Central Michigan University  
College of Humanities and Social & Behavioral Sciences  

Course Syllabus  

SOC 300  
Social Research Methodologies  
3 (3-0)  

Fall 2006  
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(Please turn page for hyperlinked table of contents)  

Syllabus Revisions:  
Thursday August 31: Confirmed that the lab sessions for help with the exercises, with the qualitative assignment, and with the research report are now scheduled at the only time the lab is available, 5:30-8:00 p.m. on a number of Tuesdays, with the first next Tuesday September 5, as previously announced.
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I. Bulletin Description and additional comments

SOC 300 Master Syllabus Description: Gathering, coding, and analyzing data, testing relationships among variables, controlling for variables, and conducting simple statistical tests.

Although this is a quite brief course description, both last Fall 2005 and this Fall the instructor is providing extensive commentary as part of efforts to better conceptualize what is different in this social work section of SOC 300. First, it should be pointed out that beginning Fall 2007, social work students will be taking SOC 350 (which requires a SOC 200 prerequisite), and SOC 300 will no longer be offered.

Following is the SOC 350 Master Syllabus Description: Data collection methodologies and issues. Covers participant observation and survey research, and two of the following: experiments/single subject design; program evaluation; interviewing; ethnography/community studies.

In this year’s social work sections (Fall and Spring), efforts will be made to work towards the transition between these two courses, by introducing content which will begin to be introduced in SOC 350, as well as continuing to explore how the social work section of this course is related to the specific Curriculum Content guidelines of the Council on Social Work Education related to Research.

II. Prerequisites: Math competency, SOC 100 or 201 or 221.

III. Rationale for Course Level

Additional social work relevant rationales for class consideration: Social workers must be provided with the knowledge of research and its methods in order to conduct research for informed, effective, and accountable practice within the framework of research ethics. Toward that end, it is essential that social workers have the foundation knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to conduct research as well as retrieve and critically evaluate the existing ones. It is also important that such a preparation for research practice be reinforced with the use of appropriate statistical procedures and computer technology. This course trains students to meet the increasing demands to develop knowledge and to demonstrate practice effectiveness with the help of such procedures and technology, in a responsible and ethical manner. It further aims at the preparation of students for more advanced research methods for clinical as well as management, community, and policy practice.

IV. Textbooks and other required materials to be furnished by student:


Lectures and exercises also rely upon material from the following textbooks used last year, which however are not required or recommended for purchase:


V. Special Requirements of the Course

Adobe Acrobat Reader Installed and Available for your use
Data storage device (flash memory drive)
Time in computer lab outside of class
Possible evening or weekend work
Recommended: Microsoft Excel 2003 installed and/or available for your use

VI. Methodology

Lecture, class discussion, independent data collection, group work, analysis, and report writing. In addition, the instructor’s course website, Blinkpro bookmarks and online read-only Refworks database makes available additional readings and resources in support of this course. In this section, students work with other students on one of several group research projects in collaboration with the instructor.

VII. Course Objectives:

The following listing list three sets of relevant course objectives, both the official SOC 300 Master Syllabus objectives, and the new SOC 350 objectives, and, as was done in Fall 2005 as well, a set of additional course objectives for this section. These additional objectives are listed both in order to facilitate social work faculty and student discussion of the nature of the research component of our social work major and to guide the nature of the textbooks, assignments, and other class content used in this section. These objectives overlap considerably with the existing SOC 300 objectives, but also add additional social work related content. In support of this list of objectives, this section presents extensive discussion of the relationship between CSWE foundation program content related to research, CSWE Foundation Program Objectives and CMU Social Work Program Objectives.

SOC 300 Course Objectives:

1. Students will be acquainted with the processes of various types of research in sociology and the social sciences and with the problems associated with them.

2. Students will have the background needed to begin to read critically and intelligently research studies in sociology, social work, social psychology, and related fields. (Program Objective 1.)

3. Students will have a background in the techniques of research so that they will be
able to conduct their own research projects with the assistance of faculty or other qualified professionals.

4. Students will be acquainted with the special applications of research procedures used in evaluation research and will be familiar with some of the unique problems associated with this type of research.

5. Students will be prepared for more advanced courses in research methodology.

**SOC 350 Course Objectives:**

1. demonstrate knowledge of the basic steps in the research process.
2. discuss issues of the reliability and validity of measurement and of time in quantitative and qualitative research.
3. demonstrate knowledge of the ethical and political dimensions of social science research. (Program objective two).
4. explicate the advantages and disadvantages of various quantitative and qualitative research strategies for exploring various types of research questions.
5. discuss the key features of participant observation and survey research. Make appropriate choices about design issues when implementing a participant observation or survey research project.
6. discuss the key features of two of the following designs—experiments/single subject designs, program evaluation, interviewing, ethnography/community studies. Make appropriate choices about design issues when implementing such projects.
7. demonstrate a critical awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of published research in the lay and professional press.
8. design a research study, collect and analyze appropriate data, and write up and present results.

**SOC 200 Course Objectives**

*Additional SOC 200 Course Objectives which are relevant to the data analysis component of SOC 300 in Fall 2006:*

1. articulate why social scientists engage in systematic empirical research
2. articulate the nature of scientific methods as they apply to social science research.
3. identify and apply basic ethical considerations in social science research and make critical decisions about the ethical treatment of human subjects in research
4. explicate key issues of social science research design, including measurement and unit of analysis.
5. show a basic understanding of probability theory and its implications for sampling in social research and have the skills to draw basic samples.
6. construct logical hypotheses, clearly identifying independent and dependent variables in social science analyses.
7. calculate by hand and with computer software basic uni- bi- and multivariate tables,
graphs, and statistics using social science examples.
8. read and interpret accurately uni-, bi-, and multivariate tables, graphs, and statistics using social science examples.
9. choose appropriate tables, graphs, and statistics to explore social issues and test hypotheses.
10. interpret competently measures of statistical significance used in social research.
11. use computers effectively to communicate and to locate social science data and findings.

Additional Course Objectives for this Section of SOC 300:

As was the case last year, there are additional course objectives introduced on top of those related to SOC 300 and SOC 350. This year, however, those additional objectives and the SOC 300 and SOC 350 objectives are mapped to the CMU Social Work Program Objectives to which they are deemed to be related. (See table below.) In addition, for each of these additional courses objectives, there are specific course assignments and aspects of course content to which they are related. While this had been done for social work courses in the major, it had not yet been done for the research course in the major. For a full explanation of the rationale for mapping these course objectives to these program objectives, see the following link:

All 16 additional course objectives, numbered 1-16, are listed below along with the program objectives they support and the assignments and course content which support them. By completion of this course, students are expected to be able to demonstrate (through course activities, assignments and/or exams), the following additional objectives:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of key concepts related to the ability to plan and carry out culturally competent research that avoids bias and minimizes problems of reliability and validity related to the diverse ways in which research subjects are situated within social and economic structures and within the rural, suburban and urban contexts (Program objectives 3, 9 and 13.) (Relevant assignments and course content: Quiz covering RB Chapter 5 and related lecture content as well as optional reading in the course bibliography and website; abstract of published evidence-based practice research assignment; evaluation of published evaluation research assignment.)

2. Demonstrate knowledge of the history and current status of research related to social work theory and practice, with special attention to the recent evolution of evidence-based social work practice and the use of empirical evidence in advocacy for social welfare and social justice (Program objectives 4 and 5.) (Relevant assignments and course content: Quiz covering RB Chapter 1content on evidence based practice, lecture on the evidence for evidence based practice, and optional reading in the course bibliography and website; abstract of published evidence-based practice research assignment; evaluation of published evaluation research assignment.)

3. Identify guidelines which facilitate conducting research consistent with the ethics of the
social work profession and the ethics of the discipline of sociology (Program objective 2.)

(Relevant assignments and course content: Quiz covering RB Chapter 1 content on evidence based practice, lecture on the evidence for evidence based practice, and optional reading in the course bibliography and website; abstract of published evidence-based practice research assignment; evaluation of published evaluation research assignment.)

4. Based upon a literature review-related assignment and upon informational and critical reviews of peer-reviewed research in social work and social science, articulate the relationship between theoretically-guided or empirically-suggested hypotheses and the logic and method of empirical research guiding social work practice and social welfare policy (Program objectives 7, 8 and 9.) (Relevant assignments and course content: Quizzes covering RB Chapters 6, 7, 12; lecture and instructor-provided worksheet on the evaluation of published research; optional reading in the course bibliography and website including Holosko, 2006; Assignment One (literature review, hypothesis generation and hypothetical research design); abstract of published evidence-based practice research assignment; evaluation of published evaluation research assignment.)

5. Understand and be able to apply the initial stages of the research process, including literature review, hypothesis generation, and hypothetical research design (Program objective 9). (Relevant assignments and course content: Quizzes on several chapters; Assignment One; Group research project; research proposal; research report.)

6. Understand the basic assumptions, concepts, foundations, and limitations of the traditional scientific approach and challenges to these foundations (Program objectives 1 and 9). (Quizzes on RB chapters 1 and 2; lecture content; abstract of published evidence-based practice research assignment; evaluation of published evaluation research assignment.).

7. Know how to gain access to substantive and methodological research literature related to generalist social work practice and to be able to effectively communicate the findings of this research (Program objectives 6 and 9). (Assignment One; Rui Wang’s website; classroom instruction; course website content; abstract of published evidence-based practice research assignment; evaluation of published evaluation research assignment.).

8. Understand the principles, logic, limitations, and alternative conceptualizations of qualitative and quantitative research designs used in the evaluation of social work practice, social service organizations and social welfare policy, with specific attention to forms of empowerment evaluation research and participatory action research. (Program objectives 8, 9 and 14.) (Quizzes on RB chapters including Chapter 18 on Qualitative Data Analysis as supplemented by questions based upon reading of Berg’s chapter on qualitative research; lecture materials regarding empowerment evaluation research; qualitative data analysis assignment).

9. Understand concepts and methods of human needs assessment and service needs assessment research, and its relationship to assessing assets and strengths of individuals and communities (Program objectives 4, 9, and 14). (RB Chapters 12-14; Lecture content on
10. Understand the common logic and differential methods used in social work generalist practice evaluation designs, social service program evaluation designs, and social welfare policy evaluation designs. (Program objectives 8 and 9.) *(RB Chapters 12-14; Lecture content on needs assessment research)*

11. Be able to work collaboratively in a group in consultation with the instructor in order to apply basic principles and methods of sampling and be able to understand the relationship of sampling to the generalizability of the results of social research. (Program objectives 9, 10, 11 and 12) *(Quizzes based upon RB; Group research project; research proposal; research report)*

12. Be able to work collaboratively in a group in consultation with the instructor in order to apply basic principles of problem formulation and measurement and be able to demonstrate understanding of key concepts related to measurement and its relationship to the reliability and validity of social research. (Program objectives 9, 10, 11 and 12.) *(Quizzes based upon RB; Group research project; research proposal; research report)*

13. Be able to work collaboratively in a group in consultation with the instructor in order to collect qualitative and quantitative data from individual respondents, and to work supportively in a group to enable group members to prepare an individual report of one aspect of the group research project’s results). (Program objective 9, 10, 11 and 12) *(Group research project; research proposal; research report; qualitative data analysis assignment; quantitative data analysis exercises)*

14. Prepare, enter, and manipulate data using microcomputer spreadsheet and statistical programs, including the ability to perform and interpret analyses of descriptive univariate analysis, including calculation and interpretation of standard deviation. (Program Objective 9.) *(Quiz on RB chapter 17; Quantitative analysis exercises; group research project; research proposal; research report)*.

15. Prepare bivariate tables and perform Chi-Square analyses of the relationship between two variables using Excel and SPSS, as well as performing and interpreting Chi-Square analyses controlling for variation within the categories of a third variable. (Program objective 9.) *(Quiz on RB chapter 17; Quantitative analysis exercises; group research project; research proposal; research report)*.

16. Understand basic principles of inferential statistics, including interpretation of the tests of statistical significance produced by Chi Square analysis. (Program objective 9.) *(Quiz on RB chapter 17; Quantitative analysis exercises; group research project; research proposal; research report).*
Table of Course Objectives in Relation to Program Objectives:

The relationship of these and the SOC 300 and SOC 350 course objectives to social work program objectives is outlined in a table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>SOC 300 Objective Numbers</th>
<th>SOC 350 Objective Numbers</th>
<th>Additional Objective Numbers</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Critical Thinking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Value Base</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Nondiscrimination</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Oppression/Justice</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. SWK History/ Structure</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Generalist Practice</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
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<td>7. Theory and practice</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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<td>8. Social Policy</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4,8,10</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Research Related</td>
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<td>1,3-8</td>
<td>1,4-10,11,13,14-16</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Communication Skills</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7, 11-13</td>
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<td>11. Supervision</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11-13</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Function in organizations</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11-13</td>
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<td>13. Rural Practice</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td>14. Client Strengths</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8,9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VIII. Course Outline

Due Dates of Exercises and Assignments:
Social Work Research Proposal: To Be Determined
Quantitative Data Analysis Exercise 1: Thurs. Sept. 7
Quantitative Data Analysis Exercise 2: Thurs. Sept. 14
Quantitative Data Analysis Exercise 3: Thurs. Sept. 21
Quantitative Data Analysis Exercise 4: Thurs. Sept. 28
Quantitative Data Analysis Exercise 5: Thurs. Oct. 5
Informational Abstract and Critical Appreciation Assignment: Tues. Oct. 10
Qualitative Data Analysis Assignment : Tues. Oct 24

1. Tuesday August 29:

Course Introduction and pretest of 25 of the 50 question BSW exam preparation material questions related to research (the odd questions). This uses the anonymous survey capability of Blackboard. On the last day of class this same set of questions will be re-administered to half the class, with the other half receiving the even questions. In-class assessment procedures of this kind are recommended by the CMU Center for Learning and Teaching. The results are not used for program assessment, but to guide section content.
development and to supplement other forms of instructor feedback. What are some of the pros and cons of such an assessment strategy? Can we identify any problems with reliability, validity, sampling, etc.? (Hint: does it make a difference whether the instructor is privy to the questions?)

First Half: Introduction to Course (Review Syllabus and explanation of the relationship of CSWE curriculum content on research and CMU’s program objectives to the additional course objectives of this section).

Second Half: Blackboard anonymous survey pretest of 25 questions from BSW exam preparation material.

2. Thursday August 31:

Assignments for Thursday August 31: Bring the Rubin-Babbie textbook to class; install Adobe Acrobat Reader on a computer to which you have access; bring a thumb drive for data storage to class; read the syllabus posted on the website. Reading Due: RB Chapter 1: The Utility of Research in Social Work

First Half: Selected coverage of Chapter 1 and brief lecture based upon Ragin’s Constructing Social Research and other materials.

Second Half: Coverage of Quantitative Data Analysis Exercise Assignment One due Thursday 9/7. Initial coverage of Chapter 17: Quantitative Data Analysis.

3. Tues. Sept. 5

Assignments: Prepare for Chapter 1 Quiz, read Chapter 2

First Half: Chapter 1 Quiz: The Utility of Social Work Research
Second Half: Selected Coverage of Chapter 2

Lab: 5:30-8:00 Tuesday Anspach 251. The instructor will be available for evening lab time and/or extended office hours for help with the exercise due Thursday.

4. Thurs. Sept. 7

Assignments: Prepare for Chapter 2 quiz; Quantitative Data Exercise 1 Due

First half: Review Exercise 1 and demonstrate exercise 2 due Thurs. 9/14
Second half: Chapter 2 quiz: How Do Social Workers Know Things?

5. Tues. Sept. 12

Assignments: Prepare for Chapter 3 Quiz
First Half: Selected Coverage of Chapter 3
Second Half: Chapter 3 quiz: Factors Influencing Research Process

Lab: 5:30-8:00 Tuesday Anspach 251. The instructor will be available for evening lab time and/or extended office hours for help with the exercise due Thursday.

6. **Thurs. Sept. 14**

Assignments: Exercise 2 due

First Half: Review Exercise 2 and demonstrate exercise 3 due Thursday 9/21
Second Half: Selected Coverage of Chapter 17: Quantitative Data Analysis

7. **Tues. Sept. 19**

Assignments: Prepare for Chapter 17 Quiz; Email instructor the citation and publisher/author abstract of the article you propose to use for your Informational Abstract and Critical Appreciation of an Evidence-Based Practice Research article, assignment due October 10.

First Half: Chapter 17 quiz: Quantitative Data Analysis
Second Half: Review Chapter 17 Quiz; Selected Coverage of Chapter 4 on ethics

Lab: 5:30-8:00 Tuesday Anspach 251. The instructor will be available for evening lab time and/or extended office hours for help with the exercise due Thursday.

8. **Thurs. Sept. 21**

Assignments: Exercise 3 due; Prepare for Chapter 4 quiz

First Half: Review Exercise 3 and demonstrate exercise 4 on correlations.
Second Half: Chapter 4 Quiz: Ethical Issues in Social Work Research

9. **Tues. Sept. 26**

Assignments: Prepare for Chapter 5 Quiz;

First Half: Selected Coverage of Chapter 5
Second Half: Chapter 5 quiz: Culturally Competent Research

Lab: 5:30-8:00 Tuesday Anspach 251. The instructor will be available for evening lab time and/or extended office hours for help with the exercise due Thursday.

10. **Thurs. Sept. 28**
Assignments: Exercise 4 due; Prepare for Chapter 6 quiz; Read and be prepared to discuss Rubin-Babbie text’s Appendix A: Writing Research Proposals.

First Half: Review Exercise 4 and demonstrate exercise 5 on Chi Square, some lab time for working on Chi Square exercise, individual help with this assignment.
Second Half: Selective Coverage of Chapter 6 and discussion of Appendix A.


Assignments: Prepare for Chapter 6 quiz

First Half: Chapter 6 Quiz
Second Half: Selected Coverage of Chapter 7: Conceptualization in Quantitative and Qualitative Inquiry

Lab: 5:30-8:00 Tuesday Anspach 251. The instructor will be available for evening lab time and/or extended office hours for help with the exercise due Thursday.

12. Thurs. Oct. 5

Assignments: Prepare for Chapter 7 quiz; Exercise 5 due.

First Half: Chapter 7 quiz
Second Half: Selected Coverage of Chapter 8: Measurement

13. Tues. Oct. 10

Note: Exercise 5 and corrected exercises 1-4 will be returned to the student for final corrections. For full credit, the completed set of exercises should be placed in the student’s portfolio and returned along with the abstract due today. Each subsequent assignment should be handed in as part of this accumulated portfolio of corrected course assignments.

Assignments: Prepare for Chapter 8 quiz; Informational Abstract and Critical Appreciation Assignment Due.

First Half: Chapter 8 quiz
Second Half: Review of your Exercise 5 and instruction on use of Chi Square when controlling for a third variable.


Note: Abstract returned with grade and suggested corrections.

Assignments: Prepare for Quiz on Chapter 9; Read Berg chapter on qualitative data analysis (on reserve)
15. Tues. Oct. 17

Assignments: Prepare for Chapter 18 quiz on Qualitative Data Analysis; Email instructor the citation and publisher/author abstract of the article you propose to use for your Evaluation of an Evaluation Research-Based Article's Research Methodology assignment due Tuesday Nov. 7.

First Half: Selected Coverage of Chapter 18: Qualitative Data Analysis
Second Half: Quiz on Chapter 18

Lab: 5:30-8:00 Tuesday Anspach 251. The instructor will be available for evening lab time and/or extended office hours for help with the Qualitative Data Analysis Exercise due Tuesday October 24.


Assignments: Prepare for Chapter 10 quiz

First Half: BRIEF Coverage on Chapter 10: Sampling and Surveys and training in survey research by Prof. Mary Senter
Second Half: Quiz on Chapter 10: Sampling and Surveys


Assignments: Qualitative Data Analysis Assignment Due with portfolio including complete set of exercises and corrected abstract assignment.

First Half: Review of Qualitative Data Analysis Assignment

18. Thurs. Oct 26

Assignments: Prepare for Chapter 11 quiz: Sampling (Continued); Reading (to be assigned) related to evaluation of research methodology.

First Half: Selected Coverage of Chapter 11; Discussion of reading on evaluating research methods of published work.
Second Half: Chapter 11 quiz

19. Tues. Oct. 31
Assignments: Prepare for Chapter 12 quiz

First Half: Selected Coverage of Chapter 12: Group Designs for Evaluating programs and practice
Second Half: Quiz on Chapter 12

20. Thurs. Nov. 2

Assignments: Prepare for Chapter 13 quiz: Program evaluation

First Half: Selected Coverage of Chapter 13: Program evaluation
Second Half: Quiz on Chapter 13

21. Tues. Nov. 7

Assignments: Prepare for Chapter 14: Single-Case Evaluation Designs;

First Half: Selected Coverage of Chapter 14: Program evaluation
Second Half: Quiz on Chapter 14

22. Thurs. Nov. 9

Assignments: Prepare for quiz on Chapter 15

First Half: Selected Coverage of Chapter 15: Additional Qualitative and Quantitative Methods (focusing especially on ethnography and participatory action research).
Second Half: Quiz on Chapter 15

23. Tues. Nov. 14

Assignments: Evaluation of an Evaluation Research-Based Article's Research Methodology assignment due along with portfolio including complete set of corrected exercises, corrected abstract and corrected qualitative assignment.

First Half: Discussion of evaluation papers and the lessons of that evaluation for last minute tuning up of the student’s own research proposals and plans for data analysis.
Second Half: Progress Reports on Group Research Reports; Groups Meetings and individual consultation with instructor

24. Thurs. Nov. 16

Assignments: Prepare for Quiz on Chapter 16

First Half: Selected Coverage of Chapter 16
Second Half: Quiz on Chapter 16
25. **Tues. Nov. 21**

Assignments: Prepare for group meetings about the analysis of the data collected by the group.

First Half: Group meetings and instructor consultation  
Second Half: Group meetings and instructor consultation

**No class Thursday November 23, Thanksgiving**

26. **Tues. Nov. 28**

Assignments: Come prepared to discuss Appendix B: Writing Social Work Research Reports, and ready to respond to instructor questions about progress towards completing data analysis and writing the report.

First Half: Class discussion of Appendix B and plans for individual research reports  
Second Half: Group meetings and instructor consultation

Lab: 5:30-8:00 Tuesday Anspach 251. The instructor will be available for evening lab time and/or extended office hours for help with the research report due Dec. 7.

27. **Thurs. Nov. 30**

Assignments: Come prepared as groups to discuss with the class the plan for each group’s presentation of its results beginning on Thursday Dec. 5.

First Half: **Class** discussion of plans for group presentations  
Second Half: Students work in class on research reports, consult with each other and with instructor.

28. **Tues. Dec. 5**


All Class: **Group** discussion of plans for group presentations

29. **Thurs. Dec. 7 (Last day of classes)**

Assignments: **Final Presentations. Research reports returned with grade and required revisions, with revisions to be submitted with the portfolio on Tuesday December 12.**

First Half:
Second Half:

30. **Final Exam Session** - Final Presentations Continued and Retest of the BSW Exam Material. **COURSE PORTFOLIO OF CORRECTED ASSIGNMENTS DUE (WITHOUT IDENTIFYING INFORMATION)**

IX. **Evaluation:**

Following is a summary of the assignments and grading:

32 Quizzes  
10 Research Proposal  
10 Research Report  
10 Abstract assignment  
10 Evaluation of published research assignment  
10 Quantitative Data Analysis Exercises (five, 2 points each)  
10 Qualitative Data Analysis Assignment  
8 Attendance and participation  
100 Total  

Quiz extra credit bonus points (up to three)  
Group project bonus points (up to two)  
Three bonus points for data collection in PSC/SOC/SWK CARRS survey if not in the group doing its group research project on that topic.

Note: Total bonus points may not exceed 5 for any one individual.
Note: Five attendance/participation points will be deducted for incomplete portfolios.

X. **Course Policies:**

1. **Attendance and participation:** Students are expected to attend and actively participate in all classes. The professor requests students notify the instructor in advance if they will be missing a class, regardless whether the absence is likely to be excused. Only absences for medical reasons or emergencies approved by the instructor are excused absences, but these also require advanced notification and documentation under University policy. Unexcused absences result in deductions from the maximum for participation points noted below. Specifically, of eight possible attendance and participation points, there will be one point deducted for the first unexcused absence and two points for each additional unexcused absence. The course portfolio is seen as an important element of the collective participation of students in this course. Accordingly, five attendance/participation points will be deducted for incomplete portfolios.

2. **Timeliness:** Students are expected to arrive on time and stay until the end of class. Persistent tardiness can result in attendance deductions.

3. **Classroom behaviors:** Students are expected to demonstrate on-task classroom behaviors that: 1) promote the learning of self and others; and 2) model effective professional
relationship building skills with social work clients, peers, colleagues, speakers, and professors. Conduct standards shall align with the NASW Code of Ethics.

4. Preparedness: Students are expected to be prepared for class. Prepared for class includes timely completion of all reading assignments. Each student is expected to come prepared to discuss reading in class. The instructor reserves the right to call on students to discuss bold-faced key concepts in the text and other important text book material. If it helps with preparation, please feel free to bring the text to class.

5. Plagiarism/Copying: Students are required to be familiar with and remain in compliance with CMU’s Academic Integrity Policy, which can be found at: http://academicsenate.cmich.edu/NonCad/ACADEMIC_INTEGRITY_POLICY.pdf

6. Disability accommodations: CMU provides students with disabilities reasonable accommodation to participate in educational programs, activities, or services. Students with disabilities requiring accommodation to participate in class activities or meet course requirements should first register with the Office of Student Disability Services (120 Park Library; telephone 774-3018; TDD 774-2568), and then contact me as soon as possible.

7. Make-ups: See section on quizzes under Assignments.

8. Late papers/assignments: Late papers/assignments will not be accepted, except under extremely rare circumstances. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the professor in advance of the due date and time, and the professor will deduct significant points for lateness that will result a reduced grade for the paper. If the student does not submit paper/assignment by the agreed upon new deadline, the grade will be zero.


10. Grading questions: Discussion of grading issues should be done during the professor’s scheduled office hours or by appointment.

11. Departmental Policy relevant to SOC 300: “The Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work is committed to social justice and diversity and to the application of research to solve real world problems. In addition, the department is dedicated to teaching excellence and the promotion of critical thinking as mechanisms for encouraging social justice, diversity, and the solution of social problems.”

12. Other: Other course policies are described in course assignments and may be elaborated or defined by the professor during class. The professor reserves the right to make policy exceptions.

13. Religious holiday policy: Central Michigan University’s Academic Senate in Spring 2006 adopted a new Religious Holiday policy. Following was the final draft of the policy as passed by the Senate: “Central Michigan University, as a public institution, does not observe
religious holidays. However, it is University policy to permit students to be absent from classes or examinations for reason of observing religious holidays. Students are allowed to make up course requirements when they are unable to avoid a conflict between their academic and their religious obligations. Absence from classes or examinations caused by observing religious holidays does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of absence. It is the obligation of students to provide faculty with written notice of the religious holiday they will be observing and the date on which they will be absent at least two weeks prior to the date of the religious holiday. Students who miss classes or are absent on days of examinations or class assignments shall be offered an opportunity to make up the work, without penalty, unless it can be demonstrated that a make-up opportunity would interfere unreasonably with the delivery of the course. Should disagreement arise over any aspect of this policy, the parties involved should contact the Department Chair, the Dean of the College, or the Ombudsperson. Final appeals will be resolved by the Provost. Similarly, every reasonable effort should be made to help faculty and staff avoid negative consequences when their religious and work obligations are in conflict. Reasonable common sense, judgment and the pursuit of mutual goodwill should result in the positive resolution of scheduling conflicts. The regular appeals and grievance processes for faculty and staff should be used if a mutually satisfactory arrangement cannot be reached. Finally, offices scheduling on-campus events should consult university calendars in an effort to avoid conflict with major religious holidays. A list of major religious holidays will be made available on the Office for Institutional Diversity’s web page. Pursuant to that policy, an interfaith religious calendar linked to the CMU website can be found at: http://www.diversity.cmich.edu/Appr_reqd/InterFaithCal06-07.htm

XI: Assignments

Due Dates of Exercises and Assignments:

Social Work Research Proposal: To Be Determined
Quantitative Data Analysis Exercise 1: Thurs. Sept. 7
Quantitative Data Analysis Exercise 2: Thurs. Sept. 14
Quantitative Data Analysis Exercise 3: Thurs. Sept. 21
Quantitative Data Analysis Exercise 4: Thurs. Sept. 28
Quantitative Data Analysis Exercise 5: Thurs. Oct. 5
Informational Abstract and Critical Appreciation Assignment: Tues. Oct. 10
Qualitative Data Analysis Assignment: Tues. Oct. 24

Goals of the assignments: Ultimately, the goals of the assignments in this course must be related to the achievement of course objectives which are plausibly connected to the achievement of program objectives. However, the goals of the assignment are also related to the desire to enable students to utilize this course to advance their interests in the evaluation and critical understanding of the research methods used in research findings related to generalist social work practice, in particular empirical articles related to evidence-based practice and to the evaluation of social work practice. This ensures that basic skills in the
initial stages of the research process (problem formulation, literature review, hypothesis
generation, research design) are learned in a way which is not alienated from the student’s
substantive interests (albeit with a topic subject to instructor approval). However, absent a
course designed to facilitate individual student research projects (such as the last of the three
research courses in the psychology major), it is felt that the small group (5-9 students) is the
best environment to conceptualize, design and carry out a small quantitative and qualitative
research project with the guidance of the instructor.

While data from previous research may be used for the completion of the initial quantitative
data analysis exercises and the initial qualitative data analysis assignment, the quantitative
and qualitative data collected by the small group research projects will also be used by each
group participant to consolidate that understanding by producing an empirical report of one
aspect of the results of that group research project or an overall respondent report of the
results, as well as to give a group report to the class of the results of the research.

This means that the various steps of the research process will not be learned entirely within
the confines of a particular original individual research project, as that would require as a
prerequisite the very skills learned by the end of this course. Using another model, namely a
pre-prepared faculty driven research project to which students contribute additional questions,
it is possible to prepare such an individualized project. Depending upon the term, such a
project may be available for students to participate in, in which case their report of research
results would be based upon that research, and in which case the literature review, hypothesis
generation, and research design assignment would be carried out with a view to the
anticipated variables available from that external project.

In Fall 2006, for instance, political science and sociology faculty members will be carrying
out such a study. Students in this section of SOC 300 will have the option of participating in
that study as a group, in lieu of the group research project. All students in this section will
receive training in computer-assisted telephone survey research (performed by Chairperson
Mary Senter) and all students who choose the group project associated with the survey will
participate in three hours of data collection in order to facilitate that external research project.
Additional students who wish to participate will receive extra credit for doing so, 3 hours
being worth 3 points.

Because this means that there is no final project which in itself can be used as part of program
assessment, each student will prepare a portfolio of each of their course assignments
which includes corrected versions of the papers and assignments that have been graded
and returned by the instructor. Grades on each assignment are contingent upon the
subsequent return of the assignment with suggested corrections made to the satisfaction
of the instructor. This will also serve the purpose of consolidating the learning associated
with each assignment and is consistent with the peer review process in social research, which
involves asking authors to revise and re-submit their work. It also serves to reinforce the
student’s sense of competence with respect to their abilities to produce a portfolio of work by
the end of the term that is cumulative and valuable.
Following is a summary of the assignments and grading:

32  Quizzes  
10  Research Proposal  
10  Research Report  
10  Abstract assignment  
10  Evaluation of published research assignment  
10  Quantitative Data Analysis Exercises (five, 2 points each)  
10  Qualitative Data Analysis Assignment  
  8  Attendance and participation  
  100  Total  

Quiz extra credit bonus points (up to three)  
Group project bonus points (up to two)  
Three bonus points for data collection in PSC/SOC/SWK CARRS survey if not in the group doing its group research project on that topic.  
Note: Total bonus points may not exceed 5 for any one individual.  
Note: Five attendance/participation points will be deducted for incomplete portfolios.

Group and/or Individual Research Project and Poster Presentation

(Note: Grading for the work associated with this research is focused on the individual research proposal and the final research report. However, the instructor reserves the right to deduct points for individual students who do not do their full share of the group’s work.)

As part of this course, each student will participate in an actual research project of some kind, either an individual research project approved by the instructor and using techniques covered in the text, or a group research project. Students who choose an individual research project will be paired with another student in order that they can provide feedback to each other on their respective projects. Under certain circumstances, the instructor will entertain research projects carried out by pairs of students.

There are a variety of possibilities for individual and group research projects. The default is to participate in a survey being carried out by faculty from the Department of Political Science and the Department of Sociology in conjunction with CARRS (Center for Applied Research and Rural Studies, see http://www.chsbs.cmich.edu/carrs/) This is the typical research assignment for SOC 300, and it is hoped that at the very minimum a small group of SOC 300 students from this section will participate in this research. A certain number of questions can be developed by this group for inclusion in the survey. The schedule for that survey is as follows:

Friday, October 13th  Questions turned into Mary/Monica from all classes  
Week of October 16th  Training in SOC 300 and PSC 280 classes by Dr. Senter  
(probably on Thursday, October 18-19)
Meetings of faculty to resolve any differences in question Wording, etc.

Submission of final interview schedule to IRB

CATI system made ready for survey

Sunday, October 22nd
  Pretest 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

October 23rd
  Interviewing for Survey begins
  Monday through Friday and Sunday 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm
  Saturday and Sunday 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

October 31st
  Marginals on 10 variables available for drafting press release

November 3rd
  Press release available

Week of November 6
  Data available for use in classes

I am open to other proposals for small group projects which involve surveys of SWK 100 and SWK 250 students; a possible alumni survey being discussed by social work faculty; possible surveys of social workers in the field; and possible research in the community. However, other groups and other individual research projects not related to this survey need to adhere to a similar schedule, so that results are available for cleaning, coding and analysis by November 6.

For a group research assignment, you will form a research team with your classmates. As a team you will design, carry out, and report on your research project, working collaboratively with each other and in consultation with the instructor. The instructor must approve the research topic and the final research instrument. There will be few opportunities for the groups to meet in class. Additional group meetings before or after class, during scheduled lab times, and at other times will be necessary. Blackboard discussion groups can be set up as well, where documents to be shared within the group can be kept.

The learning associated with this experience is associated with the formulation of research questions, the development of measurement instruments and the critique of their validity and reliability, the construction of an appropriate sample or identification of an appropriate population, the carrying out of data collection, and the analysis of qualitative and quantitative results (but see the individual research report assignment below). Division of labor of tasks within the group is determined by the group.

One task is to prepare an overall respondent report of the results. The person undertaking this task should construct their research proposal as an overall proposal for the project, rather than one which focuses on one aspect of the results, and their final research report will be written
with the respondent audience or other larger audience in mind.

The final presentation is based upon the final individual research reports; the respondent report; and the group’s efforts to provide a coherent explanation to the class of the original research question, research design, data collection measures, results, etc.. The group may wish, for example, to take turns explaining each step of the research process and then take turns presenting the results of their individual research report. It is typically the case that within group projects one person takes on more than their share of the responsibility and work.

*Each group, by the date of the group presentation, if the group feels that one such person has stood out in their contribution, will recommend one of their group to receive up to two bonus points in addition to whatever score each member of the their group project.*

In addition to collecting and analyzing data utilizing the skills learned in this course, this work will be related to two primary written assignments, discussed below.

**Research Proposal (10 Points)**

The first of these is a written research proposal prepared according to the procedures in Appendix A of the textbook. Often, research proposals evolve over the course of the formulation of the original question, the design of the sample and the data collection strategy, etc.. Accordingly, the due date for this proposal is flexible and will be determined based upon interaction between the student and the instructor and between the instructor and the groups which are formed. Where the proposal relates to a group project, it will involve research questions and proposed data analysis related to one part of the anticipated results of the group project. It is recognized that there will be a good deal of variation between the proposals in terms of the degree to which the proposal can rely upon a literature review of existing research findings on the topic or related to the topic.

**Research Report (10 Points)**

The second is a written social work research report written according to Appendix B of the text. The due date of the research proposal will be approximately mid-term and the research report will be due on Tuesday December 5. This report will be the basis for the individual and group presentations of the results of the research.

Typically, each member of each research group will select a different aspect of the results of the project for their attention, in consultation with other members of the group. The report should relate to the topic chosen in the research proposal, although it is recognized that in some cases there will be a shift in the topic of the report once the data are available. However, any shift in topic in between the proposal and the preparation of the report requires instructor approval.

One approach which can be taken for a report that is part of a group research project is to
focus data analysis in one of the following ways.

A. A qualitative analysis of the results similar to the qualitative data analysis assignment but substantively related to a qualitative element of the group research project. Depending upon the nature of the group research project, there may only be one available individual research report which can focus on qualitative data.

B. A variable oriented analysis in which the relationship between two variables is explained substantively and analytically using Chi Square analysis. If there is a need to control for a third variable, the Chi Square should be repeated additional times and the results when stratifying the results for the categories of the third variable should be discussed. If there is no need to control for a third variable, this should be defended. The results on these variables should be discussed in relation to the overall purpose of the research project and the overall results.

C. A “respondent report” of the results of the research. Typically, a brief summary of the results of a study is made available to interested respondents. This would require the writer to compile tables (not graphs) of the key results and summarize them in a way that is easily understood by the general public. This summary can play a key role in enhancing the final group presentation.

D. A “graphical summary” of the results of the research. Similar to C, the graphical summary will seek to use the charting capability of SPSS and/or Excel to summarize the key findings of the study in a way which can facilitate the development of graphical projections for the final group presentation. This summary can and should include both univariate and bivariate presentations of the data as well as charts showing numerous variables.

As can be seen, together such a set of research reports on the same group research project will tend to complement each other, help support a more coherent group presentation of the results, etc. The possibility of such a set of reports should be kept in mind while preparing the research proposal, with students divvying up the proposals along these or similar lines. However, within any one research project, there may be a number of different variables which would support research proposals and research reports which vary a good bit in their substantive focus. In other words, they may seem in some ways to be different topic entirely, although typically united in some way related to the nature of the sample. For instance, the variables proposed by political scientists, sociologists and social workers may differ in the Fall 2006 study. However, social work students can use the entire range of variables in their proposals and reports.

Remember, “you can’t lose if you have asked a good question.” The fact that your particular set of variables did not produce a “statistically significant” result doesn’t mean it doesn’t have educational or even research significance. As was concluded in the recent film, Everything is Illuminated, even though one might not find exactly what one is looking for, one usually does find something of value. Also, while there may be variation between individual research reports in the seeming significance of the results, it is important to understand that this
research was conducted as a group project, and every individual effort contributed to that project.

**Quizzes: 18 possible quizzes, minimum of 16 required, for total possible score of 32 and up to 4 extra credit points**

Quizzes are designed to reward class participation and to motivate students to come to class prepared (by having read and studied the assigned chapter and the supporting tutorial quizzes). Accordingly, there are no make-up quizzes, but consistent with the university’s missed classed policy, ([https://bulletins.cmich.edu/2006/ug/gen-acad/default.asp#missed%20class%20policy](https://bulletins.cmich.edu/2006/ug/gen-acad/default.asp#missed%20class%20policy)) with advance notice to instructor, students with a documented medically-excused absence or who must attend a required university event will be given the opportunity to engage in an alternative assessment of the equivalent course content (usually an essay quiz covering the same material.)

The length of time of the quizzes and the nature of the questions will require that the student have a thorough understanding of the sections of the book covered. In advance of the quiz, either on the same day of the quiz or on the class session prior to the quiz, the instructor will engage in “selected coverage” of the chapter being covered on the quiz, in addition to presenting other material of an educational value on that topic which will not be on the quiz but may be helpful with other assignments or in the instructor’s judgement will contribute to the student’s understanding of social research. However, this means that students must take responsibility for learning the chapter, rather than relying upon the “selected coverage.” There will be many questions in quizzes on content not covered in lectures. It is especially important to learn and understand all bold-faced, italicized and glossary terms for each chapter.

The quizzes will be closed book, in-class, blackboard exams, which are randomly generated for each student. Feedback on correct answers and page references are provided by blackboard. The number of questions for each quiz varies widely depending upon the chapter content. Most questions are those designed by the authors of the text, however there are others which were designed by the instructor, in particular matching questions that match several concepts with the corresponding correct definition.

However, each quiz contains 10 questions from the Tutorial Quizzes available for students to study in advance of each quiz. The link is also on the website under Companion Link: [http://www.wadsworth.com/cgi-wadsworth/course_products_wp.pl?fid=M20bl&product_isbn_issn=0495006580&discipline_number=4](http://www.wadsworth.com/cgi-wadsworth/course_products_wp.pl?fid=M20bl&product_isbn_issn=0495006580&discipline_number=4)

This means that if you read the study and do the tutorial quiz, you should know the answers to 10 of the questions already! (You may memorize if you wish but may not bring notes of the answers to these questions. Keep in mind the numbers will have changed.)

Please keep in mind that the kinds of questions on these quizzes are very much like the kinds
of questions you will need to be able to answer to pass the research related questions on the BSW and/or MSW licensure exams. So practice in taking such tests with closed book is an important learning experience.

There is no dropping of the lowest of the possible 16 required quiz scores, if you take 16 or fewer quizzes out of the 18 possible quizzes. Missed quizzes are scored as zero if less than a total of 16 quizzes are taken. But if you take 17 or 18 quizzes, the lowest two scores will be dropped. The number of questions vary between quizzes, but blackboard will post your percentage correct. Your final quiz score will be the average of your percentage correct scores, applied to the total maximum of 32 points for the 16 quizzes.

Blackboard calculates a percentage correct score, which is used in a spreadsheet outside blackboard by the instructor to periodically (once or twice prior to the end of the course) calculate what your final quiz total would be were you to continue through all the quizzes at the level at which you have performed until then. That projected final quiz total is then entered in the quiz total column of blackboard, which is weighted at 32% of the total score.

Also, if by the end of the course a student has taken 16 or more exams, because it was said, “Quizzes are designed to reward class participation and to motivate students to come to class prepared by having read the assigned chapter,” students who take at least 16 of the 18 quizzes (or alternatives in the case of excused absence) will be awarded one bonus point. That bonus point will be put in the unweighted bonus point column in blackboard. Students who take 17 quizzes will be awarded two bonus points, and those who take all 18 exams will be awarded three bonus points. These will be added to the quiz bonus point column of blackboard.

**Quantitative Data Analysis/Interpretation Exercises (Five for 10 Total Points)**

These 5 cumulative assignments are based upon similar assignments originally designed by Patterson and Basham for use in conjunction with their book, *Data Analysis with Spreadsheets*. However, I have revised and developed these assignments and will be providing you with detailed instructions and examples of each. We will go over each assignment in class the session before it is due. The spreadsheet assignments are due in the next class session after this material is introduced in class. Time permitting, the spreadsheet data will be imported into SPSS and the same procedure duplicated in SPSS.

Assignment number one requires the creation of a data set within a spreadsheet, using data to be provided to the class, from which each student will select a number of common variables and two unique variables.

Assignment number two requires using the spreadsheet to compute descriptive statistics and frequency distributions on variables in the data set created in the first assignment.

Assignment number three involves the computation of standard deviations and the interpretation of standard deviations.
Assignment number four requires using of a spreadsheet to conduct an analysis of the relationship between two variables in your data set through use of the Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Assignment number five requires using of a spreadsheet to conduct an analysis of the relationship between two variables in your data set through use of the Chi-square statistic.

Detailed instructions for each assignment will be made available before each assignment and added to this online syllabus.

Grading: **This is by and large a pass/fail type assignment.** It is essential to get each exercise correct in order to be able to move on to the next exercise. It is also essential to master these exercises in order to be able to properly prepare your final research report. **Full credit will be given for each exercise that is handed in on time and returned with all corrections noted along with the submission of the next assignment, which is the abstract assignment.** One point only will be given for assignments which are not on time or which are not returned corrected with the next assignment. Once all five exercises have been completed, and the fifth exercise has been corrected, the completed exercises should be placed in the student’s course portfolio. Getting these exercises perfect is entirely possible and provides the student with a 100% score on this assignment.

**Informational Abstract and Critical Appreciation of an Evidence-Based Practice Research Article (10 Points)**

The development of knowledge and skills associated with empirically demonstrated social policy and/or social program outcomes or other social work practice outcomes is important for effective social work practice. The purpose of this assignment is to increase the students' abilities to access and critically analyze outcome research and evaluation literature relevant to social welfare. **For each assignment, the informational abstract should focus in particular on the method, data, hypotheses and other elements. For each assignment, the critical appreciation should focus on aspects of the article’s research methods and the reader’s confidence in those methods and how they were used to support the conclusions reached.**

In instructor has prepared a Refworks database of several hundred articles which can be used as candidate articles for this assignment. In addition, students are encouraged to use the browsing guide on the website and visit the Central Michigan University Park Library to find a recent journal article that reports empirically-based outcomes derived from an evaluation of a social welfare benefit and/or a social work service. The article should have an already-prepared abstract as published in the journal. The student should email that provided short abstract of the article to the instructor so that he can approve the article to be used in this assignment. After approval of the article, the student will prepare an abstract of the article.

**Criteria for grading.** Grading is based on the abstract’s thoroughness and accuracy; clarity of
writing and ability to convey the articles key points and methods. Also, please see the section, “Qualities of a good abstract,” at the bottom of the Guide to Writing Abstracts.

**Note:** This assignment will be returned with a grade reflecting the quality of the work as submitted. However, the grade is contingent upon revising and re-submitting the work as suggested by the instructor and including it in the course portfolio handed in with the subsequent assignment, which is the evaluation of an evaluation research article.

**Qualitative Data Analysis Assignment (10 points):**

Although the following assignment appears difficult, it was one which most students had little difficulty mastering in Fall 2005. In fact, it would appear social work students like doing this kind of qualitative data analysis more than some of them enjoy the quantitative data analysis! A reading of the assigned chapter from Berg in preparation for the demonstration of this assignment by the instructor will prepare the student for carrying out this assignment. Students will be given one week to complete the assignment after the in-class explanation. The instructor will schedule additional office hours to facilitate students finishing this assignment on time. Students are encouraged to seek help from other members of their group, and to raise questions in the class period after the initial explanation. This is a time consuming assignment. Last year students reported it took them from 3 to 8 hours to complete, depending upon how easy they found the subject to be.

Don’t be intimidated by the unusual concepts found there: they will seem eminently clear after the reading and lecture. You may be wondering what kind of data will be used in this assignment. Over the first couple of weeks of the term, once we have decided more clearly what the group research projects will consist of, the instructor will determine what qualitative data might be appropriate for use in this assignment. The fallback will be qualitative data available from last Fall’s surveys. Students are prohibited from discussing those assignments with students who took the course last Fall; this would give them an unfair advantage over students who don’t have such ties, and would reduce the value of using the data from last Fall, despite the advantage that the instructor already has a good example of the kinds of assignments were produced based upon that data. In the end, some students may end up doing analyses of qualitative data collected this Fall, and others may used last Fall’s data. Or the instructor may provide data from an entirely different source. This will depend upon a number of factors.

1. **Criteria of selection (p. 224).** Answer the following question and explain your answer:
   
   What are the criteria of selection for the question or other measurement instrument utilized to produce the qualitative data supplied for this assignment?

   The purpose of arriving at a criteria of selection in advance of qualitative analysis of content is to increase the reliability and validity of the analysis, by ensuring that the analysis is not done in a way which is biased towards confirming the researcher's hypotheses. The criteria of selection are not "advance codes", in other words they aren't a way in which you "guess" in advance what the answers might be, the themes you might see, etc.. They are merely a way in
which you set rules in advance for what kinds of content you will select out of the total mix of content. When a research question is a very specific one, it is usually the case that the bulk of the content is related to the question at hand. Be sure to decide for yourself if you want to address only manifest content or whether you also want to address latent content (see p. 225), and explain why. Another way of thinking about manifest and latent content is that manifest content is clearly and directly related to the criteria of selection but latent content may be less clearly and more indirectly related to the content.

Before doing so, see p. 236 about the need to ask, "What study are these data pertinent to? In other words, what was the original objective of the research study." Furthermore, what was the actual question asked? Generally, if this is primary data analysis (original data, first time it was analyzed), the criteria of selection is that only that content related to the question is analyzed and other irrelevant material is excluded from analysis.

2. Identify the unit of analysis you plan to use (p. 228). See also p. 231, "What to count." (However, do not consider use of "themes", this concept will be used in a different way and it is confusing to think about themes here.)

In answering this question, discuss why you propose to count at this level. Keep in mind that the more specific the question, the less general the unit of analysis. Specific questions tend to produce specific answers, and the unit of analysis tends to be more discrete (such as the word or the phrase), while general questions tend to produce themes which emerge or be observable only at high levels of analysis such as a sentence or paragraph. Keep in mind that you can re-analyze the same data later at a higher level of analysis, such as the concept, once one has initially identified in vivo codes at lower levels of analysis.

3. Once this has been done, it is not inappropriate for the researcher to construct a list of in vivo codes (p. 227), or the literal terms (words or phrases), which the researcher thinks might be used by the respondents. A spreadsheet is often the best way to begin to analyze the data here and in the following sections. The researcher's hypotheses would tend to suggest themes would be present that might be represented by specific in vivo codes. Normally, if you were doing an inductive research design or research using "grounded theory", you wouldn't do this. However, in a deductive research design you would always do this, as your hypotheses would likely be tied to results which would be linked to such codes. In this case, for educational purposes, we will all do this. So, for instance, in the one sample from last year’s survey used as an example, if you hypothesized that respondents would say that CMU is super, you would identify as an in vivo code the theme super. Please predict, before reviewing the data, what would you hypothesize some of the in vivo codes (literal words or phrases) found in the answer might be? In a sense, these in vivo codes are the empirical indicators of the concepts for which you have provided a conceptual definition, and which you wish to operationalize with the data at hand, the "literal words". That is why it is not inappropriate to speculate in advance about what kinds of words you think you will see, as long as you do so after the criteria for selection is established. It is true that some qualitative researchers use an inductive research strategy, and don’t care to hypothesize in advance, but there is nothing inherent in qualitative methods which prevents advance hypotheses.
4. You are now ready to do your qualitative analysis. Do open coding. One goal of the analysis is to identify "minutely" (see p. 237) all in vivo codes (all actual content, not just the stuff you predict in see step 2 above) at the unit of analysis selected (see step 3 above) which is consistent with the criteria of selection (step 1 above). Accordingly, using a highlighter pen, identify all such content. Type up a list of the content with one line per piece of content.

5. Engage in axial coding or coding frames. The purpose of this step is to take the relevant data (the list of in vivo codes that is consistent with the unit of analysis and criteria of selection) and code it into frames (often understood as themes, a frequently used word, but which is not used in this way by Berg and shouldn’t be used that way in this assignment, where the concept frames should be used). This involves the exercise of reasoned judgment about the extent to which in vivo codes can be combined into frames that are considered to be synonymous. The goal here is to analyze results in a way which can help answer the research question. It is as simple as that. Accordingly, to the extent that data can be coded in a way which operationalizes the conceptual definitions, and can be coded in a way which has face validity, it is valuable to collapse different in vivo codes into frames. But there must be an clear empirical relationship between the original wording and the themes. When you can't find a word which summarizes all of them, it is often best to create a composite frame, in which you merely group all the relevant words into a group of similar ones. Even if you can identify a word which best describes the frame, be sure to list the in vivo codes you have used. You end this step with a smaller list of frames derived from the in vivo codes. List these frames one line at a time and number them.

6. Analyze the cases based upon the frames. How many cases produces answers consistent with frame 1? Frame 2? Frame 3? Create columns to the right of the original qualitative data for each frame, and place a 1 in each cell if that case has that frame. One case may have more than one frame.

7. Based upon this analysis, how would you interpret the results? In other words, what does this qualitative analysis tell you about the answer to the original question? Briefly describe the outcome. Let's compare our in vivo codes, frames, and interpretations in class!

Optional: 8. Can you identify one sociological construct (p. 227), or higher level abstract concept, which you feel may be represented by these codes?

Note: This assignment will be returned with a grade reflecting the quality of the work as submitted. However, the grade is contingent upon revising and re-submitting the work as suggested by the instructor and including it in the course portfolio handed in with the subsequent assignment, which is the evaluation of an evaluation research article.

Evaluation of an Evaluation Research-Based Article’s Research Methodology: 10 points

Having familiarized yourself with a single empirical research article; having developed skills in summarizing and communicating the findings of that article; having engaged in a general
critique of the article; having learned the fundamentals of quantitative and qualitative data analysis; having completed the bulk of the quizzes covering research methodology, the next step involves the carrying out of a more formal evaluation of a peer-reviewed empirical evaluation research article related to social work practice or program evaluation or of empirical evidence for use in social work practice.

There is a long history of social work literature designed to facilitate the evaluation of research findings. When the CSWE Program Objective nine refers to “Evaluate research studies....”, what is meant is skill in the evaluation of published research. It doesn’t mean the the production of social research, but rather the critical understanding and evaluation of such research for use in practice. That is why an assignment of this kind is valuable in a social work research section of this course.

The first book on the subject of the evaluation of research was written by social work educators who were also trained in the joint doctoral program in social work and social science at Michigan: Tripodi, Tony; Fellin, Phillip, and Meyer, Henry Joseph (1969), The assessment of social research; guidelines for the use of research in social work and social science. Itasca, Ill: F. E. Peacock Publishers. The most recent book on this subject is: Holosko, Michael J. (2006), Primer for critiquing social research: A student guide. Belmont, CA: Thomson/Brooks Cole.

Based upon these and other such guides as well as upon a similar guide to evaluating evaluation research developed earlier by the instructor, students will be provided with a detailed guide for how to prepare this assignment, including the use of checklists and others ways of guiding and stimulating the ability of the student to prepare this assignment and to be able to critically utilize research findings. The guide will stop short of enabling the student to utilize the results of the research in practice, as that is beyond the scope of this course. However, it will enable the student to consolidate the other skills and concepts learned in the course and apply them to the evaluation of key aspects of empirical evidence for social work practice.

Since this is the first time this assignment has been done, the instructor will identify several dozen candidate articles for such an evaluation. Students will pair up and do this assignment as a pair, using one of these articles, handing in a unified assignment and receiving the same grade. This will build in support and hopefully make the assignment less intimidating. However, ethically speaking, both members of the pair must be fully involved, recognizing however that it is often that case that one student may contribute more fully to the assignment. I say ethically because under the NASW Code of Ethics one has a responsibility not to take credit without acknowledgement for work done by others. Accordingly, the student who plays the most important role should be listed first on the title page, unless the pair contend that both played an equal role, in which case an asterisk should be used by the names and a note added below to this effect. If both members of the pair are still unable to figure out some aspect of the assignment, or if one member of a pair proves unable to make a significant contribution to the assignment, the instructor should be conducted. Undoubtedly, the assignment
itself will bear improvement, and the instructor appreciates the role of this class in inaugurating the use of this assignment.

X. Master Syllabus Bibliography

(Note: As the course proceeds, there will be an evolving SOC 300 bibliography designed to support the social work section. This will be posted in a read-only section of the instructor’s Refworks online bibliography and on Blackboard. To log in, click on the below link, chose the Individual Log-in tab, and use the user name mdoover and the read-only password mdoover. Navigate to View, Folders, and see the folders for AAEvidence-Based Practice and the various EBP folders. These are the results of a search for material on evidence-based research studies for use in this course. Later these will be consolidated in an updated SOC 300 bibliography, with a folder of that name. Please note that the other course bibliographies posted there are not up to date; they were master bibliographies as of an earlier point in the development of the program.)

Refworks Bibliographical Materials for this Course:

Master Syllabus Bibliography:


De Santis, Grace. 1980. “Interviewing as Social Interaction.” *Qualitative Sociology*, 8: 72-


Appendix A: Relationship of Additional Course Objectives to Program Objectives

The Council on Social Work Education’s Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards define several aspects of what are termed foundation curriculum content. Foundation content is the content seen as being delivered in BSW programs and in the first year of an MSW program. Following is the research-related content:

4.6 Research

Qualitative and quantitative research content provides understanding of a scientific, analytic, and ethical approach to building knowledge for practice. The content prepares students to develop, use, and effectively communicate empirically based knowledge, including evidence-based interventions. Research knowledge is used by students to provide high-quality services; to initiate change; to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery; and to evaluate their own practice. (Source: www.cswe.org)

This content can be delivered across a number of different courses (for instance, research content can be delivered in practice courses or in field practicum as well as in courses in a research sequence of courses, but this content must be related to “Content is relevant to the mission, goals, and objectives of the program and to the purposes, values, and ethics of the social work profession.”

First, let’s think about the purposes, values and ethics of the social work profession. The preamble of the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards indicate in the first paragraph, “Social work education combines scientific inquiry with the teaching of professional skills to provide effective and ethical social work services” (My emphasis.) In other words, scientific inquiry is seen as paired with the teaching of skills. This is consistent which one of the purposes of social work itself (p. 4): “To develop and use research, knowledge, and skills that advance social work practice.” In order to achieve such a purpose, social work education engages in means such as the following (p. 5): “Developing knowledge....Preparing social workers to evaluate the processes and effectiveness of practice....”

In order to pursue such purposes, programs adopt goals and objectives. The CMU social work program has adopted all twelve of the Foundation Program Objective of CSWE, as well as adding a couple of our own. Among the twelve, one is the following: “9. Evaluate research studies, apply research findings to practice, and evaluate their own practice interventions.”

For each social work course in our social work major, the faculty have identified which program objectives are relevant to each course. This facilitates course planning and program assessment. Specific course objectives are “mapped” to specific program objectives.

Because this is a sociology course in the social work major, not a social work course, and because there is a new research course planned for the major (SOC 350), this has not been done at this time. It may be a subject of this year’s self-study process. However, as
instructor, it behooves me to conceptualize initially which other program objectives I view as relevant to this course and to the upcoming SOC 350 course, and which kinds of additional course objectives can be introduced which are related to those objectives. Below I will discuss each key program objective that is related to research curriculum content in social work education and outline which course objective is related to that program objective. Please note that course objectives may be related to more than one program objective.

First, nearly all of our courses are seen as relevant to the following objective on critical thinking: “1. Apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice.” One might wonder what research has to do with practice. In fact, social work research is one of the methods of social work practice, along with casework, groupwork, community organization, administration, etc. There is also a research aspect of generalist practice, which is the form of practice taught at the foundation level in social work education. This program objective is supported by SOC 300 course objective 2, “Students will have the background needed to begin to read critically and intelligently research studies in sociology, social work, social psychology, and related field.” and by SOC 350 objective 7, “Demonstrate a critical awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of published research in the lay and professional press.” In addition, there is additional course objective 4: Based upon a literature review-related assignment and upon informational and critical reviews of peer-reviewed research in social work and social science, articulate the relationship between theoretically-guided or empirically-suggested hypotheses and the logic and method of empirical research guiding social work practice and social welfare policy (program objectives 3, 9 and 13). And there is additional objective 6: Understand the basic assumptions, concepts, foundations, and limitations of the traditional scientific approach and challenges to these foundations (program objectives 1 and 9).

Second, there is objective two: “2. Understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards and principles, and practice accordingly.” There are a number of important value and ethical standards related to research. These are not supported by a specific SOC 300 objective, but are by an upcoming SOC 350 objective (#3): “3. Demonstrate knowledge of the ethical and political dimensions of social science research.” This course will compare social work and sociology ethics and values related to research in relationship to this objective and to one additional objective, #3. Identify guidelines which facilitate conducting research consistent with the ethics of the social work profession and the ethics of the discipline of sociology (program objective 2).

Third, there is objective three: “3. Practice without discrimination and with respect, knowledge, and skills related to clients’ age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.” There is no specific SOC 300 or SOC 350 objective, but a chapter of the text and content in this course are related to an additional course objective which is relevant to this program objective. An additional instructor developed objective #1 is related to that objective: Demonstrate knowledge of key concepts related to the ability to plan and carry out culturally competent research that avoids bias and minimizes problems of reliability and validity related to the diverse ways in which research subjects are situated within social and economic
Objective four states: “Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and apply strategies of advocacy and social change that advance social and economic justice.” An important element of advocacy is the use of empirical research evidence. In fact, along with evidence-based practice, increasingly social workers engage in evidence-based social welfare policy advocacy. A related course objective is additional objective #2: Demonstrate knowledge of the history and current status of research related to social work theory and practice, with special attention to the recent evolution of evidence-based social work practice and the use of empirical evidence in advocacy for social welfare and social justice (program objectives 4 and 5.) One further additional course objective is #9: Understand concepts and methods of human needs assessment and service needs assessment research, and its relationship to assessing assets and strengths of individuals and communities (program objectives 4, 9, and 14).

The following program objective is also relevant: “5. Understand and interpret the history of the social work profession and its contemporary structures and issues.” One important type of social work research is historical in nature. Also, much of the best social work research is longitudinal in nature. In other words, research is done, either retrospectively or prospectively, over a period of time that may range from weeks to decades. Over, in other words, historical time. Furthermore, one form of evidence-based practice is policy practice, which is often guided by research on the contemporary structures and issues of social work and social welfare. Finally, one of the most pressing current issues in social work is the relatively recent trend towards stress on evidence based practice. Accordingly, there is additional course objective 2, which as is shown above is also seen as relevant to program objective four: Demonstrate knowledge of the history and current status of research related to social work theory and practice, with special attention to the recent evolution of evidence-based social work practice and the use of empirical evidence in advocacy for social welfare and social justice (program objectives 4 and 5.)

Program objective 6 is: “Apply the knowledge and skills of generalist social work practice with systems of all sizes.” Putting aside for the moment the view that research is an element of generalist practice, something however which is implemented in SWK 470/480 by the evaluation assignment, in order to apply knowledge, it is important to develop skills not only in critiquing research which is relied upon in evidence-based practice but also in acquiring such research and learning skills in how to organize its findings in a way which can inform practice and policy. In fact, a close look at program objective 9 (“9. Evaluate research studies, apply research findings to practice, and evaluate their own practice interventions”) shows that more attention is given to the role of social workers as critical consumers of research than to their role as producers of research. The first two clauses are related to evaluation and use of research, only the third is related to the carrying out research, and the research referred to is evaluation research (as consistent with ethical standards concerning the evaluation of practice). The curriculum content statement regarding research also has this tripartite nature: “The content prepares students to develop, use, and effectively communicate
empirically based knowledge, including evidence-based interventions.” Develop is related to doing research is related to applying research, and it is also stressed that it is important to be able to communicate research result effectively. (That ability to communicate research results effectively is supported by the abstract assignment in this course.) Accordingly, in this course, there is additional course objective 7: Know how to gain access to substantive and methodological research literature related to generalist social work practice and to be able to effectively communicate the findings of this research (program objectives 6, 9 and 10).

Next, there is objective seven: “Use theoretical frameworks supported by empirical evidence to understand individual development and behavior across the life span and the interactions among individuals and between individuals and families, groups, organizations, and communities.” The most important aspect of this objective for this course is the phrase “supported by empirical evidence.” This course, offered in the junior year, will stress enabling students to learn to access and critically utilize relevant empirical evidence as part of one element of generalist practice: social work research. The additional course objective is #4: Based upon a literature review-related assignment and upon informational and critical reviews of peer-reviewed research in social work and social science, articulate the relationship between theoretically-guided or empirically-suggested hypotheses and the logic and method of empirical research guiding social work practice and social welfare policy (program objectives 7, 8 and 9.)

Program objective 8 reads, “Analyze, formulate, and influence social policies.” Increasingly, evidence based practice, including policy practice, is related to policy-oriented research which is used in policy analysis and in formulating and influencing social policies. This program objective is supported in part by three different additional course objectives for this course, #4, #8 and #10: #4. Based upon a literature review-related assignment and upon informational and critical reviews of peer-reviewed research in social work and social science, articulate the relationship between theoretically-guided or empirically-suggested hypotheses and the logic and method of empirical research guiding social work practice and social welfare policy (program objectives 7, 8 and 9); #8. Understand the principles, logic, limitations, and alternative conceptualizations of qualitative and quantitative research designs used in the evaluation of social work practice, social service organizations and social welfare policy, with specific attention to forms of empowerment evaluation research and participatory action research (program objectives 8, 9 and 14); #10. Understand the common logic and differential methods used in social work generalist practice evaluation designs, social service program evaluation designs, and social welfare policy evaluation designs (program objectives 8 and 9.)

There are three program objectives related to the use of communication skills in organizations, the use of consultation and supervision, and functioning within organizational contexts including seeking organizational change. These are program objectives 10-12. Each of these three objectives is met by a set of three additional course objectives, #11, #12 and #13:
#11. Be able to work collaboratively in a group in consultation with the instructor in order to apply basic principles and methods of sampling and be able to understand the relationship of sampling to the generalizability of the results of social research (program objectives 9, 10, 11 and 12). (Quizzes based upon RB; Group research project; research proposal; research report)

#12. Be able to work collaboratively in a group in consultation with the instructor in order to apply basic principles of problem formulation and measurement and be able to demonstrate understanding of key concepts related to measurement and its relationship to the reliability and validity of social research (program objectives 9, 10, 11 and 12). (Quizzes based upon RB; Group research project; research proposal; research report)

#13. Be able to work collaboratively in a group in consultation with the instructor in order to collect qualitative and quantitative data from individual respondents, and to work supportively in a group to enable group members to prepare an individual report of one aspect of the group research project’s results (program objective 9, 10, 11 and 12). (Group research project; research proposal; research report; qualitative data analysis assignment; quantitative data analysis exercises)

Program objective 13 is: “13. Identify social work practice considerations for working with people living in rural areas.” It is supported to some extent by additional course objective #1: Demonstrate knowledge of key concepts related to the ability to plan and carry out culturally competent research that avoids bias and minimizes problems of reliability and validity related to the diverse ways in which research subjects are situated within social and economic structures and within the rural, suburban and urban contexts (program objectives 3, 9 and 13).

Program objective 14 is: “14. Identify client system strengths and solution focused interventions within generalist social work practice.” This is supported by course objectives #8 and #9:

#8. Understand the principles, logic, limitations, and alternative conceptualizations of qualitative and quantitative research designs used in the evaluation of social work practice, social service organizations and social welfare policy, with specific attention to forms of empowerment evaluation research and participatory action research. (Program objectives 8, 9 and 14.) (Quizzes on RB chapters including Chapter 18 on Qualitative Data Analysis as supplemented by questions based upon reading of Berg’s chapter on qualitative research; lecture materials regarding empowerment evaluation research; qualitative data analysis assignment).

#9. Understand concepts and methods of human needs assessment and service needs assessment research, and its relationship to assessing assets and strengths of individuals and communities (Program objectives 4, 9, and 14). (RB Chapters 12-14; Lecture content on needs assessment research.)