

**FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND URBAN AFFAIRS
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

Theory Development & Research Methods in Social Welfare SOW 7492 FALL SEMESTER 2009
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Office Hours: By appointment; e-mail queries encouraged

Classroom: MARC 310

Class times: 5:00 PM to 7:45 PM

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

The logic of social research, role of theory in social welfare research, range and limitations of research methods, ethical issues. Students begin work on their doctoral research proposal. Prerequisites or Corequisites: STA 6166 or equivalent. Prerequisites: Admission to Ph.D. program or permission of the instructor.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Study of social research theory and practice. Analysis of the application of various research methods. Review of ethical issues associated with various research practices. Development of qualifying examination topics, with emphasis on dissertation research.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By means of lectures, readings, classroom discussions, and other assignments, this course aims to help doctoral students to:

- 1) Understand fundamental research approaches in the social sciences.
- 2) Gain knowledge in research methods and design
- 3) Understand ethical and data safety issues associated with research on social welfare topics.
- 4) Develop their research focus.
- 5) Draft abstracts and outlines for their qualifying examination papers

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

Through classroom discussions and other assignments, students are expected to demonstrate:

- 1) An ability to describe the underlying assumptions, major tenets, and practical implications of various social science research approaches.
- 2) Growing focus and expertise in their chosen research area
- 3) Progress in preparing their qualifying examination papers, in the form of presentations, abstracts, and outlines.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Behling, O. (2000). *Translating Questionnaires and Other Research Instruments Problems and Solutions* (Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. ISBN:9780761918240

Bruning, J.L., & Kintz, B.L. (1997). *Computational Handbook of Statistics*, Fourth Edition. New York: Allyn & Bacon. ISBN 9780673990853

Converse, J.M. & Presser, S. (1986). *Survey Questions: Handcrafting the Standardized Questionnaire* (Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. ISBN: 9780803927438

Davis, J.A. (1985) *The Logic of Causal Order* (Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences). Thousand Oaks, CA Sage Publications. ISBN:9780803925533

Menard, S. (2002). *Longitudinal Research*, Second Edition (Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. ISBN: 9780761922094

Spector, P.E. (1981). *Research Designs* (Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. ISBN: 9780803917095

INSTRUCTIONAL FORMAT

Course activities will be conducted in a seminar format, with student-and instructor-led group discussions. Additionally, each student will be responsible for (1) a 20 minute, in-class presentation concerning her/his area of research interest, and (2) a 20 minute, in-class presentation concerning his/her qualifying examination papers. Finally, students also will participate in the Responsible Conduct of Research training provided by the Office of Sponsored Research Administration (OSRA; see <http://ori.fiu.edu/responsibleConduct.html>). In order to fulfill the requirements of this course, students must complete the “**The Social & Behavioral RCR Course**” offered through OSRA. Each student is responsible for providing a copy of their training completion certificate.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Required readings are assigned for each class (see below).

Two brief written questions about, or comments on, each required reading are due the day of the assigned reading.

One 20-minute in-class PowerPoint presentation concerning your area of research interest. The presentation should include the following:

1. The nature and scope of the topic you plan to research.
2. A up-to-date summary of the research finding in your area.
3. A summary of future research priorities in your area.
4. A description of what you hope to research for your dissertation, including research questions and basic methodology.

One 20-minute in class PowerPoint presentation concerning your 3 qualifying examinations papers.

The presentation should include the following:

1. Abstracts for each of the three papers
2. Outlines for each of the three papers.

The Social & Behavioral RCR Course Training Certificate

Grading Policy

FIU operate on an A-F grading system. This is a required doctoral course; a grade below B is a failing grade. Letter grades are assigned based on the following percentages (FIU Grade Points in parentheses):

A	93 - 100	B	83 – 86	C	73 – 76	D	64 – 66
A-	90 – 92	B-	80 -82	C-	70 – 72	D-	60 – 63
B+	87 - 89	C+	77 - 79	D+	67 - 69	F	59 and below

CLASS POLICIES

- Students are expected to attend classes on time, to participate in class discussions, and to share information from reading and from personal and field experiences.
- Cheating or plagiarism is considered a serious offense, and will result in failure of the assignment and disciplinary action. Students should review the FIU Student Handbook for policies regarding academic and other misconduct (see: <http://online.fiu.edu/currentstudents/academicmisconduct>).
- Students are expected to respect colleagues while also challenging each other to explore new way of thinking about the prevention of substance use and abuse and the role of social workers in prevention, policies, practices and research. One important principle in the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics provides some guidance: “Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual difference and cultural and ethnic diversity.”

CLASS	DATE	TOPIC	READING
1	8/27	Introduction, course overview	
2	9/3	The Logic of Causal Order: Conceptual Overview & Applications	Davis, pp. 7 – 68
3	9/10	Research Designs: Conceptual Overview & One-Group Designs	Spector, pp. 7 -38
4	9/17	Research Designs: Multigroup & Factorial Designs	Spector , pp. 39 – 78
5	9/24	Survey Questions: Conceptual Overview and Strategies	Converse & Presser, pp. 9 -47
6	10/01	Survey Questions: Tools at Hand	Converse & Presser, pp.48-75
7	10/8	Longitudinal Research: Purpose & Design	Menard, pp. 1 – 32
8	10/15	Longitudinal Research: Issues & Analysis	Menard, pp. 33 – 80
9	10/22	Translating Questionnaires: Overview, Usefulness, Semantics, Conceptual	Behling & Law, pp. 1 -40
10	10/29	Translating Questionnaires:	Behling & Law, pp. 41 - 61

		Normative, Putting it All Together	
11	11/05	Class Presentations 20 minute PowerPoint on intended research	
12	11/12	Class Presentations Abstracts and outlines of qualifying exam papers	
	11/19	INSTRUCTOR AWAY	
	11/26	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY	
13	12/03	“Conference” Presentations to Social Work Faculty	