**FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

**Robert Stempel College of Public Health & Social Work**

**School of Social Work**

**SOW 3403 – Social Work Research Methodology**

**Spring 2024b**

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| **Instructor:** | Richard Beaulaurier, PhD. MSW |
| **Office Location:** | AHC5-572 |
| **Office Hours:** | 12:30-1:30, 5:00-6:00 PM Tuesdays; Make appointment for office hours, other times also available by appointment. |
| **Telephone:** | 305-348-5876 |
| **Email:** | beau@fiu.edu |
| **Course Day and Time:** | Tuesdays 2:00-4-45 PM |
| **Course Location:** | OE 105 |
| **Course Website** | http://beau.fiu.edu |

**CATALOG DESCRIPTION**

Introduction to the basic language, methods, and skills of scientific research for beginning social work practice. Problem formulation, literature review, definition of variables, sampling, data collection and analysis, and report writing are addressed.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The goal of this course is for you to become a critical consumer of scientific information by understanding the basic language, methods, skills, and limitations of scientific inquiry in social work practice. Further, the goal is to have you commit to continuously discovering, appraising, and attending to changing populations, realities, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant, evidence-based, culturally responsive, and high-quality services to clients in the field.

**COURSE PRE/CO-REQUISITES**

Social Work majors or by permission of the instructor only and completion of a course in Basic Statistics.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES & LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Upon completion of this course, the students will be able to:

1. Understand the principles and methods of basic and applied research that build knowledge for professional practice.

2. Critically assess the empirical support for conceptual frameworks, policy initiatives, and techniques of social work treatment and interventions.

3. Demonstrate an understanding of ethical standards of scientific research aimed at protecting the rights of human participants.

4. Describe the use of qualitative, correlational, experimental, and quasi-experimental research to evaluate the effectiveness of specific interventions and components of service delivery.

5. Select appropriate forms of data analysis to address specific research questions.

6. Show an appreciation of how social, political, and economic considerations shape research and evaluation of social service interventions.

7. Use online databases such as Sociological Abstracts, PsycINFO, MEDLINE, PubMed, CINAHL, and Social Work Abstracts to locate peer-reviewed sources.

8. Identify research problems, questions, and hypotheses that address the needs and concerns of diverse population groups varying in characteristics such as age, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, lifestyle, race, ethnicity, or culture.

**CSWE Educational Policies and Behaviors Related to Course Objectives, Learning Outcomes, and Assignments/Exams**

The School of Social Work is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Required courses in the curriculum must be compliant with CSWE’s Education Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Each course objective, learning outcome, and assignment/examination must be linked to educational policies and specific behaviors. Each behavior will be assessed in this course to ensure you are achieving competency. The complete EPAS can be found in your student handbook.

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| **Core Competencies** | **Practice Behaviors** | **Educational Objectives** | **Assignments** | **Dimensions** |
| **Competency 1:**  Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior | 1. Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context. | 3 | Readings, Quizzes | Knowledge  Skills  Values  Cognitive and Affective Processes  (See Session 4 assignments: CITI training, Chapter’s 5&6 + chapter quizzes.) |
|  | 2. Demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication. | 3 | Discussion board, Papers,  Classroom participation | Skills  Values  Cognitive and affective processes  (Discussion board instructions, Class participation instructions, instructions for papers) |
|  | 3. Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes. | 7 | Readings,  Quizzes | Knowledge,  Skills,  (See sessions 8, 10 13; Chs. 16, 18, 20, 21, 22 & Ch Quizzes.) |
| **Competency 2:** Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice. | 5. Advocate for human rights at the individual family, group, organizational, and community system levels. | 6, 8 | Readings,  Quizzes  CITI Training | Knowledge  Skills  Values  Cognitive and Affective Processes  (See Session 4 assignments: CITI training, Chapter’s 5&6 + chapter quizzes.) |
|  | 6. Engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. | 1 | Readings,  Quizzes  CITI Training | Knowledge  Skills  Values  Cognitive and Affective Processes  (See Session 4 assignments: CITI training, Chapter’s 5&6 + chapter quizzes.) |
| **Competency 3:** Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Practice. | 7. Demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels. | 6, 8 | Readings,  Quizzes  CITI Training | Knowledge  Skills  Values  Cognitive and Affective Processes  (See Session 4 assignments: CITI training, Chapter’s 5&6 + chapter quizzes.  Session 12: Anti-Racism in Research and Practice and Health Disparities Research. Reading) |
|  | 8. Demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences. | 6, 8 | Readings,  Quizzes | Knowledge, Cognitive and Affective processes, Values, Skills  (See Session 4 Ch6 & Ch Quiz) |
| **Competency 4:** Engage Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice | 9. Apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 | Literature Review Paper, Readings  Quizzes | Knowledge, Skills, Values, Cog & Affective processes.  (See Ch 1&2 quizzes and paper assignments.) |
|  | 10. Identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use of quantitative and qualitative research to advance the purposes of social work. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 | Quizzes, Readings | Knowledge  Skills  Values  Cognitive and Affective Processes  (See Session 4 assignments: CITI training, Chapter’s 5&6 + chapter quizzes.  Session 12: Anti-Racism in Research and Practice and Health Disparities Research. Reading) |
| **Competency 5:** Engage in Policy Practice | 11. Use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services. | 2, 6 | Readings  quizzes | Knowledge  Cognitive and Affective processes  Values  (See Session 11, Ch 14 & Ch quiz.) |
| **Competency 7:** Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | 15. Apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies. | 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 | Quizzes, Readings | Knowledge, skills, values, cog & affective processes  (See Session on Research Design and program evaluation, Chapters and Chapter quizzes |
| **Competency 9:** Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities | 19. Select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes. | 5 | Quizzes, Readings | Knowledge, values, cog & affective processes  (See Session 11, Ch 14 & Ch Quizzes) |
|  | 20. Critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. | 4 | Quizzes, Readings | Knowledge, values, cog & affective processes  (See Session 11, Ch 14 & Ch Quizzes) |

**CLASSROOM POLICIES/EXPECTATIONS**

**TEACHING METHODOLOGY:**

The teaching methodologies will consist of textbook readings, class lectures, group discussions, quizzes, a literature review, and a research abstract presentation. The class sessions will consist of short lectures giving an overview of topics, reviewing examples of concepts, problem-based learning (independent activities and discussions), peer-learning activities, and individual student reflections.

# **ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATION:**

Students with special circumstances due to disability or religious beliefs should notify the instructor to make appropriate accommodations at the start of the course. Students who need special accommodation in this class due to a disability should contact FIU’s Disability Resource Center and notify the instructor so they are aware and can assist in the accommodation plan. http://drc.fiu.edu/. (305) 510-7374.

# **EXPECTATIONS FOR ACADEMIC CONDUCT:**

Satisfactory performance in this course requires self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills. Students are expected to:

* Review all course content and materials by the designated due date. You are responsible for knowledge of the information provided in class sessions.
* Participate. You are expected to participate actively in the course based on your own learning and professional goals. You come from different backgrounds and experiences and have invaluable knowledge to share with your peers for learning. Don’t shortchange them or yourself.
* Complete the required independent readings, quizzes, and assignments.
* Submit original work. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses and have institutional-level consequences. See the expectation for academic integrity below.
* Take risks. Social work research often requires personal insights and practice expertise to inform research questions, appraise literature, determine which approaches to follow, and/or to interpret complex data. Creativity is required for knowledge development. Ask questions, share ideas, and take risks to make the most out of the course.

# **EXPECTATIONS FOR ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and to honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the [Student Conduct and Honor Code](https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/get-support/student-conduct-and-academic-integrity/student-conduct-and-honor-code/index.php) procedures and sanctions as outlined in the FIU Regulation 2501 and the Student Handbook.

All assignments and reports must be original work, and references must be cited appropriately. Breaking this trust agreement will result in zero credit for the assignment in question and referral to the Honor Committee. Additionally, as practicing professionals, social workers are trusted to maintain the highest standards of ethics, integrity, and personal responsibility. Since this is your chosen discipline and in preparation for your future career, you are expected to fully comply with the Social Work Code of Ethics: <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>. For all written coursework that you submit, you must abide by the FIU School of Social Work Student Honor Pledge. You, as a social work student in FIU’s School of Social Work, are a member of an ethical community. You attest that you have followed the FIU School of Social Work Student Honor Pledge.

All students at Florida International University pledge to:

Be honest in their academic endeavors.

Not represent someone else’s work as their own.

Not cheat, nor aid in another’s cheating.

Written coursework will be submitted using TurnItIn. Consequences for academic misconduct in this course may include reporting to the University Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook, and failure in this course.

**Students are expected to:**

* Review and follow the course syllabus.
* Log in to the course on Canvas at least once per week, or more often as assignments require.
* Contact the instructor if course materials/content are unclear.
* Contact the instructor if help is needed with the any course material and related content.
* Read all course emails/announcements.
* Submit assignments by their corresponding deadline.

**The instructor will:**

* Log in to the course a minimum of 2 times per week.
* Respond to emails within two business days during the work week. For emails after business hours 9AM to 5PM, add 24 hours.
* Grade quizzes within one week of the assignment deadline.
* Grade Individual Topic Papers and Screening Exercises within two weeks of the assignment deadline.

**CLASS POLICIES:**

* You are expected to exhibit class behaviors that reflect the Student Code of Conduct in the FIU Student Handbook for the University's expectation of students' behavior AND the NASW Code of Ethics. “Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity.” While you are encouraged to express your original ideas and opinions, you should do so in a way that is respectful regarding others’ race, ethnicity, religion, immigration status, disability status, and or sexual identity/orientation. You are expected to be tolerant of ideas, opinions, and values that differ from your own.
* Be prepared by actively engaging in the course through reading, critical inquiry, and working with each other through various online modalities (e.g., discussion boards).

**COMMUNICATION:**

* Let me know what ideas and tools are challenging to you and how you are doing in the class. If you start this habit early in the semester, the instructor will be able to better tailor our activities to help you learn. This course may be unlike any of your previous courses, with increasingly complex content and new scientific concepts. The instructor is committed to helping you address these new challenges, and will meet with you at scheduled times as necessary.
* The primary mode of communication for this course will be via in-class, Canvas, the instructor’s website and Email.

**EVALUATION CRITERIA/GRADING:**

Students will be graded on the following items. The breakdown for your course grade is as follows:

| **COURSE REQUIREMENTS** | **WEIGHT** |
| --- | --- |
| Participation (which requires attendance) | 10% |
| Discussion boards | 10% |
| Quizzes | 30% |
| CITI Training | 10% |
| Preventing Plagiarism | 5% |
| Research Question and Hypothesis | 10% |
| Research Abstract & Literature Review | 25% |
| **Total** | **100%** |

| **GRADE** |  | **GRADE** |  | **GRADE** |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A  (4.00) | 93-100 | B-   (2.67) | 80-82 | F (0.00) | <60 |
| A- (3.67) | 90-92 | C+ (2.33) | 77-79 | F0 | **Failure based on non-attendance** (3<absence) |
| B+ (3.33) | 87-89 | C    (2.00) | 70-76 |  |  |
| B   (3.00) | 83-86 | D    (1.00) | 60-69 |  |  |

**Participation**

Active participation is required in this course. Participation will be determined based on contributions to course discussions and activities in class. Participation requires attendance. The instructor is better when the class participates actively. Moreover, the entire class benefits by the presence and participation of all members of the class, and it diminished if they are not there or are inactive. For this reason, no student will be awarded a passing grade if they are absent more than 3 times during the semester.

Every class will have a discussion board. It may be as simple as asking students what main items they would like discussed in class. It could also have other questions related to reading, or other assignments. For full points, students my not miss more than 2 discussion boards.

# **Quizzes**

There will be a short quiz on every chapter assigned from the book. Quizzes are distributed and submitted via Canvas. Quizzes are open book and are due at 11:59 PM, 6 days after they are assigned (by the day prior to class of the following week), unless otherwise noted. 5% points will be deducted for each **day** (including days of the weekend) that they are late. Quizzes are designed to help you identify the important topics covered in the chapter, understand, apply, and think critically about reading and lecture material.

# **CITI Training**

The CITI Training is a federal requirement for all personnel involved in research with human subjects. You will be required to complete the Social-Behavioral-Educational (SBE) portion of this course, which will cover important aspects of the protection of human subjects. You will learn about the policies and importance of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Instructions for how to complete the CITI training will be given to you. This training takes several hours. You do not need to do it all at once, rather, you are encouraged to break it up into steps. Once complete, upload your CITI training certificates in the appropriate section via Canvas.

**Preventing Plagiarism Certificate**

Students are held accountable for plagiarism which is considered academic misconduct. It can be grounds for failure of a class, expulsion from a major or even from a university. To prevent problems students will be expected to do the University of Sand Diego’s *Preventing Plagiarism* tutorial. This can be found on the FIU Library’s website here: <https://library.fiu.edu/plagiarism>. Students may complete the tutorial at any time prior to the first written assignments.

# **Research Question and Hypothesis Paper**

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate your ability to frame a research question by proposing a relationship between two concepts and hypothesizing a relationship. The student will identify a research question that can be posed to the peer-reviewed social welfare literature. This paper assignment will be linked to your final literature review paper. The research question will be answered by choosing two evidence-based therapeutic modalities and comparing their effectiveness in the treatment of one problem. The final product will include a cover sheet in APA format and a 1-page paper comprised of 1) a research question asking about the relationship between two variables and phrased as a question and 2) a hypothesis indicating the predicted manner of the relationship and direction of the relationship between two variables. More detailed instructions will be provided to you. Upload your paper to Canvas.

# **Research Abstract and Literature Review Paper**

This paper will demonstrate the student’s ability to conceptualize, organize, and write a literature review using their research question as an organizing framework. This literature review will discuss what is known in contemporary peer-reviewed literature about how and if the independent variables in question have an effect on the dependent variable. The student will identify gaps in the peer-reviewed social welfare literature. In the course material, we will cover how to conduct a search for and appraise available literature that you will utilize in completing this assignment. The final product of this assignment will be a 5-page term paper. The 5 pages do not include a bibliography or abstract. This assignment has the potential to count toward your e-Portfolio requirement for graduation. More detailed instructions will be provided to you. (Resources: [Social Work Library Guide](http://libguides.fiu.edu/socialwork); [Tips and Tricks for Health Sciences Databases)](https://library.fiu.edu/databasetips)  Upload your final paper to Canvas.

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# **POLICY ON LATE ASSIGNMENTS:**

All assignments must be completed fully and submitted on the due date. Late submissions will result in a 5% deduction for each day late (including weekends) unless prior approval is obtained from the instructor. The majority of assignments for this course will be submitted via Canvas. In the event that Canvas is not working properly when you attempt to submit your assignment, take a screen shot of the error message and submit your complete assignment to the instructor via email so that your assignment is not late.

# **CANVAS:**

This course will utilize Canvas and the Instructor’s website to provide you with assignment instructions, course content, and additional resource materials for this course. If you have never used Canvas before, or if you want to find additional information, I encourage you to visit the Canvas info page. Canvas’s messages app will be a primary form of communication.

**REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS**

Ruben, A., & Babbie, E. (2017). *Empowerment series: Research methods for social work* (9th ed.). Cengage. ISBN: 978-1-305-63382-7

**(Available at the FIU Bookstore)**

# **COURSE SCHEDULE**

This schedule is a general outline of class topics. Changes may be made to accommodate the pace of discussions, new material, additional articles, and other factors.

| **Class** | **Topic** | **Readings & Assignments** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Session 1: | **Introduction**  • Review syllabus (Course Requirements and Structure)  • Develop course principles  **The Basics of Research**  • Why study research in Social Work?  • Steps of the research process | Required Readings before the next class:  Chapter 1: Why Study Research?  Chapter 2: Evidence-Based Practice |
| Session 2: | **Evidenced-Based Practice**  • Integration of key components of EBP  **Factors Influencing the Research process**  • Guiding theories and paradigms  **Overview of the Research Process** | Required Readings before the next class:  Chapter 3: Factors influencing the Research Process |
| Session 3: | **Problem Formation**  **•** Writing a Hypothesis  **Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed-Methods**  Go over Research Question and Hypothesis Paper Assignment | Chapter 7: Problem Formation  Chapter 4: Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methods |
| Session 4: | **Ethical Issues** in Social Work Research  **Culturally Competent** Research  Go over Literature Review Paper Instructions | Required Readings before the next class:  CITI Training  Chapter 5: Ethics and Politics of Social Work Research  Chapter 6: Culturally Competent Research |
| Session 5: | **Library Session**  **Conducting a Literature Review**  •Searching for evidence  •Conducting a Literature Search  •Appraising the literature | **CITI Training- Ethical Considerations in Research Certificates due!**  **Submit citations of two peer reviewed articles on discussion board by next class period.** |
| Session 6: | **Measurement in Quantitative and Qualitative Research**  Operationally defining a concept  How to determine/ appraise methods  Sources of Measurement Error  Reliability and Validity  Peer review of Research Question and Hypothesis | Required Readings before the next class:  Chapter 8: Conceptualization in quantitative and qualitative inquiry  Chapter 9: Measurement  **Preventing Plagiarism Certificate Due**  **Research Question and Hypothesis Paper due** |
| Session 7: | **Survey and Sampling**  **•** Mail surveys, online surveys,  interview surveys, telephone surveys  • Strengths and weaknesses  Types of sampling designs  Go over assessments of articles using Matrix template tool. | Required Readings before the next class:  Chapter 10: Constructing Measurement Instruments |
| Session 8: | **Survey and Sampling**  **•** Mail surveys, online surveys,  interview surveys, telephone surveys  • Strengths and weaknesses  Types of sampling designs  Go over assessments of articles using Matrix template tool | Required Readings before the next class:  Chapter 15: Sampling  Chapter 16: Survey |
| Session 9: | **Research Designs**   * Experimental * Quasi-experimental * Pre-experimental * Single-case designs | Required Readings before next class:  Chapter 11: Causal Inference and Experimental Designs  Chapter 12: Quasi-Experimental Designs Experiments  Chapter 13: Single-Case evaluation  Designs |
| Session 10 | **Research Designs & Analysis**   * Understand purposes, strengths, and weaknesses of different data analysis approaches * Coding * Relationships among variables * Discovering patterns * Basics of SPSS | Required Readings before next class:  Chapter 21: Descriptive Data Analysis  Chapter 22: Inferential Data Analysis |
| Session 11: | **Program Evaluation**   * Purpose of program evaluation * Types of evaluations   Politics of evaluations | Chapter 14: Program Evaluation |
| Session 12: | **Writing a Research Proposal**   * Key elements of a proposal   Writing key pieces of a research abstract  **Anti-Racism in research and practice; Health Disparities Research**   * Ethical Considerations * Recruiting hard to reach populations   Community based research methods | Chapter 23: Writing Research Proposals and Reports  NIMHD Minority Health and Health Disparities Research Interest Areas  <https://nimhd.nih.gov/programs/extramural/research-areas/> |
| Session 13 | **Qualitative Research**   * Basics of Qualitative Research * Conducting Interviews and focus groups * Coding qualitative data   **Discussion on Abstracts** | Chapter 18: Qualitative Data Analysis  Chapter 20: Qualitative Data Analysis |
| Session 14: | e-Portfolio reflection and Review  Peer Review of Abstracts  **Final Class Discussion** | **Literature Review and Abstract paper due Today. Submit via Canvas the assignment with pdfs of two intervention articles.** |
| Session 15: | **Final Thoughts** |

**CAMPUS RESOURCES:**

During your FIU career, you may experience challenges including struggles with academics, finances, and/or your personal well-being. FIU has a multitude of resources available to all students. If you are seeking resources and support, or if you are worried about a friend or classmate, please take advantage of the services available to you. Free services and information are included for a variety of student concerns, including but not limited to alcohol use, mental health concerns, and financial challenges. Please see below a variety of resources available to you as an FIU student that can assist with your self-care and augment your education.

1. [Panthers Protecting Panthers- University Operations](https://repopulation.fiu.edu/university-operations/index.html)
2. [FIU Counseling and Psychological Center](https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/health-and-fitness/counseling-and-psychological-services/)
3. [Center for Excellence in Writing](https://writingcenter.fiu.edu/index.html)
4. [University Learning Center](https://undergrad.fiu.edu/cas/learning-center/)
5. [Center for Academic Success](http://undergrad.fiu.edu/cas/)
6. [FIU Student Health Services](http://studenthealth.fiu.edu/services-provided/wellness/index.html)

7. [FIU Student Food Pantry](http://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/get-support/student-food-pantry/index.php)

8. [Panthers 4 Recovery](https://www.facebook.com/pg/panthers4recoveryfiu/about/?ref=page_internal)