Social Work Research
Social Work Course # 522: Winter, 2002

Sections 001: Monday: 8:00-11:00 am, Education: Shorling Auditorium
Instructor: David L. Burton, MSW, Ph.D.
Contact Information
Phone #: 763-6580
Email Address: burtond@umich.edu
Office: 3734 Social Work Building

Technical Consultant: Peter McFarland. Peter will be assisting with the computer lab in the course. He is an Excel wizard! He will also have some office hours for questions in the lab. These will be announced in class.
Phone #: (h) 657-7955 or (w) 998-7327
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Office: 504 East Liberty / Suite 310

Course Description
Methods of learning will include: lecture, discussion, computer demonstration, hands on data analysis, in class exercises and observation exercises.

Course Objectives
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. Frame research questions and develop problem statements that reflect assessment, implementation, monitoring, or outcome issues.

2. Select research designs, methodologies, and measurement strategies used in social work research, and be able to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each, including the sensitivity to ethical, multicultural, sexual orientation, gender and other diversity issues.

3. Demonstrate knowledge of ethical issues in the conduct of research and evaluation, and their relevance and applicability in working with disadvantaged and disenfranchised populations.

4. Illustrate skills of critical analysis of research and evaluation studies with respect to quality, bias, ethics, and potential applications.
5. Apply research concepts and principles in the development and use of qualitative and quantitative methodologies and analytical approaches.

6. Critically examine the processes by which research and evaluation findings can examine the processes by which research and evaluation findings can be used to enhance social justice, social change, promotion and prevention.

7. Construct simple indices, questionnaires and measures relevant to the evaluation of practice.

8. Use computers to conduct selected descriptive and inferential statistical analytic procedures.

**Relationship to the four curricular themes:**

1. Multiculturalism and Diversity. The course will include material on methods to improve the cultural inclusiveness and sensitivity of research methods. The critical importance of bias in research problem formulation will be discussed. Additionally, this content will cover culturally sensitive measures and methods, inclusion of diverse groups of adequate size in sampling, culturally aware interpretations of data, and culturally responsible dissemination of results.

2. Social Justice. Students will gain an understanding of the ways in which research and evaluation have sometimes been used against oppressed groups, for example through unethical practices, distortion of results, or fabrication of data. Examples will be given of ways in which research can be used to empower socially disadvantaged individuals, groups, and communities. An example of the instructor’s current research will help illustrate these principles. Other methods used to assist with this problem will include studies in which the research participants were involved in all of the stages of the research process.

3. Promotion and Prevention. Studies reviewed in the course will include studies of projects aimed at enhancing well being and preventing problems. The methodological and ethical problems unique to studies of promotion and prevention efforts will be described and illustrated. The system and funding barriers of such studies will also be discussed.

4. Social Science. The unique challenges in applying social science knowledge and methods to social work settings will be covered. In essence, this course is all about the development of social science knowledge and dissemination. We will therefore cover this curricular theme quite thoroughly.
Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values.
The research and evaluation section of the NASW Code of Ethics will be applied throughout the course. Examples of common ethical dilemmas will be presented. Among the areas of ethics to be covered will be informed consent procedures, protection of research participants from harm, confidentiality, and accurate reporting of results. An emphasis will also be placed on social workers' ethical obligation to use scientifically sound practices and to continually evaluate their practice and programs.

Instructor Responsibilities
The instructor will facilitate the course objectives by completing the following tasks.

1. Provision of USEFUL and constructive comments for student's work, especially for any skill building effort.

2. Provision and maintenance of a safe (and fun!) forum for discussion and learning.

3. Availability for and responsiveness to student questions and regular student evaluation and feedback.

4. Provision of databases and needed information for data analysis projects.

Student Responsibilities*
1. Be on time and prepared with an integrative concept from readings and assignments aimed at trying to understand the material as deeply as possible.

2. Complete class assignments, as outlined below, in a timely, heuristic and high quality fashion. Late assignments may be penalized up to 25%.

*I see each student as responsible for her/his learning experience. We, as a team, and the group as a whole must contribute to the experience, but the student is ultimately responsible for the depth, challenge and enjoyment of learning. If you are interested in discussing alternate or additional assignments, readings, requirements and the like, I welcome you to speak with me about possibilities or ideas that you may have. This is unlikely to lessen one's workload, but may fit your needs and interests best.
**Student Assignments**

**Overview**

10% Contribute to the class (this includes the in-class assignments): *all semester long*

10% Pre and post test on the class web page (ungraded): *before 1/14 & between 4/16-4/24.*

5% Research problem formulation and justification assignment: *2/11*

5% Completion of the Single Subject Design (SSD) project: *3/25*

5% Methodology plan and ethical concerns: *4/1*

20% Analysis homework assignments: *2/18, 3/18, 4/8, 4/15*

20% In Class Quizzes: *Unannounced.*

25% Final project: *4/23*

100%

**Details**

10% **Contribute to the class seminar: ALL SEMESTER LONG!**

This part of your grade will be evaluated by the instructor. The following will be considered:

1. Reflection of having read the materials assigned based upon questions and comments in class. I recommend that you speak up occasionally.
2. Preparedness for answering questions by the instructor.
3. Work in role-plays and in class exercises
4. Attendance, more than two absences may result in failure or a diminished grade.

10% **Pre and post test on the class web page. 5% just for taking it each time (ungraded)**

This part of your grade is a free, as long as you take the pre and post test on the web page at the correct times (first week for the pre test, post test between April 16-April 24). It is a closed book/closed note test, an evaluation of the course.

5% **Research problem formulation and justification assignment: 2/11**

In this assignment you are to answer three questions in a 4 page paper (please see format requirements below) (*Chapters 5 & 6*):

1. What research problem do you want to investigate for you final assignment? This should be written form of a research question or questions and/or a set of hypotheses.
2. What does the literature say about this problem? This is a literature review and should be about 2 pages and use no less than 10 references, 8 of which are empirically based. More may be used.
3. What ethical concerns come up in this project?
4. Please note that this project will be evaluated in a way to give you feedback aimed at assisting you in getting an A for the final project.
Completion of the Single Subject Design (SSD) project: 3/25
This will be discussed in class, but essentially you will need to design a single subject
design with either a client or your self. This requires a clear and operationalized idea of
problems being assessed for change pre intervention assessment (A Phase), a clear
intervention and measurement during/post intervention (B phase). You will have a sheet
to use to graph your results or you can create your own on excel (Chapter 11, Whitfield,
O. (1998))

Methodology plan and ethical concerns: 4/1
In this assignment you are to answer three questions in a 4 page paper (please see format
requirements below):
1. How will you research your question? What methodology will you use/ Make
   sure to address EACH of the following (having these as headings is not a bad idea)
   - Design (Chapters 9, 10 & 11)
   - Administration (Chapters 12, 13 & 14)
   - Analysis plan (Chapters 15, 16, 17, 18, Statistics for Social Workers)
   - Measures/tools (5, 6, 7 & 8, Corcoran & Fisher’s Books, other sources of instruments)
   - Concerns about validity and reliability: which threats exist in your study? (Chapter 7)
2. Specifically what statistics or other methods of analysis will you use? This
   should lead directly to the answer to your research question and/or test of your
   hypotheses (Chapters 15, 16, 17, 18, Statistics for Social Workers).
3. Please note that there are two classes (one the day this is due and another the
   week following) in which material may apply to this assignment. This is essentially a
   draft for the final paper - worry not!
4. Please note that this project will be evaluated in a way to give you
   feedback aimed at assisting you in getting an A for the final project. Grading is
   based upon completion and effort on each part listed above.

Analysis assignments: 2/18, 3/18, 4/8, 4/15.
There will be four analysis assignments throughout the semester each of which will ask
you to provide printouts and interpretations of data sets. Three are quantitative and one is
qualitative. Handouts with instructions will be provided in the class/lab during which
that particular skill is discussed. HINT: these can be developed for your final project for
the data analysis section of the assignment. These are brief may also be doable in the
computer lab on some days. (Chapters 15, 16, 17, 18, Statistics for Social Workers).
20% **In Class Quizzes: 10% each. Unannounced.**
There will be two short quizzes, which will cover the basics in the text and reading questions for the week in which they are given. They will be objective. They will be randomly placed through the semester. Questions may also ask about the SSD project.

25% **Final project: April 23**
This will be a full write up of your research project, not to exceed 20 pages plus graphs and/or tables, and a bibliography (article length); it can be shorter. See Appendix C, page 620 and class handouts for ideas.
In essence, this is a combination of the problem formulation and the methodology and ethics sections above. I will give you feedback for them so that you can improve them and put them into the final project. This paper also includes actual data analysis with the statistic write up or qualitative write up included. Hint: the thoughtful student might have run the analyses for this paper through the analyses assignments!!!
I recommend the following sections:
- Background (literature review) which ends with research question(s) and/or testable hypotheses
- Methodology including ethics
- Results (somewhat similar to the analysis assignments)
- Conclusions/implications
- Bibliography or references

NOTE: this may be in the form of a final report to an agency or a case analysis for a client or a community with a different format, as long as all of the same elements are included.

**Written assignment format:**
ALL written assignments must follow this format. Points will be deducted for not following the format and/or **for handing in any papers late** without permission from the instructor (up to 25%). **DO NOT EXCEED PAGE LIMITS, I will not read more than the required number of pages for each assignment**
1. Typed
2. 14 pt type (12 is typical and too small)
3. Clarity in writing (sentences should make sense, paragraphs should start with a sentence outlining the paragraph, etc.)
4. Excellent spelling
5. Do not use material developed for, or in conjunction with, another class or educational assignment without discussing it with the instructor. Such assignments, which can be very useful, must, according the student handbook, be okayed with both instructors.
6. See the American Psychological Association Publication Manual, 4rth edition, or your student guide for instructions on how to list references. Models are also provided below in this syllabus.
7. DO NOT PLAGARIZE: any quote of more than 3 words must be cited. As the research you are doing is in my area of expertise, I may recognize non-cited quotations. Plagiarism may be grounds for expulsion. See your student guide for more information.
Grades
Grade inflation is rampant across undergraduate and graduate schools around the country. I see this inflation as unnecessary (for jobs, Ph.D. programs, funding opportunities, success, etc.) and undeserved. While many students in this school do very skilled work, I am relatively certain that several students will receive B’s in this course. Honesty is a better and clearly more ethical policy of feedback than false praise and reward. I will endeavor to always explain my grades clearly and to document my explanations.

Texts & Readings
There is one required and one very highly recommended text:


Very highly recommended:

They are available both at The Common Language Book Store located at 215 S 4rth Avenue, 313-663-0036. They typically do not open until 10am. Please spend some time in the bookstore, if you are unfamiliar with it, and say hello to the proprietor, Kate!

The books should be used together. Note that the Rubin & Babbie book has a great set of appendices in the back. Also, remember to use the glossary/index in each for clarification of questions and terms.

Reader
No reader- but there are a few articles- they are all available online. They may be linked to the coursetools site for the course, but are all available through “electronic journals” available to the UM community. In some cases, when you go through a link or two you may need to search by author name or title of the paper- don’t give up easily! See the list below and referenced in the course schedule.

Software
Microsoft Excel; you may use an at-home version or the version available in the UM computer lab. Talk with Peter if you need help with compatibility or have other questions.
Databases
YOU MUST DOWNLOAD THE APPROPRIATE DATA FILES FROM THE COURSE WEB PAGE.
- The Trauma Project, Burton, D. and Fleming, M. (download from web page)
- The Children’s Project II, Burton, D. (download from web page)
- General Social Survey, National Science Foundation (Link to from web page)
- W.J. Maxey Boys training school RSAT evaluation project data (not on webpage)
- Your own data. You must discuss this with the professor!!!

Groups vs. individual work
Study groups are strongly recommended but not required. This is your choice for handling assignments. If you do statistical homework together, each person must use different variables in their analyses. Grading for group work on other assignments (the pre final and final assignments: ‘research problem formulation and justification assignment’ & ‘methodology plan and ethical concerns’) will be harder as products should be much better, but so will the learning. You can change groups or do as you please, but each group assignment needs to be labeled with all names and will receive one grade and one set of feedback.
January 21st OFF for MLK Day
I have a Dream

by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Delivered on the steps at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. on August 28, 1963…

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of captivity.

But one hundred years later, we must face the tragic fact that the Negro is still not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. So we have come here today to dramatize an appalling condition.

In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men would be guaranteed the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we have come to cash this check -- a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice. We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to open the doors of opportunity to all of God's children. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment and to underestimate the determination of the Negro. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.

We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny and their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro
in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state, sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.
I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama, whose governor's lips are presently dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today.
I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning, "My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado! Let freedom ring from the curvaceous peaks of California! But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia! Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee! Let freedom ring from every hill and every molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! free at last! thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"
Articles- all available online


If it is useful to you, you might want to read the following OPTIONAL article: Carr, J. E. & Burkholder, E. O. (1998) Creating single-subject design graphs with Microsoft Excel-superg(TM). Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 31(2), 245-251. (available online through electronic journals)


Myers, L.L. & Thyer, B.A. (1997). Should social work clients have the right to effective treatment? Social Work, 42(3), 288-298. (available online through electronic journals)


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* All reading on this page is to be read PRIOR to the date it is placed on (you may have a quiz!*)
Burton’s 2002 522 Class Assignments

Class P.
2 Quizzes
4 Analysis
Prob F.
M & E:
Prob Form
Meth & Ethics
Results & D
SSD

Final Assignment