

MSW 802: Applied Social Welfare Research Seminar

The course will focus on applied social welfare research that emphasizes the necessity of integrating research methods into micro, mezzo and macro levels of practice. Dominant research paradigms and their underlying epistemological and ideological assumptions will be reviewed. Qualitative and quantitative research techniques used in the assessment of social work practice will be examined.

There is a growing recognition that there needs to be stronger links between the research knowledge and practice to address social welfare issues such as poverty, trafficking, gendered violence, and vulnerability to HIV and AIDS. Applied Social Welfare Research is research that addresses social welfare issues with the goal of informing the development of policies, programs and practices that decrease vulnerability and alleviate the impact on individuals, families and communities.

ASWR emphasizes collaboration with diverse stakeholders who are the ultimate end users of the knowledge produced and the use of multiple research methods including community mapping, surveys, interviews, observations, policy and programme analysis, and analysis of existing data and statistics.

ASWR asks the following questions:

- What are the basic social needs of (different groups of) people according to professionals and the people?
- To what extent do present interventions cover these needs? Are they acceptable?
- Given the resources available could more be done?
- Is it possible to better affect some of the factors influencing social welfare? These questions we will be asking and answering in ASWR.

Class Format:

The format will consist of lecture/discussion and practical sessions.

Texts:

- a. Course Manual by Eleanor Maticka- Tyndale
- b. Rubin A. and Babbie, E. Research methods for social work (Seventh ed.), Belmont, California: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2007.
- c. Westhues, A., Cadell, S., Karabanow, J., Maxwell, L. & Sanchez, M. (1999). The Creation of Knowledge: From Paradigm to Practice. Canadian Social Work Review, 16 (2), 129 - 154.

Student Learning Outcome Objectives – Students who complete ASWR should:

- Understand how to access books and journal articles using on-line electronic library catalogues and electronic journal article databases;
- Understand how to access text and visual images from the WWW;
- Be able to formulate researchable social science and public policy questions and operationalize how to answer them;
- Be acquainted with various qualitative and quantitative social welfare research methods:

- Understand strengths and weaknesses of different research methods and when it is and is not appropriate to use specific methods;
- Be able to design a research project using appropriate multiple research methods;
- Understand how to collect, code, and enter quantitative data into a database for use statistical packages;
- Understand ethical issues in social science and public policy research and meet high standards of research ethics;
- Be able to prepare a professional written research report;
- Be able to give an effective oral report supported by a PowerPoint presentation.

Participation and Attendance

Attendance and active participation are **required** in this class, which is designed to be a professional seminar. You are expected to read all the assigned material before class and attend every class session, fully prepared to participate in discussions and activities.

COURSE MODULES:

Students will complete four modules. The modules for the research methods and the days of the discussion are as follows:

April 14th: Module I- Developing a Research Statement and Objectives

- Identifying and prioritizing topics for research
Readings: Course manual pages 25-29, Rubin and Babbie pages 99-102
- Developing a problem statement
Readings: Course manual pages 33-45, Rubin and Babbie pages 103-104
- Literature review
Readings: Course manual pages 53-59, Rubin and Babbie pages 106-109
- Formulation of research objectives
Readings: Course manual pages 73-76,

April 15th: Module II-Research Methods

- Applied Social Welfare research methodologies
Readings: Course manual pages 85-89
- Variables
Readings: Course manual pages 91-105, Rubin and Babbie pages 125-128
- Study types

Readings: Course manual pages 113-129, Rubin and Babbie pages 112-114, 285-290, 345-348,

- d. Action research (including participatory action research)
Readings: Course manual pages 139-146
- e. Data collection techniques
Readings: Course manual pages 149-160, Rubin and Babbie pages 348-362
- f. Ethics
Readings: Course manual pages 167-170, Rubin and Babbie pages 59-78

April 16th: Module III-Quantitative (Survey) Research

- a. Questionnaire development
Readings: Course manual pages 185-198, Rubin and Babbie pages 191-210
- b. Sampling
Readings: Course manual pages 201-208, Rubin and Babbie pages 227-273
- c. Bias in quantitative research
Readings: Course manual pages 213-218, Rubin and Babbie pages 227-273
- d. Data collection plan
Readings: Course manual pages 221-232
- e. Planning data processing and analysis
Readings: Course manual pages 235-252, Rubin and Babbie pages 451-462
- f. Pre-testing the methodology
Readings: Course manual pages 259-269

April 17th: Module IV-Qualitative Research

- a. Interview guide development
Readings: Course manual pages 282-290, Rubin and Babbie pages 216-225
- b. Conducting in-depth interviews and focus groups
Readings: Course manual pages 297-311, Rubin and Babbie pages 390-392, 573-574
- c. Sampling

Readings: Course manual pages 315-321, Rubin and Babbie pages 382-387

d. Bias in qualitative research

Readings: Course manual pages 323-328, Rubin and Babbie pages 451-462

e. Data collection plan

Readings: Course manual pages 331-342, Rubin and Babbie pages 381-382

f. Plan for data processing and analysis

Readings: Course manual pages 345-352, Rubin and Babbie pages 394-397

g. Pre-testing the methodology

Readings: Course manual pages 355-365

April 18th: Class Presentations

Evaluation:

Attendance and participation:	20%	On-going
Class presentation:	20%	April 18 th , 2008
Research Proposal:	60%	To be announced in class

Final Paper:

The final paper will be a proposal for a research project using one or more of the methodologies discussed in class. The proposal will include the rationale for the selection of a particular research design. Proposals will routinely include but not be restricted to: introduction (background and context); literature review (a critical review of other studies); research questions; methodology (paradigms, design, sampling, data collection instrument(s), ethical review, analysis plan) and work plan (including time line). The proposal (excluding the bibliography) is to be a maximum of 20 typewritten pages (without appendices) submitted on letter size paper with double-line spacing and 1 1/4" margin on all sides. The paper is to follow an APA format for referencing.

Class Presentation:

Students will present a summary of their proposal to the class. Oral presentations will be followed by a brief question and answer period wherein the instructor and the presenters' colleagues will provide feedback on the content and style of the presentation. Students will share an outline, overview and information sources for their research topic with the class. The presentations will enable the class to get exposed to different approaches for conceptualizing research questions.