COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students build advanced competence in research design, data collection, and data analysis and statistics by analyzing exemplary social work research and presenting independent learning projects within specialized areas of study.

Expanded Course Description:

Students develop a draft dissertation proposal and an outline of the doctoral qualifying paper, completing independent learning projects that build substantive, theoretical, and methodological knowledge appropriate for their specialized areas of study.

OBJECTIVES

By course end, students will be able to:

1. Describe the stages of social research with particular emphasis on formulation of the research problem and an advanced research design.

2. Describe critically the major conceptual frameworks, substantive theories, and research designs that inform their specialized area of study.

3. Describe issues in study populations, sampling strategies and generalizability of findings in research in their specialized area of study.

4. Identify ethical issues and dilemmas that pertain to conducting and reporting scholarly research in their specialized area of study, including human subject considerations.

Some of the activities by which students will meet these objectives include:

1. Learn the requirements for preparing the doctoral qualifying paper, dissertation proposal, and dissertation.

2. Identify and critically review pivotal scholarly works and current intervention research in their specialized area of study.

4. Meet with dissertation chair or doctoral advisor to review substantive focus, activity schedule, and timeline for completing the qualifying paper.

5. Review the IRB requirements for review of research using human subjects.

6. Develop a detailed outline of the qualifying paper (QP) for critique by classmates and for review by the dissertation chair or doctoral advisor.

7. Develop an activity schedule, including a timeline, for preparing and defending the qualifying paper.

8. Prepare a draft dissertation proposal (DP) outline that will be submitted to their dissertation chair for review.

PREREQUISITES

SoWo 301 Foundations for Theory Construction
SoWo 303 Research Methods in Social Intervention
SoWo 314 Measurement in Social Intervention Research
SoWo 312 Development of Social Intervention Models
SoWo 304 or equivalent

REQUIREMENTS

This course is a seminar that has been designed to maximize progress on the tasks at hand—progress on the qualifying paper and the dissertation proposal. If the course does not facilitate your work on the qualifying paper or dissertation proposal or both, it has failed. Unlike other courses in the doctoral sequence, this course focuses more on the process of developing these documents rather than on the mastery of content from lectures and reading.

As such, the assignments that you do each week should support your objectives and it is your responsibility to see that they do.

During the semester you must present your QP outline and a mini-Dissertation proposal. These will be scheduled in class.

Assignments: Please submit a copy your assignment to the instructor by email with an attached copy. Feedback on assignments will be provided via the email copy. Unless otherwise indicated, prepare all assignments according to the style guidelines found in the most recent edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Students will distribute copies of selected written assignments to classmates for peer review. Some assignments will take longer than one week to complete so begin early.

Students will also need to develop their scholarly learning and presentation skills and will, during class, make Scholarly Learning Presentations that reflect something that they have learned about the production of scholarship over the course of the assignments in the course. Students are to use PowerPoint 2003 for these presentations and send a copy of the presentation for the class no later than 6 pm Sunday before the class. Reviewing materials from other seminar participants. Because this is a seminar, it is critical that everyone be versed in the materials that will be presented. When materials need to be distributed, they are due to the seminar members by early Sunday evening (6PM) and should be read by class at 12PM on Monday.
**Class Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all class sessions. If there is some reason that you cannot attend a class, please contact or leave a message for the professor at the School of Social Work.

**GRADES**

The design of this course makes distinguishing an entirely satisfactory performance (P) from a clear excellence performance (H) difficult. If you want to get an H, please make an appointment to discuss what this will take. Otherwise, students who complete the work successfully will receive a P.

**RECOMMENDED READINGS**


[www.sagepub.com](http://www.sagepub.com)


**SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week/ Seminar Topic</th>
<th>Course Assignment (to be completed by class)</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>8/25</td>
<td>1. Orientation to the course</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>- Orthner on the course and process. - Students briefly present on status of their QP &amp; dissertation ideas &amp; development.</td>
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<td>9/8</td>
<td>2. The Qualifying Exam &amp; Dissertation proposal: purposes and processes</td>
<td>1. Review one QP and be prepared to discuss differences in structure and components, based on what you understand to be the objective of the QP (Get QPs from Doctoral Program or ask current or former students) (Paja Charles QP outline and text is available on Blackboard as one example) 2. Read the following: - SSW 2008 Doctoral Program Handbook, pp. 34-49, 53-56. - UNC Graduate School Theses and Dissertation Handbook and Guide: <a href="http://gradschool.unc.edu/etdguide/">http://gradschool.unc.edu/etdguide/</a> - UNC Writing Center, Dissertation Process: <a href="http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/dissertation.html">http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/dissertation.html</a></td>
<td>- Orthner presents on dissertation issues and formats, committee development &amp; expected challenges. - Students present on their QP reviews</td>
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<td>9/15</td>
<td>3. Defining the Problem: QP Section 1 “Statement of the research”</td>
<td>1. Review 3 exemplary research papers relevant to your work and come prepared to discuss how the problem(s) or issues to be addressed in the research were identified in the papers, how well the problems were described, and how convincing the author(s) were in supporting the criticality of the problems. 2. Read Orthner &amp; Bowen (2004) on results management</td>
<td>- Angela Bardeen, UNC Library presents on RefWorks - Orthner presents on results</td>
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| 9/22  | 4. Review of draft QP and Dissertation Problem Statements               | 1. Prepare a draft one-page, single-spaced problem statement for your qualifying paper. Identify the problem you want to address, justification for the problem based on incidence and previous research, and your statement of significance of the problem to social work policy, research and practice.  
2. Prepare 3-5 slides for presentation to the class on your problem specification. Send to professor NLT Sunday 6 pm.  
3. Send your written problem statement to another assigned student for their in-class review and critique.  
|       | - Faculty panel (Mark, Michal, Kathleen) on expectations for the QP and DP - Students present on their QP problem statements. - Students and instructor provide critiques of statements. |
| 9/29  | 5. Conducting and Writing Reviews of Research Literature                | 1. Identify and submit list of 10 critical review and research studies in your problem area. Identify key themes or patterns that you can use to summarize or synthesize this work with your own “voice” or unique contribution.  
2. Meet with your dissertation chair or your current advisor to review your dissertation proposal idea and potential strategy. Be prepared to give a summary report of this meeting to the class.  
4. Read UNC Writing Center, Literature Reviews:  
http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/literature_review.html [Note: carefully review the writing recommendations on the sidebar at this site. Excellent recommendations are offered for writing style, use of APA format, correct grammar in dissertations, etc.] |
|       | 1. Orthner leads discussion on literature reviewing and discussion of student literature reviews  
2. Seminar members discuss meetings with advisor/dissertation chair |
| 10/6  | 6. Reviewing intervention research *QP Section 3 “Critical review of intervention*   | 1. Review 3 (or more) intervention studies in your area of research. Write a one-page integrative summary of these interventions, including target populations, samples used, types of designs, analysis strategies, measures of effectiveness, and strengths and weaknesses.  
2. Prepare PowerPoint presentation that includes: brief summary of interventions, identified strengths and identified weaknesses. |
|       | 1. Orthner review of key issues in intervention research in social work practice.  
2. Student summaries of |
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| 10/13  | 7. Theories, Conceptual Frameworks and Models                         | 1. Review the dominant theories or conceptual frameworks that have been used in your area of research. Be prepared to discuss the general theories that have been applied as well as the more specific theories or frameworks used in research and hypothesis testing.  
3. Review 3 examples of theory-based research papers on Blackboard:  
1. Orthner frames theory and conceptual frameworks discussion, including building of logic models.  
2. Gary Bowen leads discussion of theory development  
3. Students identify specific theories that have been applied in their area of research.  
4. Students create theory of change logic models. |
| 10/20  | 8. Theory presentations QP Section 2 “Critical analysis of theoretical frameworks or perspectives for examining the problem” | 1. Prepare an outline of the theoretical frameworks used in your area of research, especially as applied to the problem you are addressing. Include on this outline the general and specific theories you will need to review, as well as the hypotheses that emerge from these theories.  
2. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation on your theories. Summarize the theories, develop common assumptions, develop propositions from the theories, propose a theoretical model, propose 2-3 hypotheses from your theory.  
1. Students provide 10 minute PowerPoint presentations on the theoretical underpinnings of their problem area.  
2. Guided discussion of all presentations. |
| 10/27  | 9. Research Designs and Research Methods for QPs and Dissertation Proposals | 1. Identify and critique the research designs and data collection methods used in research in your area of interest. Consult the research literature in social work, your minor area, and other disciplines. What are the implications for your proposed research?  
2. Identify a population, sample and potential source of data or strategy for data collection for your dissertation research.  
3. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation of key points for class presentation and discussion (approximately 15 minutes)  
8 student presentations with discussion and recommendations |
11/3  | **11. Ethics in research and professional conduct**<br>1. Review UNC IRB requirements in *Researchers Guide to the IRB Process and Human Subjects Research* ([http://ohre.unc.edu/researchers_manual_hsr.pdf](http://ohre.unc.edu/researchers_manual_hsr.pdf)).<br>2. Review UNC graduate school ethics requirements. ([http://gradschool.unc.edu/ethics.html](http://gradschool.unc.edu/ethics.html))<br>3. Identify specific ethical issues and IRB requirements that you will need to consider in your dissertation research. Prepare a list of the issues and how you will address them. | **1. Orthner review of ethical issues in social work research.**<br>**2. Student reviews of their own issues and plans for addressing them.** |

11/10 | **12. Writing implications sections**<br>**QP Section 5 “Conclusions and implications”**<br>1. Review the conclusions and implications sections of the exemplary articles in your review of the literature. How are these sections structured? How much comparison from previous research and theory is included? Are there common patterns or are each of these different? What are the potential conclusions and implications that are likely to emerge from your own QP and DP?<br>2. Summarize your answers to these questions and prepare to present and discuss your lessons-learned with the class. | **1. Orthner summary of writing issues for this section.**<br>**2. Student reviews and discussion of conclusion section for their QPs and DPs.** |

11/17 | **13. Special Topics Class**<br>Topics to be covered will depend on priority needs of class members. Possible topics include: Advanced questionnaire development, building measurement models, developing funding proposals, successful publishing strategies, turning dissertations into publications, doctoral committee issues and structure, etc. | **1. Orthner will develop and lead this topic, with possible other faculty involvement.** |

11/24 | **14. Presentations of Qualifying Papers and Dissertation Proposals**<br>1. Prepare detailed outlines of QP and Dissertation Proposal. The outline should include all the components required for the QP, with additional outline of the methods section for the DP. Also write a 3 page narrative that describes your problem, justifies attention to this issue, and proposes a methodology for your dissertation. This document can be used to gain agreement from your committee chair and members on what you plan to write and do to complete your doctoral work.<br>2. Be prepared to discuss and critique your fellow students work to help them prepare for the dissertation review process. | **4 seminar members present detailed outlines of QP and DP, no ppt** (handouts of outline only), include update on recruitment of Chair and Committee Members, and indicate timelines. |

12/1 | **15. Presentations of Qualifying Papers and Dissertation Proposals**<br>1. Prepare detailed outlines of QP and Dissertation Proposal. The outline should include all the components required for the QP, with additional outline of the methods section for the DP. Also write a 3 page narrative that describes your problem, justifies attention to this issue, and proposes a methodology for your dissertation. This document can be used to gain agreement from your committee chair and members on what you plan to write and do to complete your doctoral work.<br>2. Be prepared to discuss and critique your fellow students work to help them prepare for the dissertation review process. | **4 seminar members present detailed outlines of QP and DP, no ppt** (handouts of outline only), include update on recruitment of Chair and Committee Members, and indicate timelines.