

**COURSE TITLE/SECTION:** SOCW 8311 (16366) Research Methods I: Introduction to Research on Evidence-Based Social Work

**FALL, 2020**

**TIME:** Tuesdays 8:30 – 11:30 AM

**FACULTY:** Allen Rubin, Ph.D.

**OFFICE HOURS:** Online by appointment.

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### I. **Course**

#### **A. Catalog Description**

Credit (3.0). Pre-requisite: Doctoral standing or permission from the instructor. This course examines the range of designs and methods involved in formulating and conducting social research, with an emphasis on the development of knowledge essential for utilizing and building the empirical knowledge base for evidence-based social work.

#### **B. Purpose**

The purpose of this course is to examine the fundamentals of formulating and conducting independent research related to building empirical knowledge for social work, and review the historical background, process, and epistemological controversies regarding evidence-based social work. The course will help prepare students to identify an area of evidence-based social work that might serve as a focus for assignments in other courses and for the dissertation.

### II. **Course Objectives**

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

1. describe the historical background, process, and epistemological controversies regarding evidence-based social work;
2. explain the problem formulation phase in social work research, including selecting a topic pertinent to evidence-based social work, developing a research question, and explicating and operationally defining the conceptual elements of the research question;
3. identify how to assess and minimize measurement error in quantitative and qualitative inquiry
4. evaluate the strengths and limitations of a variety of types of quantitative and qualitative research designs;
5. describe the strengths and limitations of alternative sampling and survey methods;

6. explain the meaning of statistical significance, type 1 and type 2 errors, and effect size in evidence-based social work research;
7. critically appraise research studies pertaining to a social work research problem of interest.

### III. Course Content

This course will include the following topical (content) areas:

1. The scientific method.
2. Evidence-based social work.
3. Epistemological paradigms.
4. Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research designs.
5. Formulating and conceptualizing research questions and designs.
6. Measurement concepts and constructing measurement instruments.
7. Designs for evaluating program and practice effectiveness.
8. Sampling issues and techniques in survey research.
9. Analyzing existing data and secondary analysis.
10. Key concepts in interpreting inferential statistical results of outcome studies.

### IV. Course Structure

The course will be conducted online via ZOOM .

Meeting ID number: **970 8998 7550**

The instructor reserves the right to change the course schedule or due dates as necessary during the semester

### V. Textbooks

#### Required:

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (2017). *Research Methods for Social Work (9<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. Belmont, CA: CENGAGE Learning.

#### Recommended:

Rubin, A. (2013). *Statistics for evidence-based practice and evaluation*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Belmont, CA: Cengage.

### VI. Course Requirements

#### **A. Reading Assignments:**

Reading assignments will be primarily from the Rubin & Babbie (2017) text. Additional required readings will be will be posted on Blackboard.

**B. Exams (90 points):** There will be two essay exams covering the reading material and course content. Each exam is worth 50 points and will test students' ability to recall, understand, apply, analyze and synthesize

course content.

## VII. Evaluation and Grading

The following standard grading scale has been adopted for all courses taught in the college.

A =	96-100% of the points	C+ =	76-79.9%
A- =	92-95.9%	C =	72-75.9%
B+ =	88-91.9%	C- =	68-71.9%
B =	84-87.9%	D =	64-67.9%
B- =	80-83.9%	F =	Below 64%

## VIII. Policy on grades of I (Incomplete):

The grade of "I" (Incomplete) is a conditional and temporary grade given when students are either **(a)** passing a course or **(b)** still have a reasonable chance of passing in the judgment of the instructor but, for non-academic reasons beyond their control have not completed a relatively small part of all requirements.

Students are responsible for informing the instructor immediately of the reasons for not submitting an assignment on time or not taking an examination. Students must contact the instructor of the course in which they receive an "I" grade to make arrangements to complete the course requirements. Students should be instructed not to re-register for the same course in a following semester in order to complete the incomplete requirements.

The grade of "I" must be changed by fulfillment of course requirements within one year of the date awarded or it will be changed automatically to an "F" (or to a "U" [Unsatisfactory] in S/U graded courses). The instructor may require a time period of less than one year to fulfill course requirements, and the grade may be changed by the instructor at any time to reflect work completed in the course. The grade of "I" may not be changed to a grade of W.

## IX. Policy on academic dishonesty and plagiarism

Please click the link below for the full explanation of the Academic Honesty policy and procedure

Policy: <http://www.uh.edu/provost/policies/honesty/documents-honesty/academic-honesty-policy.pdf>

Definitions:

"Academic dishonesty" means employing a method or technique or engaging in conduct in an academic endeavor that contravenes the standards of ethical integrity expected at the University of Houston or by a course instructor to fulfill any and all academic requirements. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to, the following:

### *Plagiarism*

- i. Representing as one's own work the work of another without acknowledging the source (plagiarism). Plagiarism includes copying verbatim text from the literature, whether printed or electronic, in all assignments including field.

### *Cheating and Unauthorized Group Work*

- ii. Openly cheating in an examination, as copying from another's paper; c. Being able to view during an examination, quiz or any in-class assignment an electronic device that allows communication with another person, access to unauthorized material, access to the internet, or the ability to capture an image, unless expressly permitted by the instructor;

- d. Using and/or possessing “crib notes,” as unauthorized use of notes or the like to aid in answering questions during an examination;
- e. Giving or receiving unauthorized aid during an examination, such as trading examinations, whispering answers, and passing notes, and using electronic devices to transmit or receive information;
- f. Securing another to take a test in the student’s place. Both the student taking the test for another and the student registered in the course are at fault;

*Fabrication, Falsification, and Misrepresentation*

- g. Changing answers or grades on a test that has been returned to a student in an attempt to claim instructor error;
- h. Using another’s laboratory results as one’s own, whether with or without the permission of the owner;
- i. Falsifying results in laboratory experiments;
- j. Misrepresenting academic records or achievements as they pertain to course prerequisites or corequisites for the purpose of enrolling or remaining in a course for which one is not eligible;
- k. Representing oneself as a person who has earned a degree without having earned that particular degree

*Stealing and Abuse of Academic Materials*

- l. Stealing, as theft of tests or grade books, from faculty offices or elsewhere, or knowingly using stolen tests or materials in satisfaction of exams, papers, or other assignments; this includes the removal of items posted for use by the students;
- m. Mutilating or stealing library materials; misshelving materials with the intent to reduce accessibility to other students;

*Complicity in Academic Dishonesty*

- n. Failing to report to the instructor or departmental hearing officer an incident which the student believes to be a violation of the academic honesty policy;

*Academic Misconduct*

- o. Any other conduct which a reasonable person in the same or similar circumstances would recognize as dishonest or improper in an academic setting.

*Process:*

Students shall have the responsibility of reporting incidents of alleged academic dishonesty to the instructor of record involved or to the appropriate authority if the alleged act is not associated with a specific class within 5 class days of the incident. Faculty or instructor of record shall have the responsibility of reporting incidents of alleged academic dishonesty through their college hearing officer within 5 class days of the incident. The faculty should include the recommended sanction in the report. The college hearing officer will notify the student of the report and recommended sanction. The student can accept the sanction and waive a hearing or request a college hearing. A hearing shall be set within 10 days and would be consist of two faculty and three students chosen by the hearing officer.

## **X. Title IX Statement**

Please review the information on the UHS sexual misconduct prevention and awareness website: <http://uhsystem.edu/salutations/title-ix-contacts/>. The Graduate College of Social Work values your well-being and safety. It is my goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions, in your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. However, in accordance with the UHS Sexual Misconduct Policy, I am a “responsible employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and must report incidents of sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, non-consensual

sexual contact, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual intimidation, intimate partner violence, or stalking), while affiliated with the University of Houston, about which I become aware of to the Title IX office. For more information about receiving support services please contact CAPS. Please know that there are places on campus where you can make a report in confidence.

## XI. Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

Date	TOPIC AND READINGS
Weeks 1-2 (8/25-9/1)	<p><b>Introductions; Overview of course; the scientific method, evidence-based social work.</b></p> <p><b>Readings Due for This Class:</b> Rubin &amp; Babbie, Chapters 1 &amp; 2</p> <p><b>Supplemental:</b> Sommers-Flanagan, J. (2015) Evidence-Based Relationship Practice: Enhancing Counselor Competence. <i>Journal of Mental Health Counseling</i>; April 2015, 37, 95-108.</p> <p>Rubin, A. &amp; Parrish, D. (2007). "Challenges to the Future of Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work Education." <i>Journal of Social Work Education</i>, 43, 3, 405-428.</p>
Week 3 (9/8)	<p><b>Epistemological paradigms (philosophy of science), factors influencing the research process, comparison of quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods research designs.</b></p> <p><b>Readings Due for This Class:</b> Rubin &amp; Babbie, Chapters 3 &amp; 4 "Two qualitative studies" on Blackboard</p> <p><b>Supplemental:</b> Brown, Brene. Shame Resilience Theory. <i>Families in Society</i>, 87, 43-52.</p>
Week 4 (9/15)	<p><b>Ethical and Culturally Competent Research</b></p> <p><b>Readings Due For This Class:</b> Rubin &amp; Babbie, Chapters 5 &amp; 6</p>
Week 5 (9/22)	<p><b>Problem formulation and conceptualization</b></p> <p>Formulating Research questions and hypotheses, operational definitions</p> <p><b>Readings Due For This Class:</b> Rubin &amp; Babbie, Chapters 7 &amp; 8</p>
Week 6 (9/29)	<p><b>Measurement</b></p> <p><b>Readings Due For This Class:</b> Rubin &amp; Babbie, Chapter 9 and pages 126 – 135</p> <p><b>Supplemental:</b> Young, D. et al. Validity and Reliability of Internalized Stigma of Mental Illness (Cantonese). <i>Research on Social Work Practice</i>. Published online before print. doi:10.1177/1049731515576209</p> <p>Greenwald, R. &amp; Rubin, A. (1999). Assessment of posttraumatic symptoms in children: Development and preliminary validation of parent and child scales. <i>Research on Social Work Practice</i>, 9, 61-75</p>

Week 7 (10/6)	<b>EXAM #1</b>
Weeks 8-9 (10/13-10/20)	<b>Causality; Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs</b> <b>Readings Due for This Class:</b> Rubin & Babbie, Chapters 11 & 12
Week 10 (10/27)	<b>Single-Case Designs</b> <b>Readings Due For This Class:</b> Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 13
Week 11 (11/3)	<b>Sampling, Surveys and Secondary Analysis</b> <b>Readings Due For This Class:</b> Rubin & Babbie, Chapters 15, 16 & pages 405 – 416 <b>Supplemental:</b> Rubin, A. & Parrish, D. (2007). "Views of Evidence-Based Practice Among Faculty in MSW Programs: A National Survey." <i>Research On Social Work Practice</i> , 17, 1, 110-122. Rubin, A. et al.(1998). Outdated Practitioner Views about family culpability and severe mental disorders. <i>Social Work</i> , 43, 412-422.
Week 12 (11/10)	<b>Questionnaire and Scale Construction</b> <b>Readings Due For this Assignment:</b> Rubin & Babbie, Chapter 10 <b>Supplemental:</b> Rubin, A. & Parrish, D. (2010). Development and Validation of the Evidence-Based Practice process Assessment Scale: Preliminary Findings <i>Research On Social Work Practice</i> , 20, 629-640. Weiss, Rubin, & Graeser, N. (2019). Transitioning to Civilian Life (TCLS): Development, Reliability, and Validity. <i>Military Behavioral Health</i> , DOI: <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/21635781.2018.1540317">10.1080/21635781.2018.1540317</a>

<p>Week 13 (11/17)</p>	<p><b>Program Evaluation</b></p> <p><b>Feedback on Assignment #1</b></p> <p><b>Readings Due For this Class:</b> Rubin &amp; Babbie, Chapter 14</p> <p><b>Supplemental:</b> Rubin, A. (1997) The Family Preservation Evaluation from Hell: Implications for Program Evaluation Fidelity, <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i>, 19,1/2, 1997, 77-79.</p>
<p>Week 14-15 (11/24-12/1)</p>	<p><b>Key inferential statistics in outcome studies -- from a conceptual standpoint: the meaning and limitations of statistical significance; relationship magnitude and effect size, and clinical/substantive significance.</b></p> <p><b>Readings Due For This Class:</b> Rubin &amp; Babbie, Chapter 22</p> <p><b>Supplemental:</b> Rubin, A., Washburn, M., &amp; Schieszle, C. (2016). Within-group effect size benchmarks for trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy with children and adolescents. <i>Research on Social Work Practice</i>, 1049731515620016. Rubin, A., (2014). An alternative paradigm for social workers seeking to do intervention research. <i>Social Work Research</i>, 38, 69-71.</p>
<p>Week 16 (12/8)</p>	<p><b>Exam 2</b></p>



## **XII. Americans with Disabilities Statement**

The University of Houston System complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for students with a disability. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, each University within the System strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an academic adjustments/auxiliary aid, please contact the UH Center for Disabilities at 713-743-5400.

## **XIII. Weather and Other Class Cancellations**

Students are encouraged to visit [uh.edu/emergency](http://uh.edu/emergency) for updates on campus closures. If a class needs to be cancelled because of instructor inability to appear in class, the instructor will email all students through the Blackboard email system. He also will notify the Dean's office and ask them to take the needed action to notify students.

## **XIV. Counseling and Psychological Services**

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to college, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS ([www.uh.edu/caps](http://www.uh.edu/caps)) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. Also, there is no appointment necessary for the "Let's Talk" program, which is a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus.

[http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets\\_talk.html](http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html).

## **XV. Bibliography**

Lists current references for students who are interested in pursuing additional information on course content.

- Bloom, M., Fischer, J., & Orme, J.G. (2001). *Evaluating practice: Guidelines for the accountable professional* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Allen & Bacon.
- Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. (2007). *Basics of Qualitative Research* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano, V. L. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage
- Galvan, J. (1999). *Writing literature reviews: A guide for students of the social and behavioral sciences*. Los Angeles, CA : Pyczak.
- Girden, E. R. (2001). *Evaluating research articles* ( 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rubin, A. (2013). *Statistics for evidence-based practice and evaluation*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Belmont, CA: Cengage.
- Rubin, A. & Bellamy, J. (2012). *Practitioner's guide to using research for evidence-based practice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Hobokin, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Shadish, W.R., Cook, T.D., & Campbell, D.T. (2001). *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference*. Wadsworth, CENGAGE Learning.