



MASTER SYLLABUS

**Course: S.W. 3810: Research Methods, Data Analysis, and Practice Evaluation I
(Three Credits)**

I. Course Domain and Boundaries

S.W. 3810 is the first of two courses that examine the basic concepts and methods of scientific inquiry used to build knowledge for social work practice. Course content (a) explore the science of knowing, (b) identify the steps in the research process and their interrelationships, (c) review basic research designs and approaches used in social work research, (d) demonstrate the use of descriptive statistics in the study of social work interventions, programs, and social welfare policies, (e) consider fundamental issues associated with problem formulation and measurement, (f) introduce students to computerized statistical packages used to analyze quantitative data, and (g) critically examine ethical issues associated with conducting social work research with culturally diverse, disenfranchised, and at-risk populations.

II. Knowledge Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- A.** Identify and explain the steps in the research process and their interrelationships;
- B.** Know the characteristics of researchable questions and testable hypotheses;
- C.** Understand the relationship between theoretical and ideological frames of reference and conceptual definitions of variables;
- D.** Understand the relationship between conceptual and operational definitions of variables including reliability and validity considerations salient to the measurement process;
- E.** Understand the relationship between developing operational definitions and quantifying variables;
- F.** Know the characteristics, strengths, and limitations of nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio level data;
- G.** Describe ethical and human diversity issues associated with conducting research with culturally diverse, socially disenfranchised, and at-risk populations;
- H.** Describe the strengths and weaknesses of various research designs used to study social work interventions, and social welfare programs and public policies.
- I.** Understand the relationship between research and social work practice.

III. Skill Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- A. Demonstrate the ability to identify ethical issues associated with social work research
- B. Demonstrate the ability to conduct basic descriptive analyses using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).
- C. Enter and clean coded data
- D. Analyze descriptive data
- E. Interpret descriptive statistics
- F. Create empirical charts and data
- G. Write summaries of descriptive data.

IV. Organization of the Course

Class sessions include lectures/presentations, class and small group discussions, group exercises, and individual and instruction in the School of Social Work computer laboratory.

V. Performance Criteria

Performance on course examinations and graded written assignments serves as the basis for assessing mastery of course knowledge and skill objectives.

VI. Texts and Class Material (All books are available at Marwil and WSU Barnes & Noble Bookstores)

Yegidis, B. L. & Weinbach, R. W. (2006). *Research methods for social workers* (5th ed.). NY: Allyn, Bacon, and Longman.

Kendrick, J. R. (2005). *Social statistics: An introduction using SPSS for Windows* (2nd. Ed.). NY: Allyn, Bacon, and Longman.

Weinbach, R. & Grinnell, R. Jr. (2004). *Statistics for social workers*(6th ed.). NY: Allyn, Bacon, and Longman.

SPSS 12.0.

***THE TEXTBOOKS AND SOFTWARE REQUIRED FOR THIS CLASS ARE BUNDLED TOGETHER UNDER ISBN#: 0205494536**

VII. Role of the Student

The Wayne State University Statement of Obligations of Students and Faculty Members to the Teaching and Learning Process identifies the roles of students and

instructors. Students can find this statement at the following WSU web address, <http://www.bulletins.wayne.edu/ubk-output/gen18.html#15234>.

Students are expected to participate in class by, (a) contributing to class discussions and small group exercises, (b) sharing their responses to course readings and issues and topics raised in class, (c) asking questions, and (d) completing feedback forms for each classroom session.

Any student formally diagnosed with a learning, physical or emotional challenge which requires special accommodation, should inform the instructor and contact Educational Accessibility Services, (313) 577-1851), between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

VIII. Attendance Policy

The University's policy on attendance states, "Students are expected to attend all sessions of courses for which they are registered and to notify the instructor or his or her secretary prior to the class sessions, if possible, when the student may be absent due to illness or similar emergency

In addition to attending all class sessions, students should arrive for class on time. Students who arrive late miss important information and disturb their classmates.

IX. Assignments and Grades

Scores earned for graded assignments and/or examinations determine final course grades. Handouts, distributed in class, specify the criteria used to assess student performance on graded assignments.

All assignments are due on the date specified by the instructor. **Late assignments are penalized three points for each day they are late. To avoid the late penalty contact the instructor at least 48 hours before the assignment is due and request an extension. Under extraordinary circumstances, students may receive approval to turn in their assignments up to three days after they are due. Make-up examinations are available only under unusual and unavoidable circumstances.**

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>% of Grade</u>	<u>Points</u>
Mid-Term Examination	35	70
Final Examination	40	80
Diversity Paper	15	30
SPSS Data Entry Assignment	<u>10</u>	<u>20</u>
	100	200

Grade Scale

A = 200 – 190	B = 173 – 166	C = 153 – 146	D = 128 – 120
A- = 189 – 180	B- = 165 – 160	C- = 145 – 140	D- = 119 – 110
B+ = 179 – 174	C+ = 159 – 154	D+ = 139 – 129	F = # 109

X. Course Outline

Sessions One & Two

A. Scientific Inquiry & Social Work Practice

Readings

Chapter 1: Yegidis & Weinbach, Toward Evidence-Based Practice.

Proctor, E. K. (2002). Social work research: Informing the frontlines and taking the long view. *Social Work Research*, 26(3), 130-131.

Proctor, E.K. (2003). Research to inform the development of social work interventions. *Social Work Research*, 27(1), 3-5.

Sessions Three & Four

B. The Ethics and Politics of Social Work Research

Readings

Chapter 2: Yegidis & Weinbach, Ethical Issues in Research.

C. Diversity Issues in Social Work Research

Readings

Rubin, A. & Babbie, E. (2005). Culturally competent research. In *Research methods for social work*. (5th ed.) (pp. 496-524). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning.

Nelson, J.C. (1994). Ethics, gender, and ethnicity in single-case research and evaluation. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 18(3/4), 139-151.

Burnette, D. (1998). Conceptual and methodological considerations in research with non-white ethnic elders. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 23(3/4), 71-91.

English, B. (1997). Conducting ethical evaluations with disadvantaged and minority target groups. *Evaluation Practice*, 18(1), 49-54.

Uehara, E., Sohng, S., Bending, R., Seyfried, S., Richey, C., Morelli, P., Spencer, M., Ortega, D. Keenan, L., & Kanuha, V. (1996). Towards a value-based approach to multicultural social work research. *Social Work*, 41(6), 613-621.

Sessions Five & Six

D. Problem Formulation and Conceptualization and Operationalization

Readings

Chapter 3: Yegidis & Weinbach, Research problems and questions.

Chapter 4: Yegidis & Weinbach, Finding and using existing knowledge.

Chapter 5: Yegidis & Weinbach, Focused research questions and research hypotheses.

Sessions Seven & Eight

E. Measurement

Readings

Chapter 10: Yegidis & Weinbach, Measurement concepts and issues.

Chapter 1: Weinbach & Grinnell, Introduction to statistical analysis.

Chapter 2: Kendrick, J. R., Levels of measurement.

Koeske, G.F. (1994). Some recommendations for improving measurement validation in social work research. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 18(3/4), 43-70.

Scott, D. (2002). Adding meaning to measurement: The value of qualitative methods in practice research. *British Journal of Social Work*, 32(7), 923-930.

F. Constructing Measurement Instruments

Readings

Chapter 11: Yegidis & Weinbach, Data collection instruments.

Sessions Nine & Ten

G. The Logic of Sampling

Readings

Chapter 9: Yegidis & Weinbach, Sampling issues and options.

H. Survey Research & Qualitative Research

Readings

Chapter 8: Yegidis & Weinbach, Other ways to describe research.

Padgett, D.K. (1998). *Qualitative methods in social work research: Changes and rewards*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Gilgun, J.F., & Abrams, L.S. (2002). The nature and usefulness of qualitative social work research. *Qualitative Social Work*, 1(1), 39-55.

Sessions Eleven & Twelve

I. Designs for Evaluating Programs and Practice

Readings

Chapter 6: Yegidis & Weinbach, Definitions and general characteristics.

Chapter 13: Yegidis & Weinbach, Evaluating programs.

Chapter 14: Yegidis & Weinbach, Evaluating individual practice effectiveness.

Sessions Thirteen & Fourteen

J. Descriptive Statistics

1. Frequencies, Percentages, and Proportions
2. Shapes of Distributions
3. The Mean: An Average
4. Mean, Median, and Mode
5. Range and Interquartile Range
6. Standard Deviation

Readings

Chapter 2: Weinbach & Grinnell, Frequency distributions and graphs.

Chapter 3: Weinbach & Grinnell, Central tendency and variability.

Chapter 4: Weinbach & Grinnell, Normal distributions

Chapter 1: Kendrick, J. R., Getting started: Fundamentals of research design.

Chapter 3: Kendrick, J. R., Creating an SPSS data file.

Chapter 4: Kendrick, J. R., Analyzing frequency distributions.

Chapter 5: Kendrick, J. R., Measures of central tendency.

Chapter 6: Kendrick, J. R., Measures of dispersion.

SPSS Class Handout, SPSS 11.0 Tutorial.

Bibliography

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- Gibbs, A. (2001). The changing nature and context of social work research. *British Journal of Social Work*, 31(5), 687-704.
- Gil, E. F., & Bob, S. (1999). Culturally competent research: An ethical perspective. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 19(1), 45-55.
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- Healey, J. F. (2005). *Statistics: A tool for social research* (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Holcomb, Z.C. (1998). *Fundamentals of descriptive statistics*. Los Angeles: Pyczak Publishing.
- Holosko, M.J. (2006). *Primer for critiquing social research: A student guide*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.
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- Westerfelt, A., & Dietz, T.J. (2005). *Planning and conducting agency-based research* (3rd ed.). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

SW. 3810: Research Methods, Data Analysis, and Practice Evaluation I

Diversity Paper (30 Points)

Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to assess students' ability to critically examine published social work research and identify and assess ethical issues associated with conducting research with culturally diverse, disenfranchised, and or at-risk populations.

Assignment Requirements

1. Select a published research article from the social work literature. The study can be either qualitative or quantitative.
2. The course instructor must approve the article you select.
3. Write a brief (no more than seven pages, typed, and double-spaced) critical analysis of the study using the following questions as guides:
 - a. What is the purpose of the study (to describe, explore, and or explain)? Is the purpose of the study clearly stated? Does the study target culturally diverse, disenfranchised, or at-risk populations? If so, briefly describe the population (s).
 - b. Does the study address a problem or need that disproportionately affects poor, needy, or at-risk populations? Briefly, describe the problem and how it affects the population.
 - c. Briefly, describe the sample used in the study. How was it selected? Did the researchers use probability sampling techniques? Does the sample include minorities, women, low-income individuals, and or at-risk populations? If the sample is not sufficiently diverse what impact will this have on the generalizability of the study's findings?
 - d. Does the study design take into consideration the unique social, cultural, or gender characteristics of the research subjects? If so, how? If not, what are the implications of not being sensitive to the unique characteristics of the study sample?

- e. What types of methods are used to collect the study data? Did the researchers collect the data using culturally appropriate methods or instruments? If not, how might the data collected be different if more culturally appropriate instruments and methods were used?
- f. Overall, how would you rate this study with regard to its sensitivity to the unique needs and characteristics of culturally diverse, disenfranchised, and or at-risk populations? Do you consider this study very ethical, ethical, only somewhat ethical, or not very ethical? Give a rationale for your answer.

Paper Format

1. All papers should be typed, double-spaced, and follow APA guidelines.
2. Each paper should include a cover page that contains your name, the course title and section, and the date. The cover page does not count against the assignment page limit.
3. The pages of your paper must be numbered and the entire document must be stapled. Unstapled papers will be penalized two points.
4. References for the paper should be brief. Extended direct quotes are strongly discouraged. Excessively long direct quotes or papers that include an excessive number direct quotes will be penalized up to a maximum of two points.
5. Do not enclose your papers in plastic covers or folders.

Grading Criteria

1. Thoroughness of the paper. Did you address all six questions listed on page one of the assignment handout?
2. The accuracy of the analysis of the study. Are your comments supported by course readings and or lectures?
3. Your ability to assess the extent to which a published social work research study follows the principles guiding the ethical conduct of social work research, particularly research involving culturally diverse, disenfranchised, and or at-risk populations.
4. Quality of the paper. Poorly written papers that contain excessive punctuation, spelling, and or grammatical errors will be penalized a maximum of five points.
5. Papers longer than seven pages will be penalized one point for every page over the seven-page limit.

**SW. 3810: Research Methods, Data Analysis, and Practice Evaluation I
(Three Credits)**

Data Analysis & Presentation Assignment (20 Points)

The executive director of the Warren County Urban Minority Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention program requests a demographic profile of the 50 participants in their new Post-Release Reentry program (PRRP). The Ohio Alcohol and Drug Services Agency, the agency funding the program, requested the profile in order to make sure program participants meet eligibility guidelines set forth in the funding agreement.

The PRRP is an offender reentry program designed to help recently paroled inmates successfully reenter their communities. More than 60% of these offenders used drugs or alcohol before they committed the offense for which they were recently paroled, and many did not receive substance abuse treatment while in prison. The PRRP provides a wide range of support services to the offender and his or her family.

The program coordinator for the PRRP created an Excel spreadsheet containing important demographic data for program participants. Following the guidelines described below, use the spreadsheet to create a demographic profile of PRRP participants.

Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to introduce students to the use of descriptive statistics and data presentation using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 13.0. In addition, students will demonstrate the ability to (a) enter and clean data, (b) analyzed descriptive data, (c) interpret descriptive statistics, (d) create empirical charts and tables, and (e) write summaries of descriptive data.

Assignment Requirements

1. Enter PRRP data in a SPSS data file
2. Conduct appropriate descriptive statistic analyses
3. Present the results of the analyses using frequency tables and graphs.
4. Prepare a brief report summarizing the results of your analysis.

Data Entry

Each student is responsible for creating an SPSS data file using the data attached to this assignment sheet.

Data Analysis

Create frequency (absolute frequencies and percentage distributions) tables for the following variables, **ethnicity, gender, offense, program completion, program satisfaction, and positive drug test**. Create a descriptive statistics (minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation) table for the following variables, **age and prison time served**.

Graphic Presentation (Pie or Bar Charts)

Create graphic representations (charts/graphs) for the following variables, **ethnicity, gender, positive drug test, program satisfaction, and program completion**.

Data Summary

1. One sentence summary of the table and or chart. Do not restate the statistics contained in the table or chart. Draw the reader's attention to the most interesting or important aspect of the results.
2. Your closing summary of the results of your analysis must answer the following questions:
 - a. What percentage of program participants completed the program?
 - b. What is the mean age of program participants
 - c. Describe program participants' gender
 - d. What are the racial/ethnic characteristics of program participants?
 - e. What is the mean length of time participants served in prison?
 - f. Describe the offenses program participants committed.
 - g. What percentage of program participants committed a drug related offense?
 - h. What percentage of program participants tested positive for drugs during the program year?
 - i. Describe participants' level of satisfaction with the PRRP

The closing summary should be approximately two to three paragraphs and written as a cohesive essay.

Grading Criteria

The assignment is graded according to the following criteria:

- Thoroughness of the report (did you answer every question listed above, did you provide appropriate charts/graphs or tables to support your answers, did you summarize the results of your analysis?).
- Accuracy of summary statements relative to the results of the analysis (do the data support your statements?).
- Perceptiveness and insight demonstrated in the overall summary.

Report Outline

Your data analysis report must follow the format presented below.

1. Cover page, that includes your name, the assignment, and date
2. Table (Frequency or Descriptive)
3. Chart/Graph (if required)
4. One sentence summary of the data depicted in the Table and or Chart/Graph, do not restate the statistics contained in the table or chart. Draw the reader's attention to the most interesting or important part of the results.

For example, instead of writing "The mean age of program participants is 32.3 years," one might write "The average program participant is in his early thirties." Try to mathematically summarize the distribution of cases on a specific variable.

Program Satisfaction

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Very Satisfied	187	26.7	26.7	26.7
Satisfied	159	22.7	22.7	49.4
Dissatisfied	198	28.3	28.3	77.7
Very Dissatisfied	156	22.3	22.3	100.0
Total	700	100.0	100.0	

The data presented in the frequency table "Program Satisfaction" might easily be summarized in the following sentence, "A little more than half (50.6%) of program participants are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the program." There is no need to state that the other half of the participants are satisfied with the program because that fact is obvious.

Summarizing empirical data is more of an art than a science and it requires good writing skills. For the purpose of this assignment it is imperative that your summaries are written are grammatically correct, use proper, punctuation, and most important, do not simply restate the statistics contained in the frequency or descriptive statistics tables.

5. Closing summary.

Post-Release Reentry Program Data

Completed Program	Age	Gender	Ethnicity/ Race	Time Served	Offense	Test Positive for Drugs	Program Satisfaction
1	42	1	1	98	1	2	1
1	22	1	1	40	4	2	2
2	33	1	1	41	6	2	3
2	31	1	1	80	4	1	4
1	38	1	1	72	7	2	1
1	39	1	1	90	4	1	2
1	26	1	1	12	7	2	3
1	33	1	1	13	5	2	4
1	26	1	2	74	4	2	3
1	44	1	1	138	1	2	3
1	42	1	1	113	3	2	3
1	43	1	1	132	2	2	3
1	30	1	1	18	5	1	1
2	22	1	1	40	4	1	4
1	21	1	1	6	5	1	2
2	26	1	1	6	5	1	2
2	34	1	1	68	4	1	2
1	31	1	1	144	1	2	1
2	39	1	1	50	7	2	1
2	36	1	1	12	5	2	1
2	45	1	1	16	7	1	4
2	21	1	1	15	7	1	4
2	27	1	1	27	6	1	3
2	34	1	1	39	7	1	3
1	39	1	1	53	6	2	2
1	43	1	1	47	3	1	4
1	55	1	1	110	8	1	1
2	20	2	1	10	7	1	3
2	43	2	1	27	5	1	1
2	51	2	1	38	6	1	4
1	33	1	1	168	2	2	2
1	23	1	1	12	3	1	2
2	23	1	1	28	4	1	3
1	25	1	1	37	7	2	1
2	41	1	2	58	1	2	4
2	49	1	1	18	5	2	1
1	45	1	1	150	7	2	3
2	24	1	1	18	4	2	2
2	21	2	1	17	8	1	4
2	26	1	1	63	4	2	1
2	43	1	1	5	5	1	3
2	25	1	1	54	7	1	2

1	34	1	2	84	1	2	4
2	39	1	1	46	7	1	1
2	27	1	1	12	5	1	1
2	27	1	1	48	4	1	4
1	24	2	1	16	5	1	2
2	27	1	1	59	4	2	2
2	34	1	1	89	4	1	3
1	35	1	1	24	5	2	3

File Specification

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Range</u>
Program Completion	1=Yes 2=No
Age	Years
Gender	1=Male 2=Female
Ethnicity/Race	1=African American 2=White 3=Hispanic 4=Other
Prison time served	Months
Offense	1=Homicide 2=Rape 3=Sexual Assault 4=Robbery 5=Drug Possession 6=Drug Trafficking 7=Other Assault 8=Fraud
Positive Drug Test	1=Yes 2=No
Program Satisfaction	1=Very Satisfied 2=Satisfied 3=Dissatisfied 4=Very Dissatisfied