

**LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK  
EXEMPLAR SYLLABUS**

**Course Title: Methods of Social Work Research**  
**Course Number: BSW SOWK 390; MSW SOWK 506**

**Prerequisites:**

**BSW:** None; For BSW students entering the 5 Year program, 390 will substitute for 506.

**MSW:** Statistics with a grade of C or better

**Semester/Year:**

**Class Time:** TBA by Section

**Class Location:** TBA by Section

**Instructor:**

**Office Location:** TBA by Section Instructor

**Office Hours:** TBA by Section Instructor

**Phone:** TBA by Section Instructor

**Email:** TBA by Section Instructor

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**SOWK 390:** This course examines foundation level principles and processes of social work research as applied to the generalist practice of social work. Based on the premise that research is the basis for the generation of knowledge and supports the activities of the profession, the course is designed to enable the student to acquire a basic understanding of, as well as skills in, general research methods.

Specifically, the course prepares the student for three roles: 1) the role of a critical consumer of social work research; 2) the role of an active participant in empirical inquiries; and 3) the role of an evaluator of one's own practice. Linkage between this course and other courses in both the liberal arts and undergraduate social work programs occurs throughout the course via application of philosophical concerns such as logic, literature critiques, examples of research questions and designs in other disciplines, and completion of a research project that employs mixed methodology. At the conclusion of the course, students should have sufficient knowledge to actively participate in the generation and implementation of research.

**SOWK 506:** Social work practitioners need research skills in order to be accountable, and to evaluate their own practice, programs, and service delivery. Moreover, as service roles and tasks expand and as accountability demands progressively increase, the need of the social work profession for systematic development of empirically validated knowledge becomes more acute. To address these needs a two-course sequence is designed to enable students to prepare for three roles: 1) competent evaluators of their own practice whether clinical or organizational; 2) critical consumers of research in the social and behavioral sciences; and 3) active participants in knowledge generating inquiries that include designing and implementing research for the development of service and the clarification of clinical issues in social work practice.

This course focuses on foundation content in research design and methodology to introduce students to the research process that can be used by social work practitioners to evaluate their individual practices, evaluate social programs, and advance practice knowledge. The major aims of the course are to enable students to develop a scientific perspective, to acquire an understanding of different research philosophies that can be used to evaluate practice, and to incorporate that perspective and understanding into a broader conceptual base for social work practice. Building on a liberal arts perspective, the course aids students in thinking critically about the methods and limitations of various systems of inquiry, and about society, people, and their problems.

### **RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER COURSES:**

**SOWK 390:** This course is a foundation level research course that focuses on basic research concepts and methodologies.

**SOWK 506:** This course is the first of two research courses students complete. It is the foundation level course that focuses on basic research concepts and methodologies. The second course SW 606, is at the advanced level.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES & EPAS RELATED COMPETENCIES<sup>1</sup>**

Through course materials and assignments, students are expected to demonstrate mastery of the following objectives, all of which are at the basic, foundation level. At the conclusion of this course, each student shall demonstrate competency in:

**2.1.2 Define and apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.**

**PB:** Apply ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.

**Assignment:** Research Ethics Tutorial Assignment

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

**PB:** Critically appraise and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research based knowledge and evidence-informed practice wisdom.

**Assignments:** Article Critiques; Exams

**2.1.5 Advance local and international human rights and social and economic justice.**

**PB:** Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination.

**Assignment:** Research Ethics Tutorial Assignment

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

**PB:** Use research evidence and other disciplines to inform practice

**PB:** Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry

**Assignments:** Article Critiques; Exams

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<sup>1</sup> The identified EPAS/PBs for the course may not be varied among sections for the same course. Assignments attached to specific EPAS/PBs are considered the standard assignments across all sections of the same course. Section Instructors may *add* additional topics/materials/assignments to their section, but they may not change the basic course topics/materials/assignments.

## **CRITERIA FOR GRADING**

Grades are based upon criterion-referenced grading. The Description of Assignments section of this document reviews the specific points for each assignment. In general, letter grades are assigned using the criteria below:

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Grades and Values</b>
<b>A</b>	Overall performance is <b>Exceptional</b>	A 4.00 96-100% A- 3.67 92-95%
<b>B</b>	Overall performance is <b>Good</b>	B+ 3.33 88-91% B 3.0 84-87% B- 2.67 80-83%
<b>C</b>	Overall performance is <b>Acceptable</b> . Work meets basic expectations set by Instructor. A grade of C- requires that BSW and MSW students retake the course.	C+ 2.33 76-79% C 2.0 72-75% C- 1.67 68-71%
<b>D</b>	Overall performance is <b>Poor</b> - student must retake course.	D+ 1.33 64-67% D 1.0 60-63%
<b>F</b>	Overall performance is <b>Unsatisfactory</b> - student fails course. See Student Handbook.	F 0 Below 60%
<b>I</b>	At the discretion of the section Instructor a temporary grade of <b>Incomplete</b> may be assigned to a student who, for a reason beyond the student's control, has been unable to complete the required work in a course on time. The request signed by the student and the faculty member must be on approved and on file with the BSW or MSW Program Director when grades are submitted. <b>See Student Handbook.</b>	

## **READING ASSIGNMENTS**

All reading assignments are listed in the "Course Schedule." It is expected that students will come to class having read the materials and are prepared to discuss them. Students are encouraged to explore other resources if certain concepts are not understood. Supplemental readings may also be listed so students may explore the topic further.

### **Required Text(s)**

Instructors may choose between the following texts:

Rubin, A. & Babbie, E. (2008). *Research Methods for Social Work* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole-Thompson Learning (OR MOST RECENT EDITION)

Grinnell, R. & Unrau, Y. (2010). *Social work research & evaluation: Foundations of evidence-based practice* (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

NOTE: This syllabus uses Rubin and Babbie but equivalent chapters from the Grinnell and Unrau text can be substituted.

### **Recommended Texts:**

Pyrczak, Fred. (2005). *Evaluating Research in Academic Journals* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Pyrczak Publishing.

## **DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

All assignments must be submitted prior to/or on the date and time indicated on the course syllabus. All assignments have mandatory due dates. Assignments submitted after those dates may not receive comments from the instructor, but rather just a final grade with an appropriate reduction in grade (one grade point per day). If a student chooses to submit an assignment after a mandatory due date, no feedback will be provided. To receive a passing grade for the course, ***all assignments must be completed and submitted.*** Students must submit all assignments using the assignment links in online course management system for each assignment.

Weighting of class assignments is as follows:

Research Ethics Tutorial (CITI Certification)	10% of Grade
Article Critiques	20% of Grade
Mid-term	20% of Grade
Final Exam	25% of Grade
Miscellaneous*	25% of Grade

\*Section Instructors for 390/506 may use this percentage for section specific activities: participation, Blackboard discussions, etc. and/or the percentage can be redistributed to the standard assignments above.

### **Assignment One: Research Ethics Tutorial**

CITI Certification – 10% of Grade || Due: End of Semester

In this class students will come to learn about the concern for the safety of human subjects that surrounds all phases of the research process. There is now a certification that can be obtained to better insure that researchers are more aware of their responsibilities regarding human subjects. CITI Certification is offered through a link on the Loyola University Chicago website.

The expectation in this course is that each student will complete the on-line certification process prior to the end of the course. Students who do not provide the Instructor with a copy of their certification will be given an “I” (Incomplete) in the course until the certification process is satisfactorily completed. Instructions for the on-line tutorial are contained in a file under “Syllabus/Course Documents” in the online course management system for this course.

### **Assignment Two: Article Critiques**

Multiple Assignments - 20% of Grade || Due: Throughout Semester

Throughout the semester, students will be given articles to critique. The critique will focus on key research concepts covered in class which may include any of the following research methodology sections from problem formulation, literature review, sampling, design, measurement, data collection and analysis. Critiques can take place in class and or as written assignments depending on the instructor’s preference and teaching environment.

A Research Guide will be provided to direct questions to be answered for the article critiques. One quantitative and one qualitative article will be provided for each critique. Materials will be provided under Article Critique on the Sakai course menu.

### **Assignments Three and Four: Midterm and Final Exams**

Midterm: 20% of Grade – Final: 25% of Grade || Due: See course schedule

A mid-term and final exam will be used to test the student's objective knowledge of material covered throughout the entire semester.

### **Assignment Five: Miscellaneous Assignments**

In addition to the assignment describe above, individual instructors may utilize additional assignments including quizzes, blackboard discussions, the Tuskegee Syphilis Study Film and Ethical Dilemmas Exercise, or other assignments to compute the remaining 25% of the grade for students in this class.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Date of class _____	by section
<b>Topics/Learning Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Science in the Helping Professions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition and Purposes of Research</li> <li>• Ways of Knowing</li> <li>• Research and Social Work</li> <li>• Evidence Based Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steps in EBP Process</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Required Readings:</b> Rubin,A. & Babbie, E. (2008) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 1, An Introduction to Scientific Inquiry in Social Work (p. 2-21);</li> <li>• Chapter 2, Evidence-Based Practice (p. 22-38)</li> </ul>	
<b>E-Journals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hartman, A. (1990) Many ways of knowing, <u>Social Work</u>, 35, 3-4.</li> <li>• Fraser, M., Taylor, M. J., Jackson, R. M. &amp; O'Jack, J. (1991). Social work and science: Many ways of knowing? <u>Social Work Research and Abstracts</u>, 27(4), 5-15.</li> <li>• Jenson, J.M. (2005). Connecting science to intervention: Advances, challenges, and the promise of evidence-based practice. <u>Social Work Research</u>, 29(3): 131-135.</li> </ul>	

Date of class _____	by section
<b>Topics/Learning Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethics and Social Work Research</li> <li>• Institutional Review Boards and Human Subjects Issues</li> </ul>	
<b>Required Readings:</b> Rubin,A. & Babbie, E. (2008). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 4, The Ethics and Politics of Social Work Rsearch (p. 67-96)</li> <li>• Chapter 5, Culturally Competent Research (p. 97-120)</li> <li>• Loyola University, Institutional Review Board Materials (<b>Posted online</b>)</li> </ul>	
<b>E-Journals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keller, H. &amp; Lee, S. (2003). Ethical issues surrounding human participants research using the internet. <u>Ethics &amp; Behavior</u>, 13 (3), 211-219.</li> <li>• Herek, G. M., Kimmel, D.C., Amaro, H. &amp; Melton, G. B. (1991) Avoiding heterosexist bias in psychological research. <u>American Psychologist</u>, 46(9), 957-963.</li> <li>• Antle, B. &amp; Regehr, C. (2003). Beyond individual rights and freedoms: Metaethics in social work research. <u>Social Work</u>, Volume 48, Number 1, January 2003.</li> <li>• Martin, J. (2000). Methodological and ethical issues in research on lesbians and gay men. <u>Social Work Research</u>, 24 (1): 51-60.</li> </ul>	

<b>Date of class</b> _____ <b>by section</b>
<b>Topics/Learning Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Inquiry and Research Typologies</b></li> <li>• <b>Overview of the Research Process and Contexts</b></li> <li>• <b>Article critique guidelines</b></li> </ul>
<b>Required Readings:</b> Rubin,A. & Babbie, E. (2008) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 3: Philosophy and Theory in Social Work Research (p. 39-66)</li> <li>• Epstein,I. (2001). Utilization of research approaches. In Grinnell, Richard M. (Ed.). <u>Social Work Research and Evaluation, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition.</u> (pp 115-126). Itasca, IL: FE Peacock. <b>(Regular Course Reserves).</b></li> </ul>

<b>Date of class</b> _____ <b>by section</b>
<b>Topics/Learning Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Research Problems and Questions</b></li> <li>• <b>Variables</b></li> <li>• <b>Hypotheses</b></li> <li>• <b>Literature Reviews</b></li> </ul>
<b>Required Readings:</b> Rubin & Babbie, E. (2008). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 6, Problem Formulation (p. 124-149)</li> <li>• Chapter 7, Conceptualization and Operationalization (p. 150-172)</li> <li>• <u>Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methods Approaches, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.</u> Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 1, pp.3-26. <b>(Regular Course Reserves).</b></li> </ul>

<b>Date of class</b> _____ <b>by section</b>
<b>Topics/Learning Objectives: Sampling</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sample selection</li> <li>• Social justice issues in sampling</li> <li>• Cultural sensitivity and sampling</li> <li>• Impact of sample size on research design</li> <li>• Probability samples</li> <li>• Non-probability samples</li> <li>• External Validity</li> </ul>
<b>Required Readings:</b> Rubin,A. & Babbie, E. (2008). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 14, Sampling (p. 335-364)</li> <li>• Heckathorn, D.D. (2002). Respondent-driven sampling II: Deriving valid population estimates from chain-referral samples of hidden populations. <u>Social Problems</u>, 49: 11-34. <b>(E-Journals)</b></li> </ul>

<b>Date of class</b> _____ <b>by section</b> _____
<b>Topics/Learning Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Measurement and Data Collection Strategies</b></li> <li>• <b>Measurement Considerations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Levels of measurement</li> <li>○ Reliability</li> <li>○ Validity</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Required Readings:</b> Rubin A. & Babbie, E. (2008). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 8, Measurement</li> <li>• Chapter 9 Constructing Measurement Instruments (p. 200-226)</li> <li>• Johnson, R. Burke. Examining the validity structure of qualitative research. (In Milinki, A.K. (1999) <u>Cases in Qualitative Research</u> (pp. 160-165), Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Publishing.</li> </ul>

<b>Date of class</b> _____ <b>by section</b> _____
<b>Topics/Learning Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Measurement and Data Collection Strategies</b></li> <li>• <b>Data Collection Strategies - Qualitative Data Collection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ethnographic interviewing with individuals</li> <li>○ Focus groups</li> <li>○ Participant observation research</li> <li>○ Use of chart notes</li> <li>○ Use of process recordings</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Data Collection Strategies - Quantitative Data Collection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Surveys and Interviews</li> <li>○ Standardized Measures</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Required Readings:</b> Rubin RubinA. & Babbie, E. (2008). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 15, Survey Research (p. 365-388)</li> <li>• Chapter 16, Analyzing Existing Data: Quantitative and Qualitative Methods (p. 390-414)</li> <li>• Chapter 17, Qualitative Research: General Principles (p. 415-435)</li> <li>• Chapter 18, Qualitative Research: Specific Methods (p. 436-454)</li> <li>• Gilgun, J. (2005). Lighten up: The citation dilemma in qualitative research. <i>Qualitative Health Research</i>, 15 (5): 721-724.</li> </ul>



<b>Date of class _____ by section</b>
<b>Topics/Learning Objectives: Overview of Research Designs: Group designs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experimental group designs for evaluating programs and practice</li> <li>• Hypothesis-testing using experimental design</li> <li>• Control and comparison groups</li> <li>• Threats to Internal and External Validity</li> <li>• Quasi-Experimental group designs for evaluating programs and practice</li> </ul>
<b>Required Readings:</b> Rubin,A. & Babbie, E. (2008). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 10, Causal Inference and Correlational Designs (p. 227-249)</li> <li>• Chapter 11. Experimental Designs (p. 250-279)</li> </ul>

<b>Date of class _____ by section</b>
<b>Topics/Learning Objectives: Research Design:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Single Subject</b></li> <li>• <b>Evaluation Research</b></li> </ul>
<b>Required Readings:</b> Rubin,A. & Babbie, E. (2008). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 12, Single-Case Evaluation Designs(p. 280-304)</li> <li>• Chapter 13, Program Evaluation (p. 305-334)</li> <li>• Spath, R. &amp; Pine, B. (2004). Using the case study approach for improved evaluations. Child and Family Social Work, 9: 57-63. (<b>E-Journals</b>)</li> <li>• Proctor, E.K. (1990) Evaluating clinical practice: issues of purpose and design. <u>Social Work Research &amp; Abstracts</u>, (January), 32-40. (<b>E-Journals</b>)</li> </ul>

<b>Date of class _____ by section</b>
<b>Topics/Learning Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Data Analysis - Part 1: Quantitative Analysis</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Methods of Data Analysis: Statistical methods of analysis (I)</li> <li>○ Descriptive /Inferential statistics</li> <li>○ Significance testing</li> <li>○ Introduction to SPSS and other computer</li> <li>○ Considering future directions for research methods for analyzing quantified data</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Part 2:</b> Methods of Data Analysis: Qualitative methods of analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Thematic analysis</li> <li>○ Content analysis</li> <li>○ Developing a reliable coding manual</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Required Readings:</b> Rubin, A. & Babbie, E. (2008). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 19, Qualitative Data Analysis (p. 455-476)</li> <li>• Chapter 20, Quantitative Data Analysis (p. 477-503)</li> <li>• Chapter 21, Inferential Data Analysis, Part 1 (p. 504-523)</li> <li>• Chapter 22, Inferential Data Analysis, Part II (p. 524-543)</li> </ul>
<b>Computer Lab, SPSS Demonstration &amp; Statistical Tests</b>

<b>Date of class _____ by section</b>
<b>Topics/Learning Objectives: Formulating findings and results</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looking for anomalies and analyzing negative case examples</li> <li>• Discussing findings</li> <li>• Reformulation of literature review as needed</li> <li>• Analyzing limitations and biases of the study</li> </ul>
<b>TBA</b>