

Indiana University  
School of Social Work

SPRING, 1989  
Th (1:00-3:40 P.M.)  
ES 2103

S570/D466  
Kapoor  
Office: 274-6716  
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SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH

I. PURPOSE OF THIS COURSE

The primary purpose of this basic research course is to provide a viable framework within which students can address important issues involving the fundamental process of knowledge building as it relates to the various areas of the broader curriculum. It is assumed that social work practice, like socio-behavioral research, is fundamentally a problem-solving enterprise, and that many of the essential processes involved in the latter are also inherent (although often disguised) in the former.

Although this course is designed to deal with much of the content that typically characterizes a basic research methods course, it does so from the perspective of professional practice. The goal, therefore, is not to develop the student into a social researcher: it is to help the student become a more effective practitioner of social work by helping him/her to better understand the scientific nature of the professional process and by enabling the student to utilize the contributions of science in a more conscious and productive manner.

As a result of the involvement in the process, it is hoped that the student will identify with and incorporate into his/her practice the cluster of values that characterize what is generally referred to as the "method of science." It is also hoped that the basic concepts and principles of sciences dealt with in this course can be generalized for use in the knowledge building activities that take place throughout the broader curriculum.

The general goal of this course, therefore, is to introduce and develop in students, skills needed to conceptualize a problem, evaluate, organize, and integrate relevant data (both existing and new), derive useful solutions based on knowledge, and communicate those solutions to clients and colleagues. It is expected that the attainment of this goal will serve to prepare students to: a) continue their own professional education, b) contribute to the development of the profession as a whole, and c) maintain their service to clients at a standard commensurate with the current level of knowledge.

This course is designed to survey the basic processes of research methodology as it is practiced in the social sciences. Underlying principles of sciences and logic will be emphasized and special attention will be directed toward the recognition of common sources of error and bias in the implementation and interpretation of research studies as it affects the outcomes of research utilization.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

It is expected that as a result of having completed the requirements of this course, the student will:

1. Understand the scientific process, its application in the social sciences, and its utilization in the problem-solving approach to social work practice;
2. Acquire skills necessary to the assessment and interpretation of existing research as a prelude to its use in decision-making in social work practice;
3. Develop the capacity to identify information needed to address questions and problems encountered in social work practice situations;
4. Develop knowledge and understanding of the range of research designs and their appropriate utilization by social workers;
5. Develop such research skills as conceptualizing a problem, formulating hypotheses, collecting, analyzing, and interpreting both quantitative and qualitative data, including commonly encountered statistical procedures;
6. Achieve skill in defining problems, interventive tasks, and proposed actions for specific practice situations in a manner that can be observed and measured;
7. Recognize methods of appropriately controlling variation and bias, including factors that can effect the reliability, validity, and representativeness of the information used by social workers in the problem-solving process, particularly as they affect special population groups;
8. Identify the value assumptions and the ethical and political dilemmas encountered by social workers and social scientists in their efforts to gather, verify, and utilize knowledge with special emphasis given to the impact which these have on oppressed groups; and
9. Establish systematic evaluation procedures which will enable the practitioner to assess the effects and effectiveness of interventive actions and approaches.

III. COURSE OUTLINE

The course is organized around the following nine (9) interrelated sections, representing collectively total thrust of social work research:

Section I.      Problem Explication

1.      Introduciton to the Course.
2.      Specification of Goals.
3.      Formulation of Research Statements and Hypotheses.
4.      Identification of Primary and Secondary Variables.
5.      Consideration of Control of Related Factors.
6.      Operationalization of Variables.

Section II.     Research and Designs and Program Evaluations

1.      Introduction to Research Designs.
2.      Exploratory (Formulative-Exploratory) Design.
3.      Quantitative-Descriptive Design.
4.      Group Experimental Designs.
5.      Single Subject Designs.
6.      Programs Evaluations.

Section III.    Sampling: Probability and Non-Probability

1.      Advantages and Disadvantages of Sampling.
2.      Steps in Sampling Process.
3.      Sampling Standards.
4.      Methods for Obtaining Samples.
5.      Sampling and Practice.

Section IV.    Measuring Variables

1.      Problems of Measurement.
2.      Validity and Reliability of Measurements.
3.      Relationship Between Reliability and Validity.
4.      Reliability--Validity and Practice.
5.      Levels of Measurements: Nominal, Ordinal, Interval and Ratio.
6.      Measurements and Practice.

Section V.     Data Collection

1.      Sources of Data: Primary and Secondary Sources.
2.      Direct Methods of Data Collection: Observation.
3.      Indirect Methods of Data Collection and some selected Projective Techniques.
4.      Critical Appraisal of Various Methods of Data Collection.

Section VI. Use of Statistics in Social Work Research

Organization of Data

1. Frequency Distribution, Classification, Categorization and Coding of Data.
2. Tabulation and Presentation of Data.
3. Use of Percentages, Measures of Central Tendency and Measures of Variability.
4. Correlation Coefficients: Meaning, Advantages and Disadvantages.
5. Significance Tests: Their Meaning and Uses.
6. Organization of Data.

Section VII. Data Analysis

1. Univariate Analysis: Preparation of Data and Techniques of Univariate Analysis.
2. Multivariate Analysis: Contingency Hypothesis, Hypothesis about the Differences Between Groups and some basic knowledge about meaning and use of Partial, Multiple and Regression Analysis will be introduced.

Section VIII. Analysis, Interpretation and Reporting

1. Analysis of Non-Quantified Data.
2. Reading and Interpreting Statistics: Evaluation of Procedures, Evaluation of Relations, Theoretical Inference, Policy Inference.
3. Reporting: Audience, Purpose, Medium, Writing Style, Content, Ethical Responsibility.
4. Evaluation of Research Projects and Data as a Basis for Practice Decisions.
5. Footnote and Bibliographical Citations.
6. Ethical Issues, Professional Codes, and Confidentiality.

Section IX. Integration and Application of Research Findings

1. Integration of Practice and Research.
2. Making Research Relevant for Practitioners.
3. Research Strategies for Improving Individualized Services.
4. Research in the areas of Minorities and Women.

IV. ASSIGNMENTS, EVALUATION AND FORMAT

Classes will include both lecture as well as discussion periods.

Students will be expected to use information gained from: 1) assigned readings, 2) class discussion and participation, and 3) a computer exercise.

Grades in this course will be based on a mid-term (25%) focusing on application of work in progress, a computer exercise (25%) and a comprehensive final (50%).

The following criteria will be used for awarding grades:

91 - 100%	A Range
81 - 90%	B Range
71 - 80%	C Range
Less than 70%	D-F Range

The above ranges will be divided, based upon the score distribution, into A, A-; B+, B, B-; C+, C, C- grades.

Students will be expected to do a course evaluation at the end of the semester for which adequate time will be set aside. The evaluation forms will be distributed in the class at the end of the last class session. A student volunteer will collect these evaluation forms and take them to the Dean's office. The feedback of these evaluations will be available to the students after the analysis of the evaluation is completed.

Students not familiar with statistical methods are encouraged to work with any programmed instruction book to gain knowledge and an understanding of basic statistical methods. Students can use any simple programmed book for this purpose. There are quite a number of self-instruction books available in the IUPUI Library. Any one of these books will serve useful purpose.

It is suggested that students consult the following book for footnote citations and bibliographical references:

Turabian, Kate L. A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations. Chicago: The Chicago University Press, 1973.

Required Text:

Monette, Duane R., Thomas J. Sullivan and Cornell R. Dejong. Applied Social Research: Tool for Human Services. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1986.

Recommended Text:

Dieonardi, Joan W. and Patrick A. Curtis. What To Do When the Numbers Are In: A Guide to Statistical Data Analysis in the Human Services. Nelson Hall, Chicago, 1988.

Huff, Darrell. How to Lie with Statistics. W.W. Norton and Co., N.Y. 1954.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Asterisks (\*) denote the references assigned for readings. Two copies of each of these readings are available on the reserve shelf of the University Library.

Arkava, Morton I. and Thomas A. Lane, Beginning Social Work Research. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1983.

Bailey, Kenneth D. Methods of Social Research. New York: The Free Press, 1978.

Barber, Theodore X. Pitfalls in Human Research: Ten Pivotal Points. New York: Pergamon Press, Inc., 1976.

Behling, John H. and Easter S. Merves. The Practice of Clinical Research: The Single Case Method. New York: University Press of America, 1984.

\* Berlin, Sharon and Diane Kravetz. "Women as Victims: A Feminist Social Work Perspective." Social Work. 26 (Nov, 1981), p. 449.

Blalock, Herbert M. An Introduction to Social Research. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970.

Bloom, Martin (ed.). Single System Research Designs. Special Issue in Journal of Social Service Research, Vol. 3, #1.

Brier, Scott. "Toward Integration of Practice and Research." in David Fanshel (ed.). Future of Social Work Research, Washington, D.C.: NASW, 1980, pp. 31-37.

Butterfield, William H. (ed.). Computers for Social Work Practice. Special Issue of Practice, NASW, Vol. 6, No. 3, 1983.

Campbell, Donald T. and Julian C. Stanley. Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research. Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1966.

\* Coulton, Caludia. "Research and Practice: An Ongoing Relationship," Health and Social Work. Vol. 10, No. 4, pp. 282-291.

Craft, John L., Statistics and Data Analysis, Itasca, IL.: F.E. Peacock, 1985.

Epstein, Laura. "Teaching Research-Based Practice: Rationale and Method." Journal of Education for Social Work, Vol. 17, No. 2, pp. 51-55.

Epstein, Irwin and Tony Tripodi. Research Techniques for Program Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977.

Fanshel, David (ed.). Future of Social Work Research. Washington, D.C.: NASW. 1980.

Fields, Nina S. "Satisfaction in Long-Term Marriages." Social Work, 28 (Jan. Feb., 1983), pp. 27-41.

- \* Hill, Robert. "Social Work Research on Minorities: Impediments and Opportunities." in David Fanshel (ed.) Future of Social Work Research, Washington, D.C., NASW, 1980, pp. 188-198.
- Huff, Darrell. How to Lie with Statistics. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1954.
- Kenney, David A. Correlations and Causality. New York: Wiley-Inter Science, 1978.
- \* Kravetz, Diane. "Sexism in a Woman's Profession." Social Work. 21 (Nov., 1976), pp. 421-426.
- Labow, Patricia J. Advanced Questionnaire Design. Cambridge, MA: Abt Books. 1982.
- Lang, Gerherd and George D. Heiss. A Practical Guide to Research Methods. New York: University Press of America, 1984.
- Lees, Ray. Research Strategies for Social Welfare. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975.
- \* Levy, Rona L. and Dennis G. Olson. "The Single Subject Methodology in Clinical Practice: An Overview." in Journal of Service Research, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Fall, 1979), pp. 25-49.
- McCollough, Celeste and Locke Van Atta. Statistical Concepts: A Program for Self-Instruction. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963.
- Maiuro, Ronald D., Eric Turpin and Jennifer James. "Sex-Role Differentiation Population: Prostitute vs. Control Samples," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry. 53 (April, 1983), pp. 345-352.
- Mass, Henry S. (ed.). Social Service Research: Reviews of Studies, Washington, D.C.: NASW, 1978.
- \* Meyer, Carol H. "Issues for Women in a Woman's Profession." in Weick and Vandiver (eds.). Women Power and Change, pp. 197-205.
- Nachmias, David and Chava Nachmias. Research Methods in the Social Sciences. New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1976.
- Orensteen, Alan and William R. F. Phillips. Understanding Social Research. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1978.
- Polansky, Norman A. Social Work Research. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1975.
- \* Quam, Jean K. and Carol D. Austin. "Coverage of Women's Issues in Eight Social Work Journals." Social Work. 29 (July-Aug., 1984), pp. 360-365.
- Rabin, Claire, "Matching the Research Seminar to Meet Practice Needs: A Method for Integrating Research and Practice." Journal of Social Work Education. Vol. 21, No. 1 (Winter, 1985), pp. 5-12.

- \* Reid, William J. "Research Strategies for Improving Individualized Services," in David Fanshel (ed.). Future of Social Work Research, Washington, D.C.: NASW. 1980, pp. 38-52.  
  
Rubin, Allen and Aaron Rosenblat (eds.). Sourcebook on Research Utilization. New York: Council on Social Work Education, 1979.
- \* Seidle, Frederick W. "Making Research Relevant to Practitioners", in David Fanshel (ed.). Future of Social Work Research. Washington, D.C.: NASW, 1980, pp. 53-62.  
  
Selltitz, Claire, et al. Research Methods in Social Relations. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976.
- \* Smith, Kim. "Tests of Significance: Some Frequent Misunderstandings." American Journal of Orthopsychiatry. 53 (April, 1983), pp. 315-321.  
  
Spender, Dale. "Education: The Patriarchal Paradigm and the Response to Feminism." Men's Studies Modified. Oxford: Pargamon Press, 1981, pp. 155-173.  
  
Thomas, Edwin J. (ed.). New Models of Social Service Research. Special Issue in Journal of Social Service Research, Vol. 1, No. 1.  
  
Tripodi, Tony and Irwin Epstein. Research Techniques for Clinical Social Workers. New York: Columbia University Press, 1980.  
  
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Wechster, Henry, et al. Social Work Research in the Human Services. New York: Human Services Press, 1976.  
  
Wienback, Robert and Richard M. Grenell, Jr. Statistics for Social Workers. New York: Longman, 1987.  
  
Wodarski, John S. The Role of Research in Clinical Practice. Baltimore: University Paper Press. 1981.  
  
Zimblist, Sidney. Historic Themes and Landmarks in Social Welfare Research. New York: Harper and Row, 1977.