student is required to complete an –on-line ethics-training course before initiating the integrative paper project. This is completed by logging into <http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php>. Once completed, you will print off a certificate and this will become a part of your research proposal.

- **WEEKLY QUIZZES AND POSTINGS**

Every week will have a quiz posted on eCollege based on the readings for the NEXT week. The intent is to encourage students to read prior to attending class. In addition, there will be weekly discussion postings and review questions to help you with the final exam.

- **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Each student will complete a thorough literature review on the population or problem area they will be investigating as a part of the requirements for SWK 595. The literature review is the foundation for the program/practice/needs assessment proposal and the final paper that will be completed in SWK 595. The literature review will be about 12-15 pages (excluding references) with a minimum of 20 empirically-based scholarly articles. The literature review should support or “frame” the student’s purpose and methodology for the proposed study.

- **RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

Students will write a formal proposal for conducting a program/practice evaluation or needs assessment to be conducted within their field agency and will serve as the basis for the SWK 595 research project next semester. Components of the paper will include the **literature review, problem statement, purpose of the project, proposed methodology, approved IRB document, Certificate of Ethics training, and copies of any instruments or measurement tools to be used in the project.**

Drafts of sections of the paper will be submitted for the purpose of receiving feedback. Points are not awarded for the drafts, but **FAILURE** to submit required sections by the assigned dates will result in a 10 point deduction from the final paper.

- **POWER POINT POSTER PRESENTATION**

Students will develop a PowerPoint Poster on their research proposal. The posters should include 1) Introduction; 2) Problem statement/Purpose of the study; 3) Research Question/Hypothesis; 4) Proposed Methodology, including sampling, measurement instruments, data analysis plan; and 5) References. Students will present their posters in a "conference style" presentation to the class at the end of the semester.

- **OTHER RESEARCH ACTIVITIES**

Opportunities will be presented for students to participate in actual research activities, either as a class or in small groups. These activities will allow students to engage in research that will benefit a program, agency, or organization.

- **ONLINE COMPREHENSIVE EXAM**

A comprehensive exam will be given that reflects content from the entire course.

POLICY ON DUE DATES:

All assignments are due **on the day and at the time specified as stated in the Course Schedule**. Late assignments will automatically have 10 points deducted from the grade per day beginning with the due date and each day thereafter. ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER ONE WEEK past the due date. (*Assignments due at the beginning of class on Monday will not be accepted after class begins the following Monday*). **DO NOT email an assignment to me unless you have received prior permission. It is easy to "lose" an email or have trouble opening attachments.**

POLICY ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Every student is expected to do his/her own work. Law, ethical standards, university policy, and departmental policy demand that students refrain from plagiarism and any form of cheating. Plagiarism is the "Act of appropriating the literary composition of another, or parts of passages from of his [or her] writings, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as the products of one's own mind." (Black's Law Dictionary, Abridged Fifth Edition, 1983). When using others' words, phrases, or ideas in writing, the original author should be given proper credit.

Cheating may take different forms. These include, but are not limited to, copying others' answers during an exam, using notes or other forms of help during an examination or quiz, except when explicitly permitted by the instructor, giving or receiving help on exams or assignments, or submitting work for one class which has already been submitted for another

class for credit. Use of citations from the Internet without paraphrasing content AND proper referencing is regarded as plagiarism. Professors have the right to use electronic review programs (such as Turn It In™) to identify plagiarism.

The department does not tolerate plagiarism or cheating. A student found to be engaging in such illegal and unethical conduct may receive a failing grade in the course and may be subjected to further disciplinary proceedings. Any assignment or exam that lacks honesty will be given a grade of "0".

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS:

This course was developed as a web-enhanced course and will be facilitated using eCollege, the Learning Management System used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. Assignments are to be submitted in E-College via the correct weekly drop box. **Do not email an assignment to me unless you have received prior permission.** It is easy to "lose" an email among the many I receive on a daily basis.

Please note there is a 24/7 technical help available for eCollege. If you run into any technical problems, you are responsible for getting the help you need. You may certainly notify me if the problem is affecting your performance in the class, but I cannot help you solve technology problems (which may be in the eCollege system but also may be related to your ISP or your hardware).

If you run into problems accessing eCollege through the standard online class link, try this alternate College web address is: <http://online.tamu.org>

Email correspondence for *all* courses delivered through eCollege will be automatically directed through your Leo Email account available through the MyLeo portal. This includes e-mail from me and e-mail you send to me. Texas A&M University-Commerce and eCollege cannot guarantee delivery and /or receipt of e-mail outside your Leo Email portal.

The university does not send out hard copy mailings of anything these days: email is the official system, and the Leo accounts are the default setting in eCollege

ACCEPTABLE CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR:

"Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to obey all federal, state, and local laws, in addition to the regulations of the University. The standards of Student Conduct including disciplinary rules and procedures are designed to provide and conform to the basic tenets of due process, as developed by institutions of higher education. As such, the University distinguishes these procedures and regulations as an educational and growth process which is not intended to conform to adversary proceedings as in a court of law. (Student's Guide Book, 2011, p. 35).

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS:

The Department of Social Work expects all social work students to conduct themselves in an ethical, professional manner. Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession articulates its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards as set forth in the *NASW Code of Ethics* to guide social workers' conduct. The *Code* is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve. Accordingly, we expect social work students to demonstrate

courtesy, respect and support for fellow students, instructors, clients, and all other persons.

All students enrolled in BSW or MSW classes are expected to observe the tenets of the NASW Code of Ethics and the Social Work Student Code of Conduct. Our Code of Conduct is reflective of professional and academic expectations – a student who cannot demonstrate appropriate behaviors will not be appropriate for practice in the social work profession. Students who violate these Codes may be asked to meet with appropriate Social Work faculty (instructors or Program Directors). In addition, the department's Academic and Professional Issues (API) Committee is responsible for dealing with student issues when requested by faculty.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

It is the policy of Texas A&M University-Commerce and the Social Work Department to do everything we can to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law, and the University's commitment to providing equal opportunities. Any student with a disability who needs accommodation, for example, in accessibility, seating placement or in arrangements for examinations should not hesitate to inform the instructor. If required, large type, Braille or cassette recordings of syllabus or assignments can be provided.

Students with conditions that require special attention or accommodation should contact the Director of Disability Resources & Services at 903-468-5150 (located in the Library, Room 132).