

**Bradley University Social Work Program**  
**SW 260 Research Methods**  
**Bradley Hall 223**  
**Fall, 2007**

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**Office Hours:** MW 1:00-3:00 and TH 3:00-4:00 or by  
appointment  
**Class Schedule:** TT 1:30-2:45 (Bradley 100)

**Blackboard:** Much of the course will be on Blackboard. I will post lecture notes and assignments there, and I will be setting up a bulletin board for class projects. In the first class I will explain how to access Blackboard. If you use an email other than your Bradley email you must arrange to have email forwarded from your Bradley account. You must have a Bradley account to use Blackboard. Also, all grades are posted to Blackboard so you can check your grades.

**Accommodation:** Any student with a disability or special need who requires accommodation should inform the instructor at the beginning of this course.

**Non-Discrimination Statement:** Students will be expected to display respect for fellow students and clients unique characteristics including race, color, gender, age, socioeconomic status, religion, creed, ethnic or national origin, veteran status, disability, sexual orientation, and political orientation. All assignments will use non-discriminatory language. See the "classroom rules" attached to this syllabus.

**Intercollegiate Competition:** Any student representing Bradley University in an intercollegiate competition (sports, speech, moot court, etc.) may be excused from class with advanced notice and the proper verification. Students will be allowed to make up work; however, it is the student's responsibility to arrange this with the instructor.

**Generalist Practice Principles**

1. 1. A systems approach provides the basic framework for understanding the generalist practice perspective and planning interventions with multiple systems.
2. 2. Problems in living are presented from a person-in-environment perspective, with focus on the transactions between individuals and the environment.
3. 3. Assessments and interventions must address both intrapsychic and environmental strengths and stressors.
4. 4. Generalist practice involves assessment and interventions at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.
5. 5. Practice is based on the problem solving process and knowledge, skills, and values that are applicable across settings with diverse populations and in a variety of problem areas.

6. 6. Critical analysis of social problems is inherent in generalist practice and results in both practice and policy responses.
7. 7. Empirical research provides a solid foundation for both education and practice and generalist practitioners are expected to participate in practice evaluation activities.
8. 8. Generalist practice often requires the social worker to function in multiple roles depending on the needs of the client system.

### **I. Course Description:**

Research Methods will prepare students for the systematic and analytical evaluation of practice and the generation of professional knowledge. Students will learn about the theory of knowledge generation and validation, the ethics of research, and the methods and process of conducting social work research. Students will examine several methods of scientific inquiry including quantitative, qualitative, and applied methods of practice and program evaluation.

### **II. Course Objectives:**

Students will be expected to demonstrate learning in the following areas:

#### Knowledge

1. 1. Students will develop their knowledge of the scientific method in order to better understand the relationship between social work research and social work practice.
2. 2. Students will develop their knowledge of various research designs and have an understanding of how to apply designs to questions and problems for the evaluation or study of individuals, families, groups, organizations, or communities.
3. 3. Students will develop their knowledge of the process of conducting research including problem formulation and conceptualization, conducting literature reviews, operationalizing the study, sampling techniques, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation.

#### Skills

1. Students will develop the skill to evaluate appropriateness of various research designs as applied to various research questions or issues of study.
2. Students will develop the skill for sampling techniques to enhance a studies validity and usefulness.
3. Students will develop the skills for data collection methods including evaluating or developing instruments.
4. Students will develop the skill to analyze and interpret data for the generation of knowledge to inform practice.
5. Students will develop skill in using computer data analysis methods including SPSS

#### Values

1. Students will understand the values and ethics associated with ethical and competent research.

2. Students will learn procedures necessary for research to protect vulnerable people and populations from duress or harm.

**III. Resources**

Required Texts: Williams, Margaret, Unrau, Yvonne A., & Grinnell, Richard M. , Jr. (2005). Research methods for social workers. Eddie Bauers: Peosta, IA.

SPSS Student Ware

Posted Black Board readings

**IV. Learning Evaluation**

**A. Exams 200 points**

There will be two exams each worth 100 points. One midterm and a final. Both exams will be on Blackboard.

**The Midterm will be posted Oct. 18 and must be completed by Oct. 25 at 5:00 PM**

**The final will be due Friday Dec. 14 at 4:30 PM.**

**B. Research Project 100 points**

The class will work on a project as a group to develop and implement a research project to assess the differences between religious and social work values. Each student will write a research paper based upon the data collected by the class. The following schedule of assignments will guide you through the process. Each student will complete the assignments and then assemble them into the final paper. These assignments will be graded in class. Students must complete the assignments on by the due date and bring them to class. Students will exchange papers and grade and critique each other's work.

**IF YOU HAVE NOT COMPLETED THE ASSIGNMENT DO NOT COME TO CLASS. YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE THE POINTS FOR THAT ASSIGNMENT.**

I WILL GRADE THE FINAL PAPER.

ASSIGNMENT	POINTS	DATE DUE
Research question	5	Sep. 4
Protection of human subjects	5	Sep.14
Research design	5	Oct. 5
Sampling	5	Oct. 26
Literature review	30	Nov. 9

Instrument	5	Nov. 16
Data collection/entry	10	Nov. 23
Final paper	35	Dec. 5
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>100</b>	

**C. C. Various in Class assignments 50 points**

Go to

<https://www.citiprogram.org/default.asp?strKeyID=570A4C16-2CD6-419A-B96C-F1E820920F8B-0>

You will need to create a login and password. You must complete the course modules and send me a certificate of completion. This site deals with the issues of using human subjects. Save your certificate because you will need it for Field. This assignment is worth 20 points. This assignment is due Sept. 11

There will be several SPSS assignments. These will be posted on Blackboard. These will be worth 30 points total.

There will be a total of 350 points for the class. Grades will be distributed as follows:

315-350 = A  
 280-314 = B  
 245-279 = C  
 210-244 = D

**V. Class Schedule**

**Unit I. INTRODUCTION 8/30**

**Introduction to class and overview**

This class will review the syllabus, the expectations for class, and the expectations for assignments. Lecture notes dealing with inquiry and how we know, "what is and what ain't so," will be posted to Blackboard.

**READINGS: Lecture 1**

**The logic of empirical research 9/4 & 9/6**

This section will examine the logic of research. It will introduce logic and "logic in use". It will explore the ideas behind research and how research supports social work practice.

**READINGS: Lecture 2**

**Unit II. THE EMPIRICAL NATURE OF SOCIAL WORK: WHY DO WE DO RESEARCH  
 9/11 & 9/13**

**The Integration of Research and Social Work  
Generalist Practice**

This section will examine the different kinds of knowledge and understanding used in social work practice and the purposes of doing social work research (pure or applied). Types of research strategies such as exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, and needs assessment are briefly introduced. We will begin planning the class research project.

**READINGS: Lecture 3 and Chapter 1 in Text**

**Human Subjects certificate due on Sept. 11**

**Unit III. THE ETHICS OF RESEACH 9/18 & 9/20**

**The Ethics, Values, and Respect for Diversity  
Associated with Social Work Research**

This section will examine the ethical principles and values imperative for social work research that emphasizes respect and dignity for all research participants, especially vulnerable populations. The NASW Code of Ethics will be discussed in relation to research. Students will have some experiential activities to evaluate examples of studies from the professional literature for ethical violations. Students will participate in developing consent procedures for research project for class. Students will also examine the value of respecting diversity issues when conducting research.

**READINGS: Lecture 4 and chapter 4 in Text**

**Unit IV. DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT**

**Research Approaches and Processes 9/25 & 9/27**

The section will discuss the conceptual formulation of a research project with a focus on reviewing and critiquing literature in a particular area.

Discussion will build on the ways of knowing in lecture 1 to look at research questions and how they shape methodology. Students will have experiential activities to participate in evaluation of examples of research designs in studies in the professional literature.

**READINGS: Lecture 5 and chaps. 2 & 3 in Text**

**Problem Formulation, Conceptualization, and Operationalization 10/2 & 10/4**

This section covers defining the research questions, hypotheses generation, developing the question and methodology through a review of the professional literature, defining variables nominally and operationally, and examining the various levels of measurement of variables.

**READINGS: Lecture 5**

**Fall Recess 10/9**

**Research Designs 10/11**

This section will explore in depth purposes and methods for the research designs of exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory research. Students will participate in experiential exercises to decide on the choice of appropriate designs for various research topics and questions.

**READINGS: Lecture 6 and chaps. 5 & 6 in Text**

**Applied Research Designs 10/16 & 10/18**

This section will take a more in-depth look at applied agency research such as practice evaluation, program evaluation, and cost-benefit analysis. This unit is particularly important as practice now stresses outcome measurement.

**READINGS: Lecture 7 and chaps. 7 & 8 in Text**

**Unit V. IMPLEMENTATION OF RESEARCH PROCESS**

**Data Collection Methods**

**Who to Study: Sampling Methods 10/23 & 10/25**

This section will discuss both probability and purposive sampling techniques and the strengths and weaknesses of both. This section will introduce concepts such as the normal curve, the Central Limit Theorem, the Law of Large Numbers, and the measurement of the standard error.

**READINGS: Lecture 8 and Chap. 9 in Text**

**Oct. 19 MIDTERM EXAM DUE** on BlackBoard

**Data Collection Methods and Instrumentation 10/30 & 1/1**

This section will examine and discuss various data collection methods such as interviewing, questionnaire construction, observation, the use of logs and journals, the use of standardized scales and instruments, and the use of secondary data. This section will discuss reliability and validity issues. Students will engage in experiential learning by constructing a questionnaire to use for the research project and will engage in the use of standardized instruments.

**READINGS: Lecture 9 and chaps. 10 & 11 in Text**

**Unit VI. Data Analysis**

**Organizing the Data 10/24 & 10/26**

This section looks at the organization techniques necessary for quantitative data prior to analysis such as entering data into the computer program (SPSS), converting data to numerical codes, and developing a codebook. This section will also discuss organizing techniques necessary for qualitative analysis such as transcribing field notes, organizing files. Students will engage in experiential learning by using SPSS and developing a codebook for the research project.

**READINGS: Lecture 10 and Chaps. 12, 13 & 14 in Text**

**March 30 EXAM III**

**Qualitative Data Analysis 11/6 & 11/8**

This section will discuss qualitative analysis techniques such as open and axial coding, constructing categories, interpreting data and building theory, and assessing the trustworthiness of the data.

**READINGS: Lecture 11**

**Quantitative Data Analysis - Descriptive Statistics 11/13 & 11/15**

This section will examine descriptive statistical analysis of data including frequency distributions, measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion, measures of association, and the use of graphics to depict data. Students will engage in experiential learning using SPSS to manipulate data and well as hand computation.

**READINGS: Lecture 12 and chap. 13**

**D. Quantitative Data Analysis - Inferential Statistics 11/20**

This section will examine the use of inferential statistics for data analysis including chi-square, t-test, ANOVA, Pearson's r, and regression analysis. Concepts of one and two tailed hypothesis, significance levels, statistical power and error will be discussed.

**READINGS: Lecture 13**

**11/22 Happy Thanksgiving!!**

**Unit VII. INTERPRETING RESULTS**

**Writing the Research Report 11/27 & 11/29**

This section will examine how to interpret results and convey them in writing. This section discusses the various sections that are included in research reports as well as ethical considerations of reporting.

**READINGS: Lecture 14 and Chaps. 15 & 16 in Text**

**The remainder of the class will address individual research project write ups and data analysis**

**The final will be posted on Blackboard on Dec. 121 and will be due Friday Dec. 14 at 4:30 PM.**

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**Research Project**

You will be expected to design and implement a research project during this course. Don't dial registration and drop yet! We will do this as a class as a group project. Again don't drop yet, unlike other class group projects, this project will not require you to get together outside of class with a small group nor does your grade depend on others in the class. So... If you haven't bailed out yet continue reading.

The project will involve the class developing and conducting a study of students and how they are relating to their parents. We will design this in class.

The process of conducting a research project will then be broken down into parts. As you notice in the syllabus, the entire project is worth 100 points, but each part has points allocated. Each assignment will be discussed in class prior to the due date. Due to the inevitable law of human nature that @#\*@#\* happens, all dates in the syllabi including

due dates remain flexible. If due dates change, they are never moved up, only delayed. Each part of the research project will lead up to the final paper, which will follow the following format.

- I. Face Sheet  
Title, Your name,
- II. Introduction  
General statement of what the research topic is and what was found.
- III. Review of the literature  
This section should be a review of relevant scholarly literature on the topic.  
(3-5 pages)
- IV. Research question or hypothesis  
If hypothesis is used, state whether it is one tailed or two tailed, and what is the null hypothesis.
- V. Research Design  
Was this project descriptive, exploratory, or explanatory using a quantitative or qualitative data methodology.
- VI. Sampling Methodology  
What sampling technique was chosen and why. Are there any limitations to the sampling method chosen? If so what? What was the sampling frame. What was the sampling process?
- VII. Data Collection Methodology  
What was the instrument chosen and why? What are some of the threats due to bias. What was the process for data collection?
- VIII. Data Analysis  
What methods are used to analyze the data, descriptive or inferential and why?
- IX. Results  
So what did the data say?
- X. Discussion and implications  
The "so what" of research

See the research handbook posted on the website for more details about writing a research report.

The paper must be in APA style, including running head.