Foundations for Evidence-Based Practice and Program Evaluation

Course No: SOWO 510, Section 001
Course Title: Foundations for Evidence-Based Practice and Program Evaluation
Semester/Year: Spring 2018
Time and location: Mondays, 9:00 – 11:50, Room 107
Instructor: Tonya B. Van Deinse, PhD, MSW
School of Social Work, Room 421A
Office: 919.962.6428
Office: tbv@email.unc.edu
Office Hours: Mondays 12pm - 2pm (Students are encouraged to request appointments during these hours.)

Course Description
Students will develop knowledge of evidence-based practice, including skills needed to identify, acquire and assess appropriate interventions for practice and basic skills required to evaluate their own social work practice.

Course Objectives
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate the following:
(1) Knowledge of evaluation models and methodologies available to implement evidence-based social work practices;
(2) Skill in accessing and assessing public databases and research literature as a foundation for evidence-based practice;
(3) Skill in applying the findings of social intervention research to social work practice and policy;
(4) Skills to develop and implement intervention evaluations that promote evidence-based social work practice and policy, including skills related to qualitative and quantitative research, measurement, data analysis, and knowledge dissemination;
(5) Ability to apply knowledge of social work ethics and values to the design of practice intervention evaluations;
(6) Skill in designing social interventions that are sensitive to and address ethnic, economic, gender, racial, religious, sexual orientation, and other issues of difference, culture, and descent; and
(7) Knowledge of the practical, political, and economic issues related to the evaluation of social interventions.

Required Texts and Readings
This text book is available in the UNC Student Stores. Links to other assigned and/or recommended readings, videos, or slides will be posted on the class Sakai site: http://sakai.unc.edu.

**Policy on Incomplete or Late Assignments**

An assignment is considered late if it is submitted any later than the start of class on the day it is due. The grade for late assignments will be reduced **10% per day, including weekends.** That is, if an assignment is turned in any later than the start of class, the grade will be reduced by 10% if turned in within the next 24 hours, 20% if turned in within 48 hours, 30% if turned in within 72 hours, etc.

To give some flexibility in meeting requirements in other classes and dealing with unexpected personal challenges (e.g., illness, family matters, etc.), students will be given one optional one-week extension to be used on any assignment, **excluding in-class quizzes.** Please notify me via email if and when you decide to use this one-week extension. **Once you have used your one-week extension you will not be granted another extension. Rather, if you need to turn in your assignment late, the late submission policy will apply.** I recommend that you carefully consider how you will use your one-week extension.

A grade of **Incomplete** is given only in exceptional and rare circumstances that warrant it, e.g., death in the family, serious illness. It is the student’s responsibility to request and explain the reasons for an Incomplete. The instructor has no responsibility to give an Incomplete without such a request.

**Writing Support**

Clear, cogent writing is an essential skill for social work professionals. Writing support is available to all students through the School’s Writing Support Team; they can help you strengthen your writing skills by sharing strategies for organizing information, presenting a cohesive argument, ensuring clear communication, and mastering APA style. Writing Support offers a learning opportunity for students but does not merely copy edit student papers. Writing support is available in-person, by e-mail, or by phone. E-mail a requested appointment day and time to SOWWritingsupport@gmail.com. In addition, see the Writing Resources and References page on the School’s website (under the Current Students tab: https://ssw.unc.edu/students/writing).

**Expectations for Written Assignments**

Students are expected to use good academic English; grades will be lowered for poor grammar, syntax, or spelling. The School of Social Work faculty has adopted APA style as the preferred format for papers and publications. **All written assignments for this course should be submitted in APA style,** unless assignment instructions indicate otherwise. Information concerning APA style and writing resources are listed below:

Policy on Academic Dishonesty
It is the responsibility of every student to obey and to support the enforcement of the Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing in actions involving the academic processes of this class. Students will properly attribute sources used in preparing written work and will include the following pledge on the first page of all written assignments: “I have not given or received unauthorized aid in preparing this written work.” Credit will not be awarded for unpledged work. Please refer to the APA Style Guide, The SSW Manual, and the SSW Writing Guide for information on attribution of quotes, plagiarism and appropriate use of assistance in preparing assignments. In keeping with the UNC Honor Code, if reason exists to believe that academic dishonesty has occurred, a referral will be made to the Office of the Student Attorney General for investigation and further action as required.

Accessibility and Resource Services
The School of Social Work aims to create an educational environment that supports the learning needs of all students. The University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability, or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities. The Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) Office at UNC has been established to coordinate all accommodations. If you might need accommodations at any point during the semester, please contact ARS prior to the beginning of the semester or as early in the semester as possible so that they can assist you; this process takes time. You can visit their website at http://accessibility.unc.edu, and contact ARS by email: accessibility@unc.edu or phone at 919-962-8300. The accommodations process starts with ARS and helps instruct Faculty at the School of Social Work on how best to proceed. As a School, we are committed to working with ARS and students to implement needed accommodations for all of our students. In addition to seeking ARS supports, please also reach out to your instructor to communicate how best your needs can be met once you have begun the ARS process.

Teaching Methods
We will use PowerPoint lectures, case examples, multimedia, problem-solving exercises, and peer group discussions related to students’ research topics.

Peer discussion group: As you design and conduct your evaluation, you will need to make many decisions and weigh competing priorities (e.g., implementing a rigorous research design to control for threats to internal validity versus selecting a less rigorous design because it’s more feasible in a real world setting). Each student will be assigned to a peer discussion group that will complete project check-ins and provide feedback to each other. The project check-ins are designed to help students think through these decisions and your peer group can provide valuable
feedback to help you make key decisions about how you design and carry out your (hypothetical) evaluation.

Grades
The School of Social Work uses an evaluation system of Honors (H), Pass (P), Low Pass (L), and Fail (F). For this class, the numerical value of an H ranges from 94 - 100; P from 80 - 93; and L from 70 - 79. P is considered entirely satisfactory in this program. H is reserved for work that is clearly excellent in all respects. Students who receive 9.0 or more Low Passing credits are ineligible to continue in graduate school.

Grading Philosophy. A majority of students are expected to receive most of their assignment criteria points in the “good” range, which will result in an assignment score in the P range. “Good” criteria reflect work that meets the expectations of the assignment (e.g., meets basic standards, may have a couple of writing errors, may have minor issues with writing mechanics, includes minimum references, etc.). “Excellent” (H range) criteria reflect work above and beyond expectations for the assignment (e.g., no writing errors, strict adherence to APA formatting, excellent writing mechanics, integration of peer-reviewed articles, etc.). “Fair” criteria reflect below standard requirements resulting in an assignment score in the L range. Scores not achieving the “fair” standard will result in an assignment score in the F range.

Electronic Devices
Although we will use laptops to complete in-class activities and labs, electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, laptops, tablets) should not be used during class for social purposes or other activities irrelevant to the course content. Alerts and notifications on devices should be silenced during class. Students who must answer emails/phone calls/ text messages should do so during the 15 minute break.

Course Requirements

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>% of total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes (9)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research ethics (CITI) training</td>
<td>replaces 1 quiz score</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project check-ins, and worksheets</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature summary and critical review</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation project</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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Research and ethics training (due class 3). You must take the Human Subjects Research Course for Social Behavioral and Educational (SBE) modules. This is an online training and can be accessed through https://www.citiprogram.org. You will need to register with CITI before starting the course. For step-by-step instructions for registering and accessing the module click here. You must pass the assessment at the end of the training in order to get credit. Please bring in a printed verification or email electronic verification by February 5th. Completion of this assignment (i.e., passing score, submitted on time) replaces your lowest quiz score.
Quizzes. Students will take a short quiz at the start of most class sessions. Questions on the quiz will be drawn from the previous class period and assigned readings. Quizzes will be returned once grades are recorded. The quizzes are meant to provide continuous feedback about students’ knowledge of core concepts and also provide the information necessary to take corrective measures, by both the instructor and students, to ensure that adequate learning has occurred. **Students must be in class to take the quiz and make-up quizzes are not given.** If you miss a quiz, you will receive a 0. Remember that completion of the CITI training replaces the lowest quiz score. Consequently, if a student earns a 0 on a quiz due to absence, that score may be dropped if the student passed the CITI training.

Class participation. Participation is measured by students’ engagement in activities (e.g., in-class assignments, project check-ins, worksheets), contributions to class discussion and collaboration and feedback with peer groups.

Project check-ins and worksheets. Throughout the semester, students will complete in-class activities and group discussions about your individual research projects. The purpose of these check-ins and worksheets is to keep you on track to complete your research project and to provide opportunities for peer feedback. The bulk of the feedback will come from the peer groups; however, I will randomly collect the product of in-class activities (e.g., worksheets, brainstorming research questions, drafting a logic model) to review. Students will receive an H, P, L or F for these in-class assignments. **Students not present during project check-ins will receive an F for the assignment, even if it is turned in via email (unless an exception has been granted).** The project check-ins are as follows:

- Exploring potential research/evaluation topics
- Drafting research questions
- Identifying and measuring outcomes
- Ethical considerations and cultural competence in evaluation
- Revisiting measurement and selecting a sampling strategy
- Selecting a research design
- Reviewing components of the evaluation paper
- Describing your sample using descriptive statistics
- Examining relationships between variables, part I
- Examining relationships between variables, part II
- Potential use of qualitative methods in your project

For project check-ins requiring data analysis, students will access software to compute statistical tests via the virtual lab at [http://virtuallab.unc.edu](http://virtuallab.unc.edu). If possible, students should bring their laptops to class or ensure that a member of their peer discussion group has a laptop. Any students having difficulty accessing a laptop should contact me a week before the scheduled project check-in.

Literature summary grid and critical review (due class 8). Students will complete a literature summary grid (see assignment on Sakai) of 5-10 peer-reviewed articles. In addition, students will write a critical review of the literature thus far, indicating the major findings, the quality of the research, and the gaps in the literature. The purpose of this assignment is to
practice evaluating the available literature on your topic area and ensuring that you begin examining the literature in preparation for writing the research paper. See the assignment posted on Sakai for specific instructions.

**Midterm and Final Exams (class 7 and class 13, respectively).** The midterm and final exams will be worth 20% each (40% of the total grade). The final exam will not be cumulative. Exams will consist of true/false, multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

**Evaluation project (due Friday, April 13th by midnight).** This evaluation project builds upon course assignments in SOWO 570 where students were tasked with identifying a community problem, conducting an assessment, and proposing an intervention. Students may use the same topic and intervention to complete the evaluation project or choose another topic related to their interest and/or field placement. If students choose the same topic used in SOWO 570, materials gathered to complete those assignments can be used again. However, students should not copy/paste material from those assignments into sections of the evaluation project and should use additional peer-reviewed articles to meet the guidelines of this assignment.

For the data analysis portion of this assignment –regardless of whether you use your SOWO 570 topic or generate a new idea –students can choose one of two options: (1) conduct a real evaluation of a program or practice in the field (i.e., design an evaluation and collect real data), or (2) design an evaluation and analyze fictitious data. **Students who elect to conduct evaluations in the field should meet with me by February 19th to discuss.** I will be creating data sets for students who will be using fictitious data sets. To ensure that I have enough time to create these data sets, students must email me by March 5th indicating:

- Research design
- Number and relevant characteristics (e.g., gender, age) of sample
- Measurement tool(s), including the way the measure is scored (for simplicity, students can choose up to two measures/outcome variables/dependent variables)

The final product will be a report which contains the following: (1) Title page, (2) Abstract, (3) Introduction, (4) Literature Review, (5) Methods, (6) Results, (7) Discussion, (8) Conclusion, (9) References, and (10) Appendix that includes the logic model and any other tables or figures referenced within the paper. Reports should be between 7 and 9 pages (maximum), excluding the title page, abstract, references, and appendix. APA guidelines should be followed in preparing this document.
### Course Schedule

**January 15th**  NO CLASS  
At UNC - CH  

**Events in the Triangle**  

**January 22nd Class 1**  
Introduction to course: Why study research?  
**Readings**  
- Rubin & Babbie, Ch. 1 (Why Study Research?)  
- Blog post by Vu Le: How the concept of effectiveness has screwed nonprofits and the people we serve  
**In class assignment:**  
- Ungraded quiz (baseline assessment)

**January 29th Class 2**  
Evaluation of Social Interventions and Evidence-Based Practice  
**Accessing library resources**  
**Readings**  
- Rubin & Babbie, Chs:  
  - Ch. 2 (Evidence Based Practice)  
  - Ch. 3 (Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methods Of Inquiry)  
  - Ch. 4 (Factors Influencing the Research Process)  
**In class assignment:**  
- Quiz 1  
- Project check-in: exploring potential research/evaluation topics

**February 5th Class 3**  
Other factors influencing research: ethics & cultural competence  
**Identifying outcomes, developing research questions and hypotheses**  
**Assignment due:**  
- Research ethics training (CITI) due  
**Readings**  
- Rubin & Babbie, Chs:  
  - Ch. 5 (Ethical Issues in Social Work Research)  
  - Ch. 6 (Culturally Competent Research)  
  - Ch. 7 (Problem Formulation)  
- Collecting Transgender Inclusive Data in the Workplace and Other Surveys  
**In class assignment:**  
- Quiz 2  
- Project check-in: Drafting research questions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>In class assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| February 12th | 4     | Qualitative Methods, Quantitative Methods, Mixed Methods  
Reliability and validity            | *Readings*  
- Rubin & Babbie, Chs:  
  - Ch. 8 (Measurement in Quantitative and Qualitative Inquiry)  
  - Ch. 9 (Quantitative and Qualitative Measurement Instruments)  
  - Ch. 15 (Additional Methods in Qualitative Inquiry)  
  - Ch. 16 (Analyzing Available Records: Quantitative and Qualitative Methods)  

*In class assignment:*  
- Quiz 3  
- Logic model review  
- Project check-in: identifying and measuring outcomes|                                                                                                                                 |
| February 19th | 5     | Sampling  
Internal and external validity | *Readings*  
- Rubin & Babbie, Chs:  
  - Ch. 10 (Surveys)  
  - Ch. 11 (Sampling: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches)  
- A Survey of LGBT Americans  
- Who is Multiracial Depends on How You Ask  
  [http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2015/11/06/who-is-multiracial-depends-on-how-you-ask/](http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2015/11/06/who-is-multiracial-depends-on-how-you-ask/)  

*In class assignment:*  
- Quiz 5  
- Project check-in: ethical considerations and cultural competence in evaluation|                                                                                                                                 |
| February 26th | 6     | Research and evaluation designs                     | *Readings*  
- Rubin & Babbie, Chs:  
  - Ch. 12 (Experiments and Quasi-Experiments)  
  - Ch. 13 (Single-Case Evaluation Designs)  
- Intervention Research to Improve Native American Health,  
  [https://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/nativeamericanintervention/funded.html](https://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/nativeamericanintervention/funded.html)  

*In class assignment:*  
- Quiz 5  
- Project check-in: selecting a research design|                                                                                                                                 |
| March 5th    | 7     | Midterm assessment  
Research designs due: Email regarding your research design, measures, sample size, sample characteristics (e.g., gender ratio, age range)|                                                                                                                                 |
| March 12th   |       | Spring Break NO CLASS                               |                                                                                                                                 |
| March 19th   | 8     | Program evaluation  
Writing the evaluation report | *Assignments due:*  
- Literature summary grid and critical review|
### Readings
- Rubin & Babbie, Ch 14 (Program evaluation)
- Core intervention components: identifying and operationalizing what makes programs work [https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED541353.pdf](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED541353.pdf)

### In class assignment:
- Project check-in: Reviewing components of the evaluation paper

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<table>
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<tr>
<th>March 26th Class 9</th>
<th>Data analysis &amp; descriptive statistics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Readings</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Rubin &amp; Babbie, Ch: 17 (Quantitative Data Analysis)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Video- descriptive statistics: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uhxtUt_-GyM&amp;list=PL1328115D3D8A2566">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uhxtUt_-GyM&amp;list=PL1328115D3D8A2566</a></td>
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### In class assignment:
- Quiz 6
- Project check-in: describing your sample using descriptive statistics

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>April 2nd Class 10</th>
<th>Inferential statistics part I</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Readings</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Video- T-tests: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Pd3dc1GcHc">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Pd3dc1GcHc</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Video- Analysis of Variance: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qV-WoquC4dA">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qV-WoquC4dA</a> don’t worry about references to factorial ANOVA or the references to interaction effects</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Video- chi-square tests: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VskmMgXmkMQ">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VskmMgXmkMQ</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Video- correlation: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=372iaWfH-Dg">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=372iaWfH-Dg</a></td>
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### In class assignment:
- Quiz 7
- Project check-in: examining relationships between variables, part I

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>April 9th Class 11</th>
<th>Inferential statistics part II (wrap up)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualitative Analysis Part I</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Readings</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rubin &amp; Babbie, Ch 18 (Qualitative data analysis)</td>
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### In class assignment:
- Quiz 8
- Project check-in: examining relationships between variables, part II
- Project check-in: potential use of qualitative methods in your project

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Friday, April 13th</th>
<th>Evaluation project due</th>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>April 16th Class 12</th>
<th>Qualitative Analysis Part II</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In class assignment:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Quiz 9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Sample qualitative data analysis</td>
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<tr>
<th>April 23rd Class 13</th>
<th>Final Exam</th>
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Literature summary grid and critical review

The final paper for this class is a hypothetical outcome evaluation for an intervention that aims to address an individual and/or social problem (e.g., evaluation of a dialectical behavioral therapy group). In preparation for the evaluation paper, students will find 5 to 10 peer-reviewed articles related to the individual and/or social problem and interventions designed to address this problem. A majority of the articles selected (i.e., more than half) should examine intervention efficacy and should be empirical studies in which a recognizable research design was used to evaluate an intervention. Students having difficulty finding such studies should consider selecting studies of similar interventions or studies that provide additional evidence that supports the theory of change behind the intervention.

Part I: Literature Grid
Students will then complete a literature grid for the peer-reviewed articles (see sample on Sakai) that contains the following sections:

- APA reference
- Study objective
- Study design
- Study sample
- Results
- Implications & conclusions
- Notes

Students should briefly summarize – in their own words – content from the peer-reviewed articles for these sections (except for the citation and notes sections).

Part II: Brief synopsis (2 pages max)
Provide a brief summary of your observations about the articles in aggregate. In other words, discuss what you noticed about the studies as a whole and do not provide a separate summary of each individual study. For example, you may note that most of the articles in the grid were quantitative research studies about your topic. Or, perhaps most of the studies examined the problem among a particular population. You may note key themes addressed in the literature or consistent findings.

Then, identify two to three important points that merit consideration and write corresponding questions for each point. Such important points might include the absence of a particular group or population within the research. For example, “Most of the study samples included women from high socioeconomic statuses. How might these findings differ for those with lower incomes?” You might also note themes in the research method used. For instance, “Most of the studies did not include a comparison sample when evaluating this intervention. How might this impact what we conclude about the findings?”

Part III: Discussion (1 page max)
Briefly summarize your point of view on the issues you raised in Part II and discuss your answers to the questions you developed.
Grading Rubric

Note: For each criterion, fractions of points (e.g. 7.25, 11.5) may be awarded within each range to reflect different performance levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion: Literature grid</th>
<th>Fair (L range) 3 pts.</th>
<th>Good (P range) 4 pts.</th>
<th>Excellent (H range) 5 pts.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Several errors in APA references</td>
<td>• Some errors in APA references</td>
<td>• No errors in APA references</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Many sections were missing summaries</td>
<td>• Most of the sections were summarized</td>
<td>• Each of the sections were summarized</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Several summaries were not succinct and/or clearly worded</td>
<td>• Most summaries were succinct and clearly worded</td>
<td>• Summaries were succinct and clearly worded</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sections were not paraphrased or not accurate</td>
<td>• Paraphrased sections were mostly accurately</td>
<td>• Sections were paraphrased accurately</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Assignment guidelines were not adhered to</td>
<td>• Assignment guidelines were mostly adhered to</td>
<td>• Assignment guidelines were adhered to</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Less than 5 peer-reviewed articles were included</td>
<td>• 5 to 7 peer-reviewed articles were included</td>
<td>• 7 to 10 peer-reviewed articles were included</td>
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<tr>
<th>Points Awarded:</th>
<th>Comments:</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Criterion: Brief synopsis</th>
<th>Fair (L range) 3 pts.</th>
<th>Good (P range) 4 pts.</th>
<th>Excellent (H range) 5 pts.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Assignment guidelines were not adhered to</td>
<td>• Assignment guidelines were mostly adhered to</td>
<td>• Assignment guidelines were adhered to</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Synopsis was not clear and did not accurately synthesize observations from the literature grid</td>
<td>• Synopsis was mostly a clear and accurate synthesis of observations from the literature grid</td>
<td>• Synopsis was a clear and accurate synthesis of observations from the literature grid</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• APA not adhered to</td>
<td>• APA mostly adhered to</td>
<td>• APA adherence</td>
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<tr>
<th>Points Awarded:</th>
<th>Comments:</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion: Discussion</th>
<th>Fair (L range) 3 pts.</th>
<th>Good (P range) 4 pts.</th>
<th>Excellent (H range) 5 pts.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Assignment guidelines were not adhered to</td>
<td>• Assignment guidelines were mostly adhered to</td>
<td>• Assignment guidelines were adhered to</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Arguments and points of view do not appear to be based on evidence provided</td>
<td>• Arguments and points of view are mostly well reasoned</td>
<td>• Arguments and points of view are well reasoned</td>
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<tr>
<th>Points Awarded:</th>
<th>Comments:</th>
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SOWO 510 - Guidelines for Research Project

Working individually, students will identify a problem (e.g., depression among adolescent youth in foster care), select an intervention (an evidence-based or evidence-informed practice), analyze a dataset, and write a scholarly report (in the form of an article for journal publication). This project is worth 20% of the final grade.

The research paper will be 7-9 pages in length (9 page maximum) – not including title page, abstract, references, and appendices – and should be formatted consistent with the APA manual format for manuscripts.


The research paper should include the following sections:

Title page
- Be sure the title is descriptive and precise.
- Try to pique the readers’ interest.

Abstract
- Brief summary of the proposal’s contents (300 words or less)
- Refer to the research question or hypothesis
- Indicate the proposed methodology
- Indicate the potential implications of the research

Introduction
- You may want to do this after you have written or outlined the lit review section
- Describe the problem area (what is the general topic you are focusing on?)
- Briefly state the importance/relevance of this topic
- Provide enough information to show where you are headed with this proposal
  - Is there a gap in the research that must be filled?
  - Is there a population of people about which we know very little?
  - Have previous studies used research methods that were not rigorous enough?
  - In general terms, what do you intend to do with your research?
- State your research question/hypothesis; purpose of your research
  - This research study critically examines relevant empirical studies to understand the risk factors and correlates of XX and proposes a [qualitative/quantitative/mixed methods] study to [state your research question/objective here].
- You may also consider giving a brief orientation to how you organized your proposal/paper

Literature review
- For P consideration, students should meaningfully cite a minimum of 12 references in this section; for H consideration, students should meaningfully cite a minimum of 18 references in this section
Here you will provide background information about the topic area, moving from a broad to specific focus

- Describe the substantive area and provide relevant statistics about prevalence (1-2 paragraphs)
- Move toward a more specific focus on the problem area/problem statement
  - What is it about the substantive area that is problematic? What are the specific issues you are focusing on within your substantive area?
  - Provide relevant statistics to make your point
- Of the topics you discuss within the problem statement, what is the most pressing?
  - Of the topics related to this problem, what should the field be focusing on right now? Why is this the most pressing topic?
- What interventions have been used to address this issue? Briefly describe the intervention you plan to use.
- What is the state of the evidence regarding the use of this intervention? Provide a critical analysis of the literature
  - Emphasize the findings of previous research; but be succinct
  - Point out trends and themes in the literature across studies
  - Point out the gaps in the literature
- Make a summarizing statement about the state of the literature pertaining to the intervention.
  - Where are the holes? What is missing?
- State the purpose of your research as well as your research questions
  - Be sure to specify the purpose, research question, and describe your study adds to the literature, e.g., what gaps does your study address? How does the study address these gaps?
  - Be sure that your research question is specific and attainable; see PICO
- Notes:
  - Use subheadings to organize your work (see APA manual for formatting);
  - Try to avoid using direct quotations in the lit review
  - The lit review is not an annotated bibliography; it is your critical analysis of a body of literature about your topic area;

Methods

- Research design
  - Will you be conducting qualitative or quantitative research?
  - What type of design will you use? Is this a cross-sectional study? Is it longitudinal? Is there a comparison or control group? Experimental design? Quasi-experimental?
- Sample
  - What sampling method will you use? Be specific.
  - Who is the target sample?
  - How many participants will you recruit?
  - For those using single-subject designs, you should provide a description of your client, your client’s problems, and how and why the problems were selected for intervention.
• Measures
  o What data collection instruments will you use? Will you use a survey? Will you use a semi-structured interview guide?
  o Who will collect the data?
  o If using standardized instruments, list reliability and validity statistics.
• Data Analysis
  o What is the dependent variable and level of measurement?
  o What is the independent variable and level of measurement?
  o What types of statistical tests were used?
• Intervention description
  o Provide a brief description of the intervention or program.

Results
• Discuss how the data were examined (e.g., t-test, chi-square, ANOVA)
• Discuss how the outcome variable(s) were influenced by the intervention (e.g., improved over time, those in treatment group fared better than those in the control group)

Discussion
• Briefly summarize your findings (i.e., did the intervention work?)
• Discuss the limitations of the study
  o What might be a limitation to the design of the study? To the intervention? How might that impact the findings?
  o What might be alternative explanations of your findings?
• Discuss the implications for practitioners and agencies
• Discuss the implications for policy
• Discuss the implications for future research

Conclusion

References
• Use APA formatting
• Only include references that were cited in the paper

Appendix
• Logic model
• Tables & figures

Note: this paper should be formatted using APA for all aspects of the paper, including reporting results from your statistical analyses, formatting citations within the paper, formatting the references section, page number placement, etc.
# Grading Rubric

Note: For each criterion, fractions of points (e.g. 7.25, 11.5) may be awarded within each range to reflect different performance levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion: Title page, abstract, appendices, references</th>
<th>Fair (L range) 1 pts.</th>
<th>Good (P range) 2 pts.</th>
<th>Excellent (H range) 3 pts.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The title page is missing two or more elements</td>
<td>• The title page is missing one element</td>
<td>• The title page contains all elements</td>
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<tr>
<td>• No title is provided</td>
<td>• The title simply states “evaluation paper” or equivalent title</td>
<td>• The title is interesting and descriptive</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Running head is not included</td>
<td>• The running head is not formatted according to APA</td>
<td>• The running head is formatted according to APA</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The abstract is not included</td>
<td>• An abstract is provided but it exceeds the 300-word limit or fails to address the elements listed in the assignment</td>
<td>• The abstract meets the 300-word limit and provides adequate information addressing all elements listed in the assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The logic model is only a somewhat accurate and informative graphic</td>
<td>• The logic model is a mostly accurate and informative graphic depiction</td>
<td>• The logic model is an accurate and informative graphic depiction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The reference section is not formatted using APA guidelines or there are several errors</td>
<td>• The reference section is mostly formatted using APA guidelines but there are a few errors</td>
<td>• The reference section is formatted using APA guidelines, with 1 or 2 exceptions</td>
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<th>Comments:</th>
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<tr>
<th>Criterion: Introduction and literature review</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fair (L range) 1-2 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• No introduction is provided</td>
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<td>• The research objective is not provided</td>
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<tr>
<td>• There are fewer than 8 references meaningfully cited in the introduction and literature review sections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The literature review does not elaborate sufficiently on the problem area</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The literature review does not include relevant statistics and other information to indicate the significance of the problem</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The quality of the research literature is not discussed and gaps are not identified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The research question is not stated</td>
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literature is minimally discussed and gaps are identified
• The research question is stated but does not have all the elements of PICOT

literature is discussed and the gaps are identified
• The research question is stated and has all the elements of PICOT; it is clear how the research question will address the gaps in the literature

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<th>Criterion: Methods and Results</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fair (L range) 1-2 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The specific research design is not stated</td>
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<td>• The methods are not indicated</td>
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<td>• The independent and dependent variables are not named</td>
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<td>• The data collection tools/measures are not described</td>
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<td>• The target sample is not indicated</td>
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<td>• Data analysis procedures are not identified</td>
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<td>• Data are incorrectly displayed in the results section</td>
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<th>Criterion: Discussion and conclusion</th>
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<td>Fair (L range) 3 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The results are not interpreted in the discussion</td>
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<td>• Implications for practice, policy, and research are not discussed</td>
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<td>• A conclusion was not provided</td>
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<td><strong>Awarded:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Criterion: Writing Quality &amp; Presentation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Fair (L range)</em> 1 pts.</td>
<td><em>Good (P range)</em> 2 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The paper is unorganized, with no or few transitions, and a lack of a clear focus on the topic.</td>
<td>• The paper is generally well organized, though transitions could have been smoother. Focus on the topic is lost in some sections of the paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Many sentences are poorly constructed, have grammatical errors, and are difficult to read and understand.</td>
<td>• Sentences are mostly well constructed and easy to read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Paper has several errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.</td>
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