SOWO 940

Development of Social Intervention Models

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OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday 4:00-5:00 (Call to schedule appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This PhD-level course focuses on preparing advanced graduate students with the knowledge and skills needed to design and evaluate interventions that address social needs, problems, and conditions.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course, students are expected to be able to:

• Identify and assess the social-environmental factors involved in defining a specific social need, problem, or condition;
• Analyze a social need, problem, or condition relevant to a particular population and identify appropriate interventions;
• Assess the theoretical and empirical support for alternative interventions that address a selected need, problem, or condition with a particular population;
• Describe and apply a logical sequence of research activities that guides the design, implementation, and evaluation of social interventions;
• Select and apply appropriate research methodology in developing a social intervention;
• Demonstrate awareness of the interplay of different levels of intervention and moderators such as age, class, culture, disability status, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, and sexual orientation in designing, implementing, and evaluating a social intervention;
• Generate hypotheses for guiding empirical inquiry for testing social interventions;
• Delineate effective strategies for collaboration between academic and practice communities in designing, implementing, and evaluating social interventions;
• Develop a NIH Exploratory/Developmental Research Grant (R21) proposal, including a treatment manual

REQUIRED TEXTS


Required journal articles and other readings listed in the Course Outline section are available electronically through the UNC Library system. Most are available also at the Sakai course website. The principal texts are available for purchase at the Health Affairs Bookstore.

RECOMMENDED RELATED READINGS
Note. Students in past course sections have reported the following e-resource was helpful:


**RECOMMENDED RESOURCE**


**EXPANDED DESCRIPTION**

This course is structured as a seminar. In our discussions, we will examine and critique the assigned readings, provide consultation to one another, and respond to presentations by seminar participants and guests. Students are expected to complete required readings before class. All members of the class are expected to be prepared for class and to contribute to discussions and exercises. If you find you will not be able to be in class, you should notify the instructor.

Students are expected to complete assigned and independent readings, contribute to the development of a positive learning environment in the seminar, and demonstrate their learning through written assignments and seminar participation. Required readings are identified on the proposed schedule. Students should conduct substantial independent readings, and this reading should be reflected and cited in papers and assignments. Emphasis should be placed on peer-reviewed journals.

**TEACHING METHODS**

Teaching methods include lecture, discussion, and group activity. Students are expected to contribute during classroom. Questions on course topics and other issues in research and professional development are welcome.

**CLASS POLICIES**

**Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all class meetings, complete assigned and independent readings, and contribute to the development of a positive learning environment in the seminar. Students who miss three class meetings (excused and/or unexcused, and including cumulative partially missed classes) will be required to take an Incomplete in the course and to retake either the missed sessions or the entire course the following year before receiving a grade. Attendance and participation will be assessed weekly. Students who miss a class are responsible for obtaining all missed information and materials from classmates.

**Class Assignments**

Course discussions and activities will be responsive to student interests. It is hoped that students will share relevant knowledge and experience to enrich the learning of other seminar participants. In addition, contributions based on independent exploration of topics beyond the course content are welcome.

**Bad Weather Policy**

In the case of snow, ice, or other threatening or unsafe conditions, students should follow UNC’s
Adverse Weather announcements at www.unc.edu or Adverse Weather and Emergency Phone Line (919) 843-1234. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact UNC Public Safety at 919-962-3951 (M-F, 7:30-5:00) or after business hours at 919-962-8100.

FORMAT FOR WRITTEN WORK


Please give special attention to Chapters 3 and 4 (pp. 61-124) of the APA Publication Manual, which focus on the mechanics of writing with style. In addition, please attend to Chapters 6 and 7 (pp. 169-224), which focus on crediting sources, including use of digital object identifiers in the reference list. APA style writing is expected and will be considered in evaluating papers.

Acceptable Submission Format and Methods

Assignments should be submitted in hardcopy. Use APA layout editing style (single-spacing with double-spacing between paragraphs).

Late Assignments

Late submissions will be penalized 5 points for a major assignment and .5 point for a mini-assignment. Students should notify the instructor of a late submission before the due date.

Code of Honor Affirmation

All written products in the course must have a signed Honor Code statement. Independent work is expected. Papers without this affirmation will not be accepted. The statement should read as follows:

I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment.

(Your Signature)

In addition to a pledge of no plagiarism, inclusion of this statement is interpreted by the instructor as a pledge that the work is the original work of the student. For a tutorial on plagiarism, please be sure to see: http://www.hsl.unc.edu/services/tutorials/PlagiarismTutorial/intro.html

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS


2. Seminar Leadership. Each seminar participant will be expected to take a special leadership role for one session. This role will involve preparing and conducting a class session related to quasi-experimental or experimental design. Plans for the session will be developed in consultation with the instructor. Seminar leadership will include the following elements:
   - Selecting and presenting appropriate conceptual material from assigned, supplementary, and independent readings;
   - Preparing questions to focus discussion;
   - Involving the class in the application of concepts;
   - Facilitating discussion; and
   - Preparing a list of references and other materials.
3. **Draft of Treatment Manual.** Prepare and submit a draft of your treatment manual. It should be at least 15 pages in length, excluding the title page and the table of contents. **Due April 3.**


   Due on **April 24**, proposals may not exceed six pages, excluding Specific Aims. They should include:
   
   - **Specific Aims** – a statement of and justification for the intervention; explicitly state 2-3 aims and hypotheses (if any)
   
   - **Significance** – should explain why the proposed research is important to the field; how the field will change; focus on national significance; (as appropriate) use incidence and prevalence information; link the **Significance** statement to Healthy People 2020 (see [http://www.healthypeople.gov/](http://www.healthypeople.gov/)); conceptualize your study as a building block of a series of studies
   
   - **Innovation** – describe novel methods; explain refinements over existing practices
   
   - **Approach** – a description of the intervention and a research plan; explain how you are going to do the study

   i. Description of the intervention (based the extension or synthesis of existing models; append a full intervention manual of at least 30 pages);

   ii. Description of Research Methods – a research plan for developing the intervention, including at least two phases of development and a description of the research design to be used in each phase; 

   **Tip.** Descriptions of research designs usually include the plan for recruiting/sampling participants, method of group assignment (if applicable), means for measuring outcomes and covariates (i.e., data collection methods, waves, and measures), and methods of analysis. You should propose activities that have high practical value for your dissertation. Consider effect sizes, intracluster correlations, and measurement precision in estimating reasonable sample sizes. Estimate a minimal detectable effect (MDE). Consider also the issues of causal inference. Be sure to link your intervention model to the measurement model.]; and

   iii. Identification of implementation and research issues, including limitations, potentially hazardous procedures, and precautions to be taken.

   - **Preliminary Studies** – a summary of pilot data that have been collected by the principal investigator (PI) or the proposed research team; emphasize the strength of the PI and others on the project

   - **Appendix: Treatment Manual** – append a treatment manual of at least 30 pages in length. It should be linked to your conceptual framework and clearly target mediators. Include step-by-step instructions for intervention agents (i.e., social workers, teachers, or others). Try also to include artwork, graphics, and worksheets. Be careful not to plagiarize artwork or exercises. NIH reviewers are very knowledgeable and savvy.

   **Note.** To guide your work, consider using the NIDA Research Assistant tutorial available at [http://www.theresearchassistant.com/tutorial/4.asp](http://www.theresearchassistant.com/tutorial/4.asp), or you might seek background help at the NIH Grant Submission portal ([www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)).

   **Note.** CDFA is Catalog of Domestic Federal Assistance; FOA is Funding Opportunity Announcement; FON is Funding Opportunity Number; and PA is Program Announcement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Deliverables (i.e., graded assignments)</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>Draft of NIH proposal</td>
<td>March 6</td>
<td>2:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft of treatment manual</td>
<td>April 3</td>
<td>2:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>R21 NIH proposal and treatment manual</td>
<td>April 24</td>
<td>2:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>Oral presentations</td>
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<td>Seminar Leadership</td>
<td>See schedule</td>
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**Grading System**

The course uses the standard grading cutoffs.

- High Pass = 94-100
- Pass = 80-93
- Low Pass = 70-79
- Fail = 69 and below

The final grade is based on a possible 100-point score and will be estimated from evaluations of seminar participation and written assignments. Scoring rubrics for assignments are available on the course website. The point distribution is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminar Participation and Completion of Minor Assignments</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Class participation and preparedness (10 points)</td>
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<td>- Completion of mini-assignments (10 points)</td>
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<td>- Specifying the need or problem (2 point)</td>
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<td>- Identifying core concepts or constructs (2 points)</td>
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<td>- Identifying innovative intervention strategies (2 points)</td>
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<td>- Drawing a conceptual model (4 points)</td>
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<td>Draft of Proposal</td>
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<td>- Oral Presentation (5 points)</td>
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<td>- R21 Proposal (10 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar Leadership Project</td>
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<td>Draft of Treatment Manual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intervention Research Proposal</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Oral Presentation (5 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Treatment Manual (15 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- R21 Proposal (25 points)</td>
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100
POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty is contrary to the ethics of the social work profession, is unfair to other students, violates the UNC Code of Honor, and is acceptable in no circumstances. Original work is expected. Submitted work must conform to the Honor Code of the University of North Carolina. For information on the UNC-CH Honor Code, including guidance on representing the words, thoughts, and ideas of others, see: http://honor.unc.edu/ Please note that plagiarism is defined in the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance, Section II.B.1 as, “…the deliberate or reckless representation of another's words, thoughts, or ideas as one's own without attribution in connection with submission of academic work, whether graded or otherwise.” 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. Violations of the Honor Code result in an “F” grade. From Honor Code website, here are some helpful guidelines for when and how to cite the ideas and work of others:

Quotations: When directly quoting an outside source, the borrowed text must be surrounded by quotation marks or, if the quoted material is 40 words or more in length, it must be set as a block quote. See the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (2010, p. 92). Every quote must include a source – the author, year, and page number. The source must appear in the reference section at the end of your paper.

Here is an example of alternative ways to cite the same material:

Original Text (more than 40 words; set as block quote):

Unks (2007) found the following:

Our best teachers do not convey information by filling heads or stretching minds with some sort of illusionary basic subjects; they impart instead a way of looking, a way of perceiving, a way of investigating the wonder of life in such a way that students learn how and what to see. (p. 42)

Internal Reference (less than 40 words):

Unks (2007) argued that "our best teachers…impart instead a way of looking, a way of perceiving, a way of investigating the wonder of life in such a way that students learn how and what to see" (p. 42). OR

In an eloquent argument, Unks (2007, p. 42) claimed, "Our best teachers…impart instead a way of looking, a way of perceiving, a way of investigating the wonder of life in such a way that students learn how and what to see."

Paraphrase:

Responding to Barth (2006), Unks (2007) argued that the best teachers show students a way to perceive the wonder of life.

POLICY ON ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
Students with disabilities that affect their participation in the course and who wish to have special accommodations should contact the University’s Disabilities Services (Voice: 919-962-8300, TTY: 711 [NC Relay] or http://equalopportunity-ada.unc.edu/americans-with-disability/student-disability-services/index.htm). Disabilities Services notifies instructors that students have documented disabilities and may require accommodations. Students should discuss the specific accommodations (e.g., changes in instructional format, examination format) with their instructor.

In addition, the Academic Success Program for Students with Learning Disabilities (919-962-7227) provides supportive services for students with learning disabilities and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorders. Students will be asked to provide documentation of disabling or medical conditions from an appropriate primary care provider. Working with Disability Services and the Academic Success Program and without lowering academic standards, the instructor will make reasonable accommodations to reduce barriers caused by a disability.

**COURSE WEBSITE**

The course description, lecture notes, and other course materials are available online through the Sakai website. See http://sakai.unc.edu
# Course Outline and Readings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class date</th>
<th>Readings, Discussion Topics, and Speakers</th>
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## January 9

### Class #1: Introduction

- Review course syllabus
- Overview of NIH funding mechanisms
- Cause, effect, and causal relationships
- Causal description versus causal explanation
- Terminology
  - Experiment
  - Randomized experiment
  - Quasi-experiment
  - Natural experiment
  - Observational study
- What is an intervention?
- What is intervention research? Why is it important in social work?
- Role of qualitative research: The Robbers Cave Experiment

**Interested in the Robbers Cave study?** See:

**Discussion:**
- What are your intervention interests?
- How is your dissertation related to an intervention?

**In-Class Exercise:**
- Read Tuchman: Does Tuchman et al. make a persuasive argument?
- Read Dear X: What are the challenges, as you see them?
- Resources on Sakai:


  Dear X (If you have not already read this letter, see the course website)

**Reading Assignments (after class):**


Fraser, Richman, Galinsky, & Day, 2009. pp. 3-44

## January 16

### Class #2: Writing Proposals (2:00-3:15)

- Vancouver citation style
• Writing proposals versus journal articles

Guest Speaker: Diane Wyant

January 23  Class #3: Overview of Types of Validity – Causal Connections

• Assessing the validity of causal inferences
• A typology of validity
  ▪ Statistical conclusion validity
  ▪ Internal validity
  ▪ Construct validity
  ▪ External validity

Required Reading (before class):

Mini-Assignment #1 – The Need or Problem: Pick a need, problem, or condition to address throughout the semester. Prepare a brief written statement (~ two pages) of your central social concern and intervention interest. Be prepared to share this with your colleagues. Note: For all assignments in SOWO 940, we will use single-spaced layout style. In your statement, address the following questions:

1. What is the need, problem, or condition? What is its prevalence? How has the prevalence changed over time? Use primary data sources (e.g., CDC Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance or U.S. Census Bureau data). Do not rely on secondary sources, such as newsletters or advocacy websites.
2. What empirical and theoretical literature should you review? Key words?
3. What kinds of interventions might be needed and feasible at each level (e.g., individual, family, organizational, county or court jurisdiction, state, nation)?
4. What level of intervention is of interest to you at this point?
5. What are the key outcome measures? Find and present reviews of measures in your field (see e.g., Dawe, Loxton, Hides, Kavanagh, & Mattick, 2002)?


January 30  Class #4: Statistical Conclusion and Internal Validity

• How to assess the strength of causal inferences
  ▪ Statistical conclusion validity
  ▪ Internal validity
• Concept: The best available evidence

Required Reading (before class):
Shadish et al. (2002), pp. 33-63.

**Mini-Assignment #2 – Identify the Core Constructs:** Develop a list of constructs (i.e., units, settings, treatments, and outcomes) you will use to organize your literature review. Be prepared to share your list in class.

As part of the process of building an intervention, begin a bibliography on your area. Include theoretical, empirical, and practice literature that describes the interventions that have addressed this area in the past. To address the social need, problem, or condition, are multiple interventions needed? Which ones appear promising? Can they be combined or sequenced along some continuum (e.g., developmental age)? Submit your list and bibliography. Use asterisks to indicate those interventions that you intend to review.

**TIP:** From a practical perspective, you should begin work on your proposal with an assessment of what is currently funded because an agency is unlikely to award funding for a new project if it is currently funding a similar project. To review abstracts of existing NIH research projects, use the Research Portfolio Online Reporting Tool (RePORT) at: [http://projectreporter.nih.gov/reporter.cfm](http://projectreporter.nih.gov/reporter.cfm)

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**February 6**  
**Class #5: Independent Reading Week**

**Reading:**
15 research articles on interventions in your area

**Mini-Assignment #3 – Identify Innovative Intervention Strategies**
- Submit an annotated bibliography for 15 articles (give sample size, design, intervention, and findings); no more than 150 words per article; be sufficient; develop a code, if you like
- Describe in one page at least three implications for the design of an innovative intervention that may advance the field. *Note.* Think small. What has been tested and found to be promising? How could you advance knowledge?

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**February 13**  
**Class #6: Construct and External Validity**

- Threats to construct validity
- Threats to external validity
- Implications for assessing the “best available” evidence

**Required Reading (before class):**
Shadish et al. (2002), pp. 64-102


**Recommended Reading:**

**Discussion:**
Based on statistical conclusion validity, internal validity, construct validity, and external validity, describe the strength of the literature in your area.

**February 20**

**Class #7: Developing Conceptual Frameworks for Interventions – Specifying Mediational Models and Theories of Change**

- How do we represent interventions in structural models?
- Specifying mediation in developmental and conceptual models
- Mediation, confounding, and suppression effects
- Theories of change

**Example:** The Biopsychosocial Model of Conduct Problems in Adolescence – Integrating Individual, Family, Peer, and Sociocultural Risks

**Required Reading:**
Fraser et al. (2009), pp. 45-62.

**Recommended Readings** (review for format of your conceptual framework):


**Mini-Assignment #4 – Draw Your Conceptual Model:** Use the graphing techniques demonstrated in Orlando et al. (2005) to draw a mediational model depicting mediators and distal outcomes related to your intervention. Next create a theory of change for your intervention. Be prepared to present both in class.
Class #8: Developing Culturally-Sensitive Treatment Manuals
Policies as Interventions

Developing Culturally Congruent Treatment Manuals

- Specifying culture-based program mediators in the design of social interventions
- Measurement considerations in cross-cultural intervention research
- Fidelity considerations in cross-cultural intervention research
- Consumer and parent groups, advisory boards, and consultants

Guest Speaker: Betsy Bledsoe, Assistant Professor, SSW, UNC-Chapel Hill

Required Reading:
Fraser et al. (2009), pp. 63-156.

Recommended Reading:


Policies as Interventions

On Reserve in Rare Books at Wilson Library (Second floor rotunda): *Orders and Directions* (DA398 1630 .G7):

*Sovereign* (1625-1649: Charles I) Orders and directions, together with a Commission for the better administration of justice, and more perfect information of His Maistie: How, and by whom the lawes and statutes tending to the reliefe of the poore, the well ordering and training of youth in trades, and the reformation of disorders and disordered persons, are executed throughout the kingdome / which His Royall Maiestie hath commanded to be published and inquired of, by the body of his Priuie Councell, whom he hath made principall commissioners for this purpose.

Imprinted at London: By Robert Barker, printer to the Kings most Excellent Maiestie, and by the assignes of Iohn Bill, 1630.

*Note.* Book on hold under instructor’s name. You will have to fill out a Rare Books Collection Application to see this document. Be sure to have your UNC One Card. The hours of the Rare Books Collection of the Wilson Library are 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. weekdays, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Saturdays, and 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Sundays. (*Hours subject to change because of the ongoing sprinkler installation project in Wilson*). If you have questions, contact Susan or John (919-962-3765), Public Services Librarians, in the Reading Room on the second floor. Email: vinci@email.unc.edu

Examples of Policies Intended to Produce Systematic Changes:


**Discussion:**
How are interventions, including policies, in your area tailored on the basis of potential moderators such as age, class, culture, disability status, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, and sexual orientation? Be prepared to share one example.

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**March 6**

**Class #9: R21 Research Proposal (draft)**

**Assignment:** Prepare a single-spaced (.5” margins all sides, 11 point Arial, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype, or Georgia typeface), six-page draft of a proposal (including figures and tables, but excluding one page for Specific Aims and an appendix for references) that addresses each of the topics below.

Be realistic: You should propose only what can actually be done. Be sure that your proposal has high feasibility.

Be prepared to present your proposal for discussion in class.

Write to a specific R21 and submit a copy of the PA, RFA, or RFP to which you are responding with your proposal.

*Specific Aims* (1 page)
- Specify the aims of your study
- Specify any hypotheses

*Significance* (1 page)
- Describe the need or problem area in national terms by using incidence, prevalence, or other primary data. That is, make the case that you will address a problem of national significance.
- Develop and describe a conceptual framework or model (include a graphic image that specifies malleable mediators)
- Use research literature to support each construct in the conceptual framework. Describe (in detail) four to six relevant studies. Be sure to assess the statistical conclusion and internal validity of this literature.

*Innovation* (.5 page)

*Approach* (4.5 pages)
- Describe the design, including participants, recruitment and sampling procedures, assignment mechanism, measures, data collection strategy, data analysis plan, and power. Be sure to address such issues as reliability and validity of measures, expected attrition of sample, imputation of missing data (Can you make the MAR assumption?), and mechanisms for insuring treatment fidelity plus fidelity assessment.
- Describe your intervention and indicate that the treatment manual is appended.
- Describe preliminary studies

*References* (use Vancouver style)

See proposals at course website.
March 20  Class #10: Seminar Leadership

Seminar Leadership #1: Quasi-Experimental Designs

- Designs without control groups
- Designs that use a control group but no pretest
- Designs that use both control groups and pretests
- Designs that combine many design elements

Required Reading:
Shadish et al. (2002), pp. 103-245.

Seminar Leaders for Seminar #1:
1.
2.
3.
4.

March 27  Class #11: Seminar Leadership

Seminar Leadership #2: Experimental Designs

Rationale, Recruitment, Types of Randomization, Program Implementation, Attrition, and Missingness

- Theory of random assignment
- Designs with random assignment
- Conditions conducive to random assignment
- Recruiting participants to be in experiments
- Improving the random assignment process with matching
- Inducing and measuring implementation
- Matching with propensity scores

Required Reading:

Seminar Leaders for Seminar #3:
1.
2.
3.
4.

April 3  Class #12: Treatment Manuals (draft due)

Four Stages in Manual Development
1. Formulation
2. Revision
3. Differentiation
4. Translation and Adaptation

**Tips and Consultation from the Authors**

Johanna Greeson, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Policy and Practice
Rainier Masa, doctoral candidate
Qi Wu, doctoral candidate

**Assignment:** Bring draft of treatment manual (minimum 15 pages, excluding a title page and the table of contents).

April 10  Class #13: Ethics in Intervention Research

- Values and ethical standards
- Competing goods paradigm of dilemmas
- Ethical elements in intervention research
  - Selection of interventions and participants
  - Informed consent
  - Withholding potentially effective services
  - Random assignment
  - Service/study discontinuation
  - Conflicts of interest

Guest Speaker: Kim Strom-Gottfried, Theimann Distinguished Professor

**Required Readings** (see course website):


http://oba.od.nih.gov/policy/Draft_UsualCareProc_06062006_cvr.pdf [This is a long manuscript. In addition to the Weijer section, browse for content related to your proposal.]

April 17  Class #14: Generalized Causal Inference

- Formal sampling
- Grounded theory of generalized causal inference: Five Principles
- Critical analyses of assumptions

Guest Speaker: TBA

Required Reading:
Shadish et al. (2002), pp. 341-504 (browse)

April 24  Class #15: Presentation of R21 Proposal – Mock Review

- Mock NIH Review of Proposals: Oral Presentation

Guest Reviewers: TBA

Recommended Reading:


Course Deliverable: NIH proposal with treatment manual
Submit your proposal and treatment manual as separate documents. Please attach the PA to your proposal.