



**TWU-UNT Joint MSW Program**  
**Fall 2020**  
**SOWK 5403**  
**Social Work Research Methods**



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### Course Information

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TIME: Wednesdays 6:00 PM - 8:50 PM  
ROOM: Remote Synchronous  
PREREQUISITES: NONE

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Huei-Wern Shen  
OFFICE: Chilton Hall 390B  
OFFICE HOURS: By Appointment  
E-MAIL: hwshen@unt.edu

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### Course Description

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This course covers foundational concepts, principles, and methods of scientific inquiry, focusing on quantitative and qualitative designs and analysis and the use of existing research in practice and policy. Examines evidence-based practice as a process of inquiry. Explores cultural and ethical considerations and the role of research in advocating for under-served and special populations.

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### Course Objectives

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#### Core Competency

#### COURSE OBJECTIVES

**By the end of this course students will be able to:**

Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice  
[EPAS C4]\*

1. Use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research.
2. Apply critical thinking to engage in the analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings.
3. Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

[EPAS C7]\*

4. Collect and organize data and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies.
5. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies.
6. Select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

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\* Council on Social Work Education Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) Social Work Core Competencies

### Course format & Role of Students

Course content will be covered through readings, quizzes, exercises/assignments, lectures and discussions. Handouts will be provided in class where appropriate.

Students are expected to attend class and be on time, **complete the readings, come to class prepared and complete all assignments on time.** Students are encouraged to ask questions, share experiences and participate actively in class discussions. Any problems with attendance, meeting deadlines or completing assignments should be discussed promptly with the instructor.

### JMSW Program Course Related Policies

#### Attendance and Late Work Policy

Attendance and professionalism are vital in social work education. You are expected to attend all classes, seminar meetings, faculty appointments and other obligations, and to come to class on time. Many courses use small group collaboration and roleplaying methods that require your presence and participation **during class** for optimal learning. Professors rely on your timely presence to effectively implement these experiential methods and enhance the learning environment for everyone.

If you must miss a class, **Please notify the professor in advance that you will be absent.** It is your responsibility to collect notes from a classmate and/or handouts/powerpoints from Canvas. Absences may be excused based on:

- 1) a major event/illness that is life disrupting and clearly outside of your control, or
- 2) an illness that renders you incapable of participating or that is infectious and thus risks causing harm to your fellow students and professor if you participate.

The professor reserves the right to deduct points from your final point total for multiple (more than one) absences, late arrival, and/or leaving early. **It is the policy of the Joint Social Work Program that upon obtaining three misses from any course**

**(excused or unexcused) you will earn a failing grade for the semester.** You will not be able to advance in your field practicum or other parts of the JMSW Program until you retake the course due to minimum grade and GPA requirements.

In fairness to students who do complete assignments on time, those who turn papers in late will have significant points deducted unless a legitimate reason for the tardiness has been discussed with the instructor **prior** to the due date.

**Late assignment policy:** Assignments are due at the time and date, and in the manner, specified in the assignment or project. Unless otherwise noted, an assignment or paper is **always due at the start of the class** (which is **18:00**). An assignment is considered one day late if it is submitted at 18:00:01. If an assignment or project is one (1) class-day late, the grade value will decrease one letter grade from the original value (from B+ to B); if two (2) class-days late, two letter grades will be decreased from original value (B+ to B-); if three (3) class-days late, three letter grades will be decreased from original value (B+ to C+); if more than (3) class-days late, your paper will not be graded (a letter grade F will be granted). In extenuating circumstances students may be given an extension. Foreseeable problems should be discussed with the instructor BEFORE the assignment due date, not after. All course assignments must be completed before a grade is issued.

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic dishonesty is a serious offense that may lead to probation, suspension, or expulsion. One form of academic dishonesty is plagiarism--the use of an author's ideas, statements, or approaches without crediting the source. Academic dishonesty also includes such acts as cheating by copying information from another student's examination, take-home test, or laboratory manual.

Specific details and descriptions of TWU's Policies on Academic Dishonesty Procedures and students' right to appeal are available at <https://servicecenter.twu.edu/TDClient/KB/ArticleDet?ID=24426>

Specific details and description of UNT's Policy on Student Standards of Academic Integrity (18.1.16) and students' right to appeal are available at <https://policy.unt.edu/policydesc/student-standards-academic-integrity-18-1-16>.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act Accommodation Policy**

In accordance with university policies and state and federal regulations, TWU & UNT are committed to full academic access for all qualified students, including those with disabilities. To this end, all academic units are willing to make reasonable and appropriate adjustments to the classroom environment and the teaching, testing, or learning methodologies in order to facilitate equality of educational access for persons with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the TWU Disability Services for Students (DSS) if their home base is TWU or the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) if their home base is UNT to verify their eligibility. If a

disability is verified, DSS or ODA will provide the student with an accommodation letter to be hand delivered to the instructor to begin a private discussion regarding the student's specific needs in the course.

### Campus Carry & Concealed Handguns

In accordance with state law and TWU and UNT policies, students who are licensed may carry a concealed handgun on campus premises except in locations and at any function, event, and program prohibited by law or by this policy. Students may learn more about TWU's concealed handgun policy at <https://servicecenter.twu.edu/TDCClient/KB/ArticleDet?ID=34877> and UNT's concealed handgun policy at <https://campuscarry.unt.edu>.

### Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, & Assault

TWU & UNT are committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. Both TWU & UNT have staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

### Textbooks

#### *Required Text*

Rubin, A. & Babbie, E. (2015). *Essential Research Methods for Social Work* (4<sup>th</sup> Edition). Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

#### *Optional Text*

American Psychological Association (2019). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

### Attendance Policies

Attendance and participation are the responsibility of each student and is expected. Excessive absences will result in a failing grade for the course. Arriving late to class disrupts lectures, discussions and small group work, and so do whispered conversations, cell phones and internet browsing or e-mail checking during class.

**Disrespectful behaviors such as being late to class regularly, creating distractions with conversations with classmates, texting/e-chatting, emailing, or electronic devices (e.g. phone, laptop, tablet) sounds frequently, the instructor will reduce your final grade by up to 5 percentage points.**

## Assignments

- 1. Plagiarism Prevention Assignment (5%, due 9/2 at 18:00) [C4]:** Short Plagiarism Tutorial, Reflection and Prevention Assignment:
  - Complete reviewing the UNT tutorial on plagiarism [[UNT Libraries Plagiarism Guide](#)] as well as resources and other information provided on this web page.
  - Please write a one-page paper to briefly discuss **your thoughts about plagiarism AND your plan to prevent plagiarism in the future** using APA style (e.g. 1-inch margin, double spaced...etc) [for more information, please refer to [APA 7.0 Student Sample Paper](#)]
- 2. IRB On-line Training (15%, due 9/9) [C4; C7]:** A “Protecting Human Research Participants” training is required for this course. This course is offered through both TWU and UNT in the form of a web based training. This training provides information on research ethics and protecting human research participants. This training takes approximately 2-3 hours to complete. This training can be accessed through [UNT Human Subjects Education website](#). Please find the CITI Training on the website and follow [the instructions](#) to complete the [Social & Behavioral Research](#) in the [CITI Program](#). Remember you must print out both
  - a) the Review Completed Quizzes Screen and
  - b) the Training Certificate.
- 3. Quizzes (30%) [C4]:** Two quizzes will be given during the first half of the semester. Time to complete quizzes will be limited to 30 minutes from 18:00 to 18:30. These quizzes will cover material presented in class the week(s) prior **as well as your readings**.

**Quiz 1 (15%, 9/16, 18:00-18:40).** Quiz 1 will cover all course material in week 1, week 2, & week 3.

**Quiz 2 (15%, 9/30, 18:00-18:40).** Quiz 2 will cover all course material in week 4 & week 5.
- 4. Research Proposal (45%) [C4; C7]**

**Step 1. Detailed Outline (10%, due 11/4 at 18:00).** Detailed full-sentence outline stating the areas below is expected: Problem Statement and Study Objective, Literature Review, Research Questions (and Hypotheses if available), Design, Subjects for the Study, Data Collections Methods, Measurement, Limitations, Ethical Issues.

**Step 2. Poster Presentation (15%, due 11/18 at 18:00).** Each group will present a summary of their research proposal to the class. Each presentation will be in a poster format, covering the problem statement, research

questions/hypotheses, proposed method, and proposed analyses. The use of PowerPoint to display your poster is recommended but making the poster using other software is acceptable too. Grading will be based on how clearly you can articulate the research problem and your intent to study it and the appropriateness of your analysis.

**Step 3. Final Written Proposal (20%, due 12/2 at 21:00).** Over the course of the semester you and your teammate will complete a research proposal. This assignment is meant to challenge you to integrate and apply a majority of the information covered in this class. A well-written research proposal includes many of the same components as a scholarly research paper. This assignment will also help you develop grant-writing skills.

5. **Class Participation (5%).** Class participation is essential in this master's level class. Class participation is composed of three evaluative dimensions: quantity (including class attendance), quality, and accountability. Quantitatively, it is not acceptable if students do not contribute at all. It is also not desired that students try to ask or answer every question, give all the examples, provide inordinate support to classmates, nor be a class discussion monopolizer. It is desirable that all students be given the opportunity to participate by asking questions, offering examples when called for, and supply evidence of personal awareness of concepts germane to class discussion. Students are expected to be adult learners; listening actively and being respectful in comments and action.

### **Grading Criteria for Assignments**

Effective practice and generalist social work requires good writing skills to communicate information accurately and concisely to others. For this reason, writing assignments will be evaluated both for the content presented and for the clarity of that presentation. The grade for a paper will be based on the following criteria:

1. Presentation and Appearance
  - Neatness
  - Correct grammar
  - Spelling
  - Punctuation
  - Correct usage of APA style: The American Psychological Association's style manual should be followed for all written assignments when applicable.
  - All papers should be typed, double-spaced and paginated.
2. Organization
  - Structure and format of the paper
  - Logical sequencing and continuity of ideas
  - Clarity of expression
  - Conciseness

<b>Final score</b>	<b>Final grade</b>
90-100	A
80-89.9	B
70-79.9	C
60-69.9	D
59.9 and Below	F

### **Course Reading Schedule**

**8/26**

**Week 1**

**Introduction and Overview**

Readings

Rubin & Babbie: Chapters 1, 2, 3

**9/2 (Plagiarism Assignment due)**

**Week 2**

**Overview of the Research Process: Problem Formulation, Research Questions & Hypothesizing, Conceptualization, Operationalizing**

Readings

Rubin & Babbie: Chapters 4, 7

**9/9 (IRB Training due)**

**Week 3**

**Measurement & Measurement Instruments**

Readings

Rubin & Babbie: Chapters 8, 9

**9/16 (Quiz 1, 18:00 - 18:40)**

**Week 4**

**Surveys & Sampling**

Readings

Rubin & Babbie: Chapters 10, 11

**9/23**

**Week 5**

**Research Design-Group Design & Single Case Design**

Readings

Rubin & Babbie: Chapter 12, 13

**9/30 (Quiz 2, 18:00-18:40)**

**Week 6**                      **Literature Review: Asking good questions**  
Readings                      Rubin & Babbie: Chapter 7

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**10/7 (Library instruction session by Ms. Jennifer Rowe)**

**Week 7**                      **Literature Review: Searching Literature**  
**[Group] Developing a research question for the Proposal**  
Readings                      Rubin & Babbie: Appendix A

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**10/14 (non-graded Research Question due on 10/13 by 11:59PM)**

**Week 8**                      **[Group] Meet with professor for Research Proposal**  
(sign up in the previous class)

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**10/21**

**Week 9**                      **Literature Review: Organizing & Synthesizing Literature**  
**[Group] Working on your Proposal draft**  
Readings                      Rubin & Babbie: Appendix B, Appendix C

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**10/28**

**Week 10**                      **[Group] Meet with professor for Research Proposal**  
(sign up in the previous class)

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**11/4 (Step 1 Proposal Due)**

**Week 11**                      **Quantitative Methods and Implications**  
Readings                      Rubin & Babbie: Chapters 17 & 18

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**11/11**

**Week 12**                      **Creating Presentations and Posters**

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**11/18 (Step 2 Proposal Due)**

**Week 13                      Poster Presentations (participation required)**

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**11/25**

**Week 14                      Happy Thanksgiving!**

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**12/2 (Step 3 Proposal Due)**

**Week 15                      Final Research Proposal Due at 21:00**

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### **Other Online Resources**

#### **Writing Support**

- [TWU Write Site](#)
- [UNT Writing Center](#)
- [U.S. Government - Literacy and Plain Language](#)

#### **Purdue Online Writing Lab**

- [APA 7th Edition General Format](#)
- [Avoiding Plagiarism](#)

#### **More APA Supports**

- [APA Style Guidelines](#)

#### **Netiquette or network etiquette**

- [UNR Netiquette](#)
- [Cal State Netiquette Examples](#)