COURSE TITLE: Research and Evaluation Methods I

COURSE NUMBER: 39-607-63

MEETING TIME/PLACE: Monday, 7:30 – 10:15 p.m., Room TBA

COURSE INSTRUCTOR: Philinda Mindler, MSW, Adjunct Professor

OFFICE PHONE/HOURS: Telephone: cell 302-373-5126
Email: philindamindler@yahoo.com

Office Hours- By appt Monday 7:15 – 7:30 pm and by telephone and email

The instructor is available to consult with students via telephone and email. Students who need uninterrupted time are encouraged to schedule meetings in person, via telephone or e-mail ahead of time. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with the instructor to review their academic progress in this class, throughout the semester, but especially around midterm. It is the student’s responsibility to know when extra help is needed and to seek such help from the instructor. It is also each student’s responsibility to seek clarification on assignments before they are due and not after they have been graded.
This course will address the following two Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards Core Competencies and identified Practice Behaviors:

1. Educational Policy 2.1.3—Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.

Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information. Social workers distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom;

**Practice Behaviors**

- analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation; and
- demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues.

2. Educational Policy 2.1.6—Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.

Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers

**Practice Behaviors**

- use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry and
- use research evidence to inform practice.
COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Methods of Research in Social Work Practice is the first of a two (2) course sequential offering in the research foundation curriculum. It is designed to introduce students to the scientific method of inquiry within the context of advanced generalist practice and research problems, germane to social work. Issues relating to research, theory, goals and methodological procedures are examined. Students are introduced to the various ways in which these underpinnings are designed to aid in the development of the appropriate language, knowledge and skills for the application of research methods associated with advanced generalist social work practice. Substantive topics include: framing hypotheses and delineating the components of the hypotheses; stages involved in conducting social scientific research projects; the logic of such procedures; values and ethics; conceptualization and operationalization; research design; and sampling. Ethnology and ecological fallacies provide the conceptual frame of reference for issues relating to cultural diversity, working with at-risk populations, and achieving social justice.

COURSE CREDITS: Three (3) semester hours

ATTENDANCE POLICY:
Since regular class attendance is a vital part of the educational process, all students are expected to attend all classes. Students who are absent from classes while participating in official University related activities or on University related travel must be excused by the activity’s faculty/staff advisor. In all other cases, only the instructor can approve a student’s request to be absent from class. A student’s final grade in a course will not be reduced solely because the student has incurred absences. (This policy is consistent with University Policy; see Student Handbook, 2001, p.36).

POLICY ON HONESTY:
“Integrity must be practiced in all endeavors and relationships. All acts of dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on tests and examinations, plagiarism, alteration or misuse of college documents, records or identification cards, forgery, misrepresentation, unauthorized use of another’s property, lying, theft, or receiving stolen goods will be considered as serious misconduct. Any student violating this regulation is subject to dismissal from the University”. (Student Handbook, 2001; p.107.)

NON-DISCRIMINATION OF HANDICAPPED STUDENTS POLICY:
Non-discrimination. “Delaware State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability in the administration of any of its educational programs and activities or with respect to admission and employment”. (Student Handbook 2001, p.7)
Non-discrimination of students with disabilities. Delaware State University is committed to a non-discrimination of handicapped persons, as specified in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American Disabilities Act of 1990. To qualify for special services, the student must contact Ms. Laura Kurtz, Coordinator of Disabilities Services, William Jason Library, Room 200, (phone 857-6388). Every student who qualifies under the definition of the Acts and who wishes special accommodations in this course needs have written documentation as to the
type of accommodation(s) needed and needs either to notify the instructor (preferably at the beginning of the course) or to request that the Coordinator of Disabilities Services contact the instructor. (See Student Handbook 2001, p. 51)

**TEACHING METHODS:** the primary teaching methods include lecture, group assignments and discussion, laboratory exercises, Internet exploration and Blackboard

**COURSE EVALUATION:**

- Annotated Bibliography  10%
- Mid-term examination  20%
- Proposal Introduction  10%
- Literature Review & Theoretical Framework  10%
- Methodology  15%
- Final Paper  25%
- Class Participation/homework assignments  10%

**GRADING SCALE:**

- 90 – 100 = A
- 80 – 89 = B
- 70 – 79 = C
- 60 – 69 = D
- 0 – 59 = F

**COURSE TEXTBOOK:**

Readings: Students are expected to complete the supplemental readings as indicated in the “course outline”. The supplemental readings have been placed on reserve and can be checked out at the circulation desk in the Jason Library. For the student’s convenience overnight only lending privileges will be extended.

**Required texts & software:**


Supplemental Readings:


Additional Reference Sources:


**MAKE-UP FOR TESTS AND ASSIGNMENT POLICY:**

Each student is expected to take tests and submit written assignments on the scheduled date and time that such work is due. A student who is not able to take a test as scheduled, must notify the instructor in advance and then must schedule and take a make-up test within three (3) days. A student who does not follow this procedure will receive a grade of 0 on the test. Quizzes (announced or unannounced) may not be made up. For papers submitted late, the policy will be described in the assignment. If the absence is excused by the activity’s faculty/staff advisor for the student’s participation in official University related activities, all work (tests, quizzes, due assignments, etc.) may be made up. The Instructor in the case of inclement weather, recognized religious holidays, and extenuating circumstances makes exceptions to this make-up policy. Ten (10) points will be automatically deducted from examination scores for examinations taken after the scheduled exam. **MAKE-UP TESTS ARE NOT AUTOMATICALLY GIVEN.**

**POLICY ON INCOMPLETE GRADES:**

Each student is expected to complete all course requirements and stay on track with the course regardless of his or her presence in class.

According to University policy, a grade of “I” (Incomplete) will be given when the course work is incomplete due to reasons clearly beyond the control of the student. The unfinished work must be completed by the end of the first six (6) weeks of the student’s next semester in attendance or the “I” grade is changed to “F”. (University Policy; see Student Handbook, 2001, p.35).
In this course, criteria for an “I” (Incomplete grade) are:

1. At least 80% of the course work has been completed successfully so that a passing grade can be earned;
2. The student has made an arrangement with the instructor prior to the time that final grades are assigned; and
3. The student has provided information necessary to satisfy the instructor that circumstances beyond the control of the student prevented his or her completing the required work on time.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

Unit I August 31
EP 2.1.6-CC: Engage in research informed practice and practice-informed research.

**Introduction/Why Social Workers Need Research**

1. Overview of course
2. Course Objectives, Outcomes, Assignments & Expectations
3. Connection of social work and research

**Philosophies and Perspectives About Research**

4. Inductive & Deductive Philosophies
5. Quantitative and Qualitative Methodologies
6. Specialized Areas of Research

Required Readings: Text: Dudley, Chapters 1 & 2, pp. 1-36.


Unit II September 14
EP 2.1.3 – CC: Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgements..

**Research Ethics and Social Work’s Mandates**

1. Ethical Problems in Research
2. Ethical Safeguards of Research
3. Mandates of Social Work
4. Values & Ethics, Diversity, At-Risk Groups, & Social Justice

Required Readings: Text: Dudley: Chapter 3, pp. 37-61; Blanksby Chapter 1, pp. 1-32

Unit III September 21

EP 2.1.6- PB: Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry

**Understanding the Research Topic**

1. What Issues Affect Topic Selection?
2. Research Topics and Social Work
3. The Literature Review
4. Values & Ethics, Diversity, At-Risk Groups, & Social Justice
5. Laboratory exercises with SPSS

Required Readings: Text: Dudley: Chapter 4 pp. 64-79; Blanksby Chapter 2, pp. 35-77


Unit IV September 28 (not an official holiday for DSU)

EP 2.1.3- CC: Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.

**Defining and Measuring Concepts**

1. Concepts, Variables, Values & Constants
2. Understanding Measurement
3. How Knowledge is Generated
4. Quantitative & Qualitative Measurement
5. Levels of Measurement
6. Validity and Reliability
7. Standardized Scales
8. Values & Ethics, Diversity, At-Risk Groups, & Social Justice
9. Laboratory exercises with SPSS

Required Readings: Text: Dudley: Chapter 5 pp. 82-112; Blanksby, Chapter 3, pp. 79-119
Unit V October 5

Midterm Examination

Unit VI October 12

EP 2.1.6 PB: Use research evidence to inform practice.

**Focusing a Research Study**

1. Exploratory Studies Ask General Research Questions
2. Explanatory Studies Test Hypotheses
3. Three Conditions of Causal Relationships
4. Practical Uses of Hypotheses
5. Generating Hypotheses
6. Focusing a Research Study and the Consumer Role
7. Values & Ethics, Diversity, At-Risk Groups, & Social Justice
8. Laboratory exercises with SPSS

Required Readings: Text: Dudley: Chapter 6, pp. 115-130; Blanksby Chapter 4, pp. 123-145


Unit VII October 19

EP 2.1.3 PB: Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues.

**Preparing the Research Report**

1. Five Key Tasks Involved in Preparing a Report
   - Highlighting Background Material on the Study
   - Organizing the Findings
   - Developing Recommendations
   - Writing or Presenting the Report
   - Disseminating and Utilizing the Results
2. Reporting on the Research and the Consumer Role
3. Values & Ethics, Diversity, At-Risk Groups, & Social Justice
4. Laboratory exercises with SPSS

Required Readings: Text: Dudley: Chapter 16, pp. 291-305; Blanksby Chapter 5, pp. 148-174
Unit VIII October 26
EP 2.1.3 PB: Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation

**Designing the Study & Sampling Techniques**

1. Considering Secondary Research
2. Is the Study Exploratory or Explanatory?
3. Important Concepts about Sampling
4. Selecting a Sample
5. Probability & Non-probability Sampling
6. Sample size
7. Values & Ethics, Diversity, At-Risk Groups, & Social Justice

Laboratory exercises with SPSS

Required Readings:  
Text: Dudley: Chapters 7 & 8, pp. 132-159; Blanksby Chapter 6, pp. 177-208


Unit IX November 2
EP 2.1.6 CC: Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.

**Constructing Surveys & Observational Studies**

1. Using Interviews in Research
2. Using Questionnaires in Research
3. Similarities between Data Collection in Research & Social Work
4. Importance of High Response Rates
5. Validity & Reliability Issues
6. How to Construct a Survey
7. Conducting Structured & Unstructured Observations
8. Observing Social Artifacts & Other Nonhuman Entities
9. Values & Ethics, Diversity, At-Risk Groups, & Social Justice
10. Laboratory exercises with SPSS

Required Readings:  
Text: Dudley: Chapters 9 & 10, pp. 162-194; Blanksby Chapter 7, pp. 212-238


Unit X November 9
EP 2.1.6 CC: Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.
Exploring Causal Relationships
(Veterans Day is not a holiday for DSU)

1. Relevance of Causal Relationships in Social Work Practice
2. Claiming that the Intervention Makes a Difference
3. Documenting the Impact of Social Work Interventions
4. Extraneous Influences
5. Validity and Group Designs
6. Group Designs for Exploring the Impact of an Intervention
7. Single System Designs & Practice Evaluations
8. Values & Ethics, Diversity, At-Risk Groups, & Social Justice
9. Laboratory exercises with SPSS

Required Readings: Text: Dudley: Chapter 11, pp. 197-221; Blanksby Chapter 8, 240-259


Unit XI November 16
EP 2.1.6 CC: Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.

Collecting the Data

Differences in Collecting Quantitative and Qualitative Data
1. Preparation for Data Collection
2. Considering the Influence of the Personal Characteristics of the Researcher
3. Collecting the Data and the Consumer Role
4. Values & Ethics, Diversity, At-Risk Groups, & Social Justice
5. Laboratory exercises with SPSS


Unit XII November 23
EP 2.1.6 CC: Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.

Analyzing Data/Qualitative Data Analysis

1. What is Data Analysis?
2. Planning for Data Analysis
3. Quantitative vs. Qualitative Data Analysis
4. Varied Types of Qualitative Data
5. How are Qualitative Data Analyzed?
6. Values & Ethics, Diversity, At-Risk Groups, & Social Justice
7. Laboratory exercises with SPSS


Unit XIII November 30
EP 2.1.6 CC: Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.

Analyzing Data/Quantitative Data Analysis

1. Coding the Data
2. Descriptive Statistics for Data Analysis
3. Bivariate Statistics for Data Analysis
4. Working with a Data Set
5. Values & Ethics, Diversity, At-Risk Groups, & Social Justice


Unit XIV December 7
Final Research Proposals/Papers DUE!!

Assignment I
Annotated Bibliography

EP 2.1.3 PB: Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge and practice wisdom.

This assignment consists of locating five (5) research articles and writing the findings in a specified format. The research articles must be articles in which a specific research question or hypothesis was tested using empirical methods. The analytical methods used to test the hypothesis or the research question can either be of a quantitative or qualitative type. The articles must be germane to social work practice and can focus on such diverse topics as homelessness, HIV/AIDS, chemical dependency, sexuality, domestic violence and racial/cultural issues. The format for the annotated bibliography is as follows:

The citation for each article must be at the beginning of the page for that specific journal article. Therefore, there should be one (1) citation for each journal article. The citation should follow the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA, 5th Edition, August 2002) format.

After the citation, there should be a summary of the findings from that particular research study. The summary should include the demographic characteristics of the research participants such as age, race, gender, educational level, income and any other demographic characteristics that were pertinent to the study. The summary should also include findings that were relevant to the research question or hypothesis. These should include any statistical analyses in a quantitative
research study and narrative descriptions of the findings in a qualitative research study. The summary should also include the conclusions the researcher drew from the study.

Finally, the annotated bibliography should include your evaluation of the research study. You should be especially mindful of whether or not the study seems to contain outstanding biases and your feelings about the utility (usefulness) of the study in advancing social work knowledge. Document should contain a cover page and free of spelling and grammatical mistakes.

The page length for the annotated bibliography should be no more than five (5) pages or one (1) page per article. The citation should be doubled-spaced and the summary of the findings and your evaluation should be single-spaced.

The due date for the paper is September 21st.

You should select one (1) article out of the five to present the summary and evaluation for the next class period. You may wish to consider using the articles that you read for this assignment for your final research proposal. This will give you a head start on your research project.

Note: For assistance with this and other assignments, contact Mr. Davis in the DSU library. There is also a sample of an annotated bibliography on the library’s web site. Graduate quality work is expected for this and all other assignments.

Any lingering questions should be directed to your instructor in a timely manner.

Assignment II
Guidelines for the Research Proposal
EP 2.1.6 – PB: Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry and use research evidence to inform practice.
EP 2.1.3 - PB: Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge and practice wisdom.

Purpose of the Proposal

The proposal seeks to help students understand and skillfully employ the research process by having them to actually execute and simulate the proposal preparation stages. In this process, students should be able to competently prepare all stages of the process, which includes the Introduction, the Theoretical/Conceptual Framework and Literature Review and finally the Methodology. During this process, the student should be able to develop an appreciation and understanding of how the description of the problem, relevant theoretical and conceptual components, background information, hypothesis construction, variable conceptualization/operationalization, measurement, sampling, data collection and data analysis all converge to form the entire proposal package. (See chapter 16 of text).

Mechanics of the proposal preparation stages
The first step in the process is to explore a **topic for your proposal.** The first assignment in which you were to find research articles and present them in an annotated bibliography should help you settle on a topic. However, it highly recommended that you conduct your study in your field placement under the guidance of your field instructor. In this case you should meet with your field instructor to agree on a topic together. You should keep your field instructor involved in every stage of the proposal because s/he will be invited to observe the final presentation at the end of your spring semester. If you do not have a field placement, then meet with the instructor so that you can receive guidance before selecting a topic. The components in the topic should show some possible relationship to each other. For instance, you might want to know if a support group designed to increase the self-esteem of young gay African-American and Latino men actually does work. You could also propose to investigate whether faith-based health education programs have an impact on hypertension rates in an African-American/Latino/Native American community. Furthermore, you could develop a proposal in which you attempt to determine if the hours spent watching television has any relationship to obesity in adolescents. These are only examples that may spur some ideas for you.

The second step is to develop the **Introduction and Statement of the Problem.** This section consists of:

a. **Description of the problem:** In this section provide statistical data on the magnitude and severity of the problem. You are attempting to convince the proposal reviewer that this really is a problem. The statistical data should indicate both the magnitude and severity of the problem. The statistical data can be gathered from current news sources such as magazines, newspapers or other popular press articles.

b. **Discussion of the problem:** expand your discussion of the problem by detailing some of the manifestations and implications of this problem for your population group.

c. **Significance of the problem and rationale for studying it.** Does researching this problem have meaning for the social work profession? Is it a topic that has been studied too much in the past? Is it relevant for the social work profession? Ask the, “so what” question.

The next step is the development of the **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework.** The literature review consists of an exploration of the relevant studies you have consulted in order to bolster your claims that there is a need for your particular study. The literature review should include studies that are no more than **ten years old.** Therefore, your literature review should not include any studies before **1996.** In the literature review you should also determine if there are gaps or omissions of subject matter in the previous studies that you could use as a springboard for your own study. The literature review should consist of articles and books from the **scholarly press only.** That means only peer-reviewed journal articles. (See listing on pp. 16, 55 & 60 of the Dudley text).

The conceptual/theoretical framework is used to buttress your research study with relevant theories and concepts that are germane to your particular variables of interest. In social work, we use many theories and concepts from other professions and disciplines such as psychology, cultural anthropology, medicine, and sociology. However, some of the more popular social work theories are the ecological perspective, social systems theory and cognitive behavioral theory.
Whatever theory or theories you choose must be intimately related to your topic and your variables.

The last step in the proposal process is the preparation of the **Methodology**. The methodology is the portion of the proposal in which you actually explain how you will implement the study. There are several sections of the methodology. They are as follows:

1. State Research Question(s)
2. State Study Hypothesis(es): Research and Null Hypothesis(es)
3. Measurement Variables
   a. Describe your Independent Variable(s)?
   b. Describe your Dependent Variable(s)?
   c. Provide Conceptual Definitions for both the Independent and Dependent Variables
   d. Provide Operational Definitions for both the Independent and Dependent Variables?
4. Clearly describe your type of Research Design with support from the literature
5. Clearly describe your Sample Population(s)
6. Clearly describe your Sampling Procedures (step by step)
7. Clearly describe your Data Collection Procedures (step by step)
8. Clearly describe the Measurement Instrument(s) that you will use to collect your data. Explain the source or origins of your instrument(s) and its validity and reliability.
9. Using the sample on the DSU Sponsored Programs website, prepare an IRB Application and Conformed Consent Form (if primary research will be conducted). These documents will be submitted to the DSU IBR Committee for the Protection of Subjects for permission to conduct your study. (Samples from previous classes will be provided).
10. To the best of your ability, describe the procedures you will use to analyze the Data you collect.

**Dates for submission of the stages of the individual research proposal**

**Introduction**—October 12\(^{th}\)

**Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**—October 26\(^{th}\) —

**Methodology**—November 16\(^{th}\)

**Final Proposal**—December 7\(^{th}\)