University of Nevada, Reno
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Course Number & Title: SW 641: Elements of Evidence Informed Practice II

Instructor:

Office Hours:

Credits: 2

Pre-Requisites: SW 640

Course Description:
This is the second in a two-course sequence that examines concepts, principles, and methods of scientific inquiry, emphasizing qualitative and quantitative designs, assessment of practice and program effectiveness, and critical use of existing research when working with organizations, communities and larger populations. A key focus is on understanding the reciprocal relationship between practice and research. The goal of this course is to prepare competent research consumers, who view evidence informed practice as a “process of inquiry,” and continually examine the foundations of “best practices.” Emphasis is placed on a) learning to formulate research and evaluation questions; b) conducting ongoing analysis and critique of research literature; c) using empirically valid data to identify social problems relevant to practice. Additionally, the course introduces cultural and ethical issues present in all investigative endeavors and the unique issues involved in studying special populations and populations at risk.

Linkages with Other Courses:
SW 641 provides students with an understanding of the integral role research plays in social work practice with organizations, communities, and larger populations. It also provides the skills for evaluating practice that are incorporated into SW 623 (SW Methods with Organizations, Communities, & Legislatures), SW723 (Strategies for Community Change), SW 725 (Administration and Policy Practice). In addition, this course lays the foundation for SW 740 & SW 741 (Practice and Program Evaluation I & II).

Relevant Competencies and Associated Practice Behaviors:

2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide practice
- Recognize and manage personal values
- Make ethical decisions
- Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts
- Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions

2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments
- Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge;
- Analyze models of assessment and evaluation
- Demonstrate effective oral and written communication

2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice
- Recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures & values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege & power.
- Gain sufficient self-awareness to recognize the influence of personal biases & values in working with diverse groups.
- Recognize, value & communicate their understanding of the importance of difference …
2.1.5 Advance human rights and social & economic justice
   • Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination as well as strategies of advocacy and social change that advance social and economic justice.

2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research
   • Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry
   • Use research evidence to inform practice

2.1.10 Engage, assess, intervene, & evaluate with individuals, families, and groups
   • Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.

Course Objectives/Educational Outcomes

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Assess and evaluate effectiveness of interventions in practice with organizations, communities and larger populations.
2. Identify key ethical issues and principles within studies
3. Analyze the role of research in eradicating, maintaining or establishing structural oppression and inequality.
4. Identify issues of power impacting the funding, conceptualization and use of research
5. Formulate research and evaluation questions
6. Conduct a focused literature review and abstract pertinent information from research articles.
7. Prepare a research proposal that addresses a practice based research question with scientific rigor
8. Critically evaluate the strengths and limitations of empirical studies and reports
9. Identify and distinguish between major research designs and their applications
10. Distinguish between the purposes, methodologies and strengths/limitations of qualitative, quantitative and mixed-method approaches
11. Differentiate between evidence-based practice and evidence-based practices
12. Identify the role of theory in shaping research questions and designs
13. Identify the purpose and potential uses of logic models
14. Read and interpret tables
15. Interpret basic statistical tests of association and difference
16. Identify the appropriate use of focus groups in community settings
17. Identify issues of power impacting the funding, conceptualization and use of the research
18. Articulate how data can be used to inform SW practice, program and policy.
19. Select appropriate data analyses strategies
20. Articulate the steps involved in the research process; the relationship between steps, and the iterative nature of the process as it evolves from start to finish;
21. Identify the purposes and basic frameworks of evaluation
22. Use empirically valid data (including practice experiences) to identify research questions relevant to practice

Instructional Methods
In addition to lectures and readings, this course will implement a variety of experiential/collaborative learning techniques, including in-class discussions, exercises, and small group activities.

Course Policies

- **Class Attendance and Participation**: As much of the learning in this class is dependent upon class member contributions, you will be expected to come prepared and ready to actively participate in every class meeting. Active participation will include: involvement in class activities and discussions, timeliness to class, and collegial conduct.

  Students who miss 2 class sessions will lose 10 points. Students who miss 3 class sessions will lose 15 points. Those students who miss 4 or more class sessions will receive a grade of “F” for the course.

- **Disabilities**: Students who have documented disabilities that may affect their learning or performance in this class should contact the UNR Disability Services Office (Thompson Student Services Building, room 101). The instructor will make those accommodations that are requested in writing by the aforementioned office.

- **Academic Success Services**: Your student fees cover usage of the Math Center (784-4433) or [www.unr.edu/mathcenter/](http://www.unr.edu/mathcenter/), Tutoring Center (784-6801 or [www.unr.edu/tutoring/](http://www.unr.edu/tutoring/)), and University Writing Center (784-6030 or [www.unr.edu/writing_center](http://www.unr.edu/writing_center)). These centers support your classroom learning; it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.

- **Academic Dishonesty**: “Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses” constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and penalties can include canceling a student’s enrollment without a grade giving an F for the course or for the assignment. For more details, see the UNR General Catalog.

- **Audio or Video Recordings**: Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.
Course Requirements:

Required Text:

Recommended Text:

Library Reserve Materials Supplemental library readings will be placed on electronic reserve. (UNR Electronic Reserves: http://www.library.unr.edu/reserves.html).

Assignments

1. Attendance, Participation and In-class assignments (200 points)
   Class Attendance: Each missed class will result in a deduction of points. If you are experiencing a family or personal emergency, please contact the instructor by e-mail prior to or immediately following the missed class meeting.
   Class Participation: Come to class prepared to actively participate in every class meeting. Active involvement will be a pivotal part of your learning and final grade. Please arrive for class on time, participate, and remain for the entire class. It is important to conduct yourself with the professionalism befitting the field of social work. You are expected to display respect of fellow students’ unique characteristics including race, color, gender, religion, creed, ethnic or national origin, age, veteran status, disability, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation. Experiential research exercises, in-class article critiques and other in-class exercises will be included as part of your participation grade. The School of Social Work considers attendance an important part of the learning process. Learning is enhanced through student interaction. Members of the class should be able to rely on your participation, and vice versa as part of your educational experience.

2. Homework Assignments (50 points)
   A series of activities designed to give you “hands on” experience with course-related content. Detailed descriptions, including due dates, grading criteria and so forth will be provided separately.

3. Annotated Bibliography Assignment (100 points)
   The Annotated Bibliography assignment is the first of the three literature review assignments. It requires that you choose a social work related issue and then select five related journal articles and write an annotated bibliography for each one. This assignment prepares you for writing the literature review draft and final paper. Detailed assignment instructions will be handed out and discussed in class. This assignment is due February 14.

4. Introduction and Literature Review Draft and Proposal (100 points)
   The Introduction, Literature Review Draft and proposal is the second of the three literature review assignments. This assignment builds upon your Annotated Bibliography and prepares you for completing your Final Literature Review assignment and proposal. Please turn in your graded Annotated Bibliography assignment with your Literature Review draft. Detailed assignment instructions will be handed out and discussed in class. This assignment is due March 28.
5. **Final Introduction and Literature Review and Proposal** (350 points)
The final Introduction and Literature Review assignment is a culminating semester assignment. Please turn in your graded Annotate Bibliography and Literature Review Draft assignments with your final Introduction and Literature Review. Detailed assignment instructions will be handed out and discussed in class. This assignment is due April 18.

6. **Brief Student Presentations** (50 points)
Students will give brief 5-10 minute presentations on the state of the art of the literature that they are reviewing. Additional details will be handed out in class. This will give students and opportunity to showcase their review, analysis and critical thinking skills they have been learning.

7. **Evaluation 101 Exercise** (50 points)
Evaluation is an essential aspect of social work practice. This exercise will help to reinforce evaluation exercises and materials covered in class and the chapter reading. Go to the US DHHS Center for Substance Abuse Prevention Website:


Read through the Evaluation for the Unevaluated: Program Evaluation 101—Modules 1-4. Take the quizzes as you go through the modules. Print completed quiz 4 (only), put your name on it and turn it in. This assignment is due April 25.

8. **Presentations of Literature Reviews and Proposals** (100 points)
Each student will give an electronic presentation of her/his final Literature Review and proposal. The electronic presentation and related assignments will serve as the final exam for the course.
Grading Scale:

The following scale will be used to determine letter grades:

- A = 95-100%
- A- = 90-94.9%
- B+= 87-89.9%
- B = 83-86.9%
- B-= 80-82.9%
- C+ = 77-79.9%
- C = 73-76.9%
- C- = 70-72.9%
- D+= 67-69.9%
- D = 63-66.9%
- D- = 60-62.9%
- F = Below 60%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>2. Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>3. Literature Review and Proposal Draft</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>4. Final Literature Review and Proposal</td>
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<td>5. Homework Assignments</td>
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<td>6. Evaluation Assignment</td>
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<td>7. Brief Presentations</td>
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<td>8. Final Presentations</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Sample Course Outline: Proposed schedule of topics and assignments due. Instructor reserves the right to alter the following schedule as needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings Completed for Today</th>
<th>Assignments Due Today and/or Presentations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 24</td>
<td>Course Overview and Review Syllabus</td>
<td>Review NASW Code of Ethics</td>
<td>Schedule individual meetings with your instructor for Week 3.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Evidence-Based Practice: Re-examined</td>
<td>DJR- Chapter 1 Introduction</td>
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<td>Macro Focus—Groups, Organizations, and Communities</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Research Questions and hypotheses</td>
<td>Reserve Readings Lavoie, 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 31</td>
<td>Macro Theories</td>
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<td>Homework 1: Turn in 3 examples of research questions or hypotheses related to your topic of interest. Include the article reference for each research question or hypothesis</td>
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<td>Article critique of theory</td>
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<td>Annotated Bibliographies</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Individual meetings with course instructor about your research question</td>
<td>Homework 2: One page Research Question Assignment</td>
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<td>Feb 7</td>
<td>Designing a Methodology to fit your research question/hypothesis (design and sampling)</td>
<td>DJR - Chapters 3 &amp; 4 Specification and Design</td>
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<td>Critiquing Methodologies</td>
<td>DJR - Chapter 9 Design Examples</td>
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<td>Reserve Reading: Cruz, Serna, Rué, Real, Soler-Gonzalez and Galván, 2012</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Designing a Methodology to fit your research question continued (measures)</td>
<td>Annotated Bibliography Due</td>
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<td>Feb 14</td>
<td>Critiquing Methodologies</td>
<td>DJR - Chapter 9 Design Examples</td>
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<td>Choosing statistical test or qualitative analysis to fit your research question and methodology</td>
<td>Reserve Reading: Review: Cruz, et al , 2012</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Designing a Methodology to fit your research question continued (measures)</td>
<td>Homework 3: Finalized Research Question</td>
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<td>Feb 21</td>
<td>Critiquing Methodologies</td>
<td>DJR - Chapter 5 Measurement</td>
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<td>Choosing statistical test or qualitative analysis to fit your research question and methodology</td>
<td>Review Chapter 6 Qualitative Research</td>
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<td>Chapter 15 Analysis examples</td>
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<td>Dudley Chapter 13</td>
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<td>Reserve Reading: Review: Cruz, et al , 2012</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Finding &amp; evaluating practice-relevant literature: organizations</td>
<td>Homework 4: Literature Review Matrix Due</td>
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<td>Feb 21</td>
<td>Statistics and qualitative analysis continued</td>
<td>DJR - Chapter 11 &amp; 12 Implementation and Implementation Examples</td>
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<td>Review Chapter 15 Analysis Examples</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>The Purpose of Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement--Community Examples</td>
<td>DJR - Chapter 11 Implementation</td>
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<td>Feb 28</td>
<td>Critiquing relevant literature—QI State of the Art of the Literature</td>
<td>Reserve Readings: Goldhber-Fiebert,</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Mar 7</td>
<td>Critiquing and Creating Tables</td>
<td>DJR - Chapter 13 Quantitative Analysis</td>
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<td>Interpreting basic statistical tests of association and difference</td>
<td>Dudley Chapter 13</td>
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<td>Discuss Demographics Table Homework</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Mar 21</td>
<td>Spring Break: No Class!</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>March 28</td>
<td>Finding &amp; evaluating practice-relevant literature: Focus Group Research and Mixed Methods</td>
<td>Reserve Readings Eby, Kitchen, &amp; Williams, 2012 Saleh, 2012 DJR - Review Chapter 6 Qualitative Research</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Finding &amp; evaluating practice-relevant literature: Community Case Studies</td>
<td>DJR - Chapter 8 Clinical Applications: Single Subject Designs</td>
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<td>April 4</td>
<td>DJR - Chapter 8 Clinical Applications: Single Subject Designs</td>
<td>Reserve Readings</td>
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<td>Nikrin, 2005</td>
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<td>Kang-Yi &amp; Gellis, 2010</td>
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<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Finding &amp; evaluating practice-relevant literature: RCTs</td>
<td>DJR - Review Chapters 4 &amp; 5 Design and Measurement</td>
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<td>April 11</td>
<td>DJR - Review Chapters 4 &amp; 5 Design and Measurement</td>
<td>Reserve Readings</td>
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<td>Pandey, Sehgal, Riboud, Levine, &amp; Goyal, 2007</td>
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<td>Newman &amp; Roberts, 1997</td>
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<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Introduction to Logic Model in the context of communities</td>
<td>Book Chapters on Reserve—Knowlton and Phillips, 2013</td>
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<td>April 18</td>
<td>Book Chapters on Reserve—Knowlton and Phillips, 2013</td>
<td>Final Literature Review and Proposal Due</td>
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<td>Week 14</td>
<td><strong>Integrative Project</strong> example Ann McCracken: Topic evaluating community programs</td>
<td>DJR - Chapter 7 Multi-subject Research</td>
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<td>April 25</td>
<td>Needs assessments</td>
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<td>Reserve Reading</td>
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<td>Chapters 1 &amp; 4 Soriano, 2013</td>
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<td>Week 15</td>
<td>Wrap up review</td>
<td>Evaluation 101 Assignment Due</td>
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<td>May 2</td>
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<td>Finals Week</td>
<td>(Final Exam Period) Student Presentations</td>
<td>DJR - Chapter 7 Multi-subject Research</td>
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<td>Evaluation 101 Assignment Due</td>
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<td>Approximately 10-12 minutes each</td>
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SW 641 Bibliography


Freisthler, B., Sware, G. M., & Harrison-Jay, S. (2003). It was the best of times, it was the worst of times: Young adult stepchildren talk about growing up in a stepfamily. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, 38*(3/4), 83-102.


