SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE AND EVALUATION RESEARCH
SWK 6401
SUMMER 2015

COURSE DESCRIPTION
The need to evaluate our social work interventions in a systematic way has become a necessity. It is essential to know empirically which interventions work with specific client systems. The first imperative is to do no harm. Responsible practitioners need to evaluate the effects of what they do, if only to protect their clients.

The purpose of Social Work Practice and Evaluation Research, a required generalist course, is to impart to students an understanding and appreciation of a scientific, analytic approach to building knowledge for practice and for evaluating service delivery. Students will learn the relationship between single-subject research and practice, the fundamentals of the language of social work research, the elements of research designs, data analysis techniques used in single subject research, skills required to use research literature and how to communicate research concepts.

Research is presented as a logical extension of service delivery, rooted in the ethical imperative not to harm clients and to ensure that the methods employed in service delivery are effective. The course demonstrates the connection between foundation practice and research in that students will learn how to objectively measure the impact of interventions taught in foundation practice.

The course affords students opportunity to develop quantitative and qualitative evaluative skills, especially those that can be used to assess their own practice methods and outcomes. The culminating experience of the course is an evaluative study conceptualized, formulated, designed, executed, and analyzed by the students.

Course lectures, readings, and lab assignments have been designed to assist students toward this end.

COURSE COMPETENCY OUTCOMES:
At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments (CSWE Competency 2.1.3)
2. Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research (CSWE Competency 2.1.6)
3. Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (CSWE Competency 2.1.10 a, b, d)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
At the conclusion of this course, students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Utilize single subject research methods to explore and promote understanding of social work practice.
2. Understand and utilize the language of social work research.
3. Show the relationship between observations, evidence, and inference.

4. Identify and formulate the critical concepts used in problem formulation.

5. Quantify interventions and outcomes.

6. Understand the relationship of single system research designs with classic social work research.

7. Understand and utilize appropriate single subject research designs.

8. Utilize data analysis techniques such as: visual analysis; autocorrelation; regression line, proportional frequency, Statistical Process Control charts (SPC); t-test, and chi-square.

9. Understand and recognize the ethical implications of research.

10. Carry out a literature search using relevant books, journals and such databases as Social Work Research and Abstracts, ProQuest, and PubMed.

11. Apply research concepts by analyzing research studies in social work and related fields.

12. Communicate successfully through written materials, visual presentations and oral presentations the concepts, processes and findings of social work practice research.

**PLAGIARISM**
Students should remember that the School will not condone plagiarism in any form and will sanction acts of plagiarism. A student who presents someone else's work as his or her own work is stealing from the authors or persons who did the original thinking and writing. Plagiarism occurs when a student directly copies another's work without citation; when a student paraphrases major aspects of another's work without citation; and when a student combines the work of different authors into a new statement without reference to those authors. It is also plagiarism to use the ideas and/or work of another student and present them as your own. It is not plagiarism to formulate your own presentation of an idea or concept as a reaction to someone else's work; however, the work to which you are reacting should be discussed and appropriately cited. Any student who can be shown to have plagiarized any part of any assignment in this course will automatically **FAIL** the course and will be referred to the Associate Dean for disciplinary action that may include expulsion.

**HIPAA ALERT**
In line with the new HIPAA regulations concerning protected health information, it is important that you understand that any case information you present from your work, will need to be de-identified. What this means is that any information that would allow another to identify the person needs to be changed or eliminated. This includes obvious things like names and birth dates but may also contain other information that is so unique to the person that it will allow for identification, including diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender. If diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender is directly related to the case presentation it can be included if it will not allow for identification.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**
Given the nature of classroom discussion and the presentation of case materials and at times personal revelation in class, students are reminded that the same commitment to confidentiality with clients extends to classmates. What is shared in class stays in class.
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
Students with disabilities who are enrolled in this course and who will be requesting documented disability-related accommodations are asked to make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services, Rochelle Kohn, Beren Campus, 917-326-4828, rkochn1@yu.edu, Abby Kelsen, Wilf Campus, 646-685-0118, akelsen@yu.edu, during the first week of class. After approval for accommodations is granted, please submit your accommodations letter to Disability Services Office immediately.

E-RES (Electronic Reserve)
Most of the articles mentioned in the curriculum are available on electronic reserve [E-RES]. You can access the full text articles from your home or from a university computer at no charge.

How do I Use E-RES?
1. Go to the library’s online resources page: http://www.yu.edu/libraries/online_resources.asp
2. Click on E-RES. If you are off-campus, at this point you will be prompted for your Off Campus Access Service login and password.
3. Click on “Search E-RES” or on “Course Index,” and search by instructor's name, department, course name, course number, document title, or document author. [all research courses will be listed under Auerbach, the sequence chair]
4. Click on the link to your course.
5. Enter the password given to you by your instructor.
6. Locate and click on the item you wish to view. Titles beginning with "A", "An", or "The" are alphabetized under "A" and "T" respectively.
7. When the article text or book record appears on the screen, you can print, email, or save it to disk.

To view documents that are in pdf format, the computer you are using must have Adobe Acrobat Reader software. You can download it FREE at www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html

BASIC TEXT
All required and recommended texts are on reserve in the library, and required articles as well as suggested readings can be found on E-RESERVE. The E-RES password will be given to students at the beginning of the course.


COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Students are required to attend class and arrive on time. Students who miss 2 or more classes can receive a failing grade. Lateness will also be reflected in the final grade.

B. Assignments

There are 3 required assignments. The assignments follow the content areas and are designed to reinforce the topic areas covered. Papers must conform to APA academic style when including citations and bibliography. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Please refer to your student handbook on school policies regarding this matter.

Assignment 1 – Problem Formulation
Read the required readings and bring in excerpts of process recordings and/or minutes or other documentation during your field work that reflects a client system’s behavior you wanted to change, examples: crying, fund raising dollars, marital arguments, number of hours volunteering per week, truancy, attendance at group meeting, screaming, lateness, etc. Make a list of ten aspects of an overall behavior. Examples of depression: crying, sleeplessness, and lack of appetite, use of sad words, lack of humor, hair uncombed.
Due session 3 - Learning Objectives 3,4 (CSWE Competencies 2.1.6, 2.1.10 a, b, d)

Assignment 2 – Description of Baseline
Describe your baseline data. Be sure to include each of the following in your analysis:
- Present descriptive statistics for your baseline. Be sure to include the sample size, range of values, mean, standard deviation, and median
- Create a line graph and describe the stability of your data based on visual analysis.
- Create a one and two standard deviation band graph. Do there appear to be outliers in your data?
- Using regression, do you detect a trend in your baseline data? Report your findings.
- Is your baseline data autocorrelated? Report your findings.
Due Session 8 - Learning objectives 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12 (CSWE Competencies 2.1.6, 2.1.10 b, d)

Assignment 3 – Comparing baseline to intervention
Describe the methods you used to evaluate your practice: what research design did you use? What indicators did you measure and how did you measure them. Be specific and include copies of scales or other instruments you may have used. Define your intervention. Why did you select this? Use scholarly literature to support your decision. Continue by describing your intervention data. Be sure to include all the elements required for assignment #2. Then, compare your baseline data to your intervention data. Based on whether data trends or has issues of autocorrelation in either phase, choose an appropriate statistical test to conduct your analysis. Be sure to explain the rationale for conducting this test along with your findings.

For the final report weave together into a final document the results of the previous assignments and the data analyses conducted by you in the class labs using SSDforR.
Due Session 14 - Learning objectives 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. (CSWE Competencies 2.1.3, 2.1.6, 2.1.10 b, d) – Measured practice behaviors – 2.1.3 PB1, 2.1.3 PB2, 2.1.6 PB1, 2.1.6 PB2, 2.1.10(d)
FOR ASSIGNMENT 3, INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- Abstract
- Purpose
- Methodology
- Results (descriptive and inferential statistics)
- Discussions of findings
- Implications for Practice
- Limitations of the study and recommendations for further research
- References

C. Grading

20% Class Participation
15% each Assignments 1 & 2
50% Assignment #3

COURSE OUTLINE

SESSION 1 - INTEGRATING EVALUATION AND PRACTICE

Learning Objective 1, 11

- What are the basic characteristics of single-system designs
- Connections of evaluation and practice. Comparison of classic research and single system design research

Required Readings


Suggested Readings


**SESSION 2 - RESEARCH ETHICS**

Learning Objective: 9

- Basic ethical principals of research
- Protecting the rights of research participants
- Our obligation to evaluate our practice

**Required Readings:**
Bloom, Fischer, & Orme. (Chapter 25)


**SESSIONS 3-6 - CONCEPTUALIZING AND MEASURING TARGET AND OBJECTIVES/GOALS**

Learning Objectives: 2, 3, 4

- Defining practice concepts so they can be used to organize, classify, sort, and measure the observables in practice.
- Basics of conceptualizing and measurement
- Can everything be measured
- Key characteristics of all measures
- Levels of measurement
- Introduction from general problems to specific targets of interventions
- Guidelines from moving from vague to specific

**Required Readings:**

Bloom, Fischer & Orme. Chapter 2, Chapter 3, & Chapter 4.

**Suggested Readings:**

SESSION 7 – Using Online databases

Learning Objectives: 2, 3, 4, & 10.

- Developing a Measurement Plan
- Review of the alternative measurement plans:
- Behavioral observations obtrusive and nonobstrusive
- Individualized rating scales
- Standardized rating scales
- Standardized questionnaires
- Logs
- Selecting a measure.

Required Readings:
Bloom, Fischer & Orme. Chapter 5, Chapter 6, Chapter 7, Chapter 8, Chapter 9, Chapter 10.

Suggested Readings:


SESSION 8 - CONCEPTUALIZING AND OPERATIONALIZING THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLE(S)

READINGS: Practice texts; articles obtained during review of the literature

Learning Objectives: 2, 3, 4, 5, & 10

- Independent variable
- Treatment method(s) used

SESSION 9 - SINGLE SYSTEM DESIGNS - CAUSAL RELATIONSHIPS IN PRACTICE

Learning Objective: 7

Required Readings:


Suggested Readings:


Bloom, Fischer, & Orme. Chapters 16-17.

**SESSION 10 - VISUAL DATA ANALYSIS**

Learning Objective: 8

**Required Readings:**


**SESSION 11 - DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

Learning Objective: 8

**Required Readings:**


**SESSIONS 12-13 - TESTS OF STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR SINGLE-SYSTEM DESIGN**

Learning Objective 8

**Required Readings:**

Bloom, Fischer, & Orme. Chapter 22.

**Suggested Readings:**


### SESSION 14 - COMMUNICATION OF RESEARCH CONCEPTS, AND FINDINGS

**Learning Objectives 7, 12**

**Required Readings:**


**Suggested Reading:**


**REFERENCES**


