

**San Diego State University
School of Social Work**

**SW 610
Computer Applications in Social Work Practice
Spring 2008**

Class: HT-189 Computer lab

Wed. 12:30 – 3:10 pm
4:00 – 6:40 pm

Office Hours:

Tues. 10:30 am to 12:30pm
Weds. 10:30 am to 12:00pm

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I. COURSE PURPOSE

The purpose of the course is to provide students with a practical knowledge of social work research based on a combination of a statistical computer application and the Internet technology. This course provides students with continuity and linkage in social work research learning between Social Work 690 (Research Methods in Social Work) and Social Work 791 (Evaluation of Social Work Practice). This course will cover topics related to learning how to use social work research in social work practice in an effort to better serve people in need.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

A. Knowledge Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a practical knowledge and application of research methods in social work practice.
2. Develop a working understanding of one statistical software program that will guide data analysis for survey and intervention research.

B. SKILL OBJECTIVES

Students will:

1. Demonstrate an ability to apply principles of social work research methods into practice settings.

2. Demonstrate an ability to develop reliable and valid research questions.
3. Develop skills in identifying types of research design and data to be collected.
4. Demonstrate skills in analyzing data collected through both survey and intervention research.
5. Demonstrate skills in using data and information in evaluation of efficacy of intervention and effectiveness of program.

C. Value and Ethics

Students will be able to;

1. Integrate social work values and ethics into the application of social work research method.
2. Identify specific values related to the use of research protocol and statistical procedures.
3. Identify ethical dilemmas as they arise in use of research in social work practice.

III. COURSE TOPICS

We begin with a session on the use of the computer and Internet technology in various social work practice settings. Thus, in the first part of the course, we will explore and learn about capabilities and potentials the Internet provides for social work practice and research. More specifically, it involves discussion on the use of the computer technology in gathering information and assessing effectiveness of intervention related to social work practice.

The second part of the course involves data analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) program. You will learn how to analyze data from two major sources such as survey research and intervention research data. After data analysis, you will also learn how to appropriately report your findings and results.

Finally, this course will discuss the use of qualitative research methods in analyzing non-numerical types of data.

IV. EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

As an instructor, I have several expectations:

1. I expect you to have a good understanding of contents related research methods that you learned in Social Work 690. It is *extremely* critical to successfully completing course work in this class. I suggest that you do review the textbook from SW690 before you attend lecture or computer lab sessions.

2. I expect you to secure an e-mail account that you will use for the semester by no later than the second week of class. In addition, I expect you to check your e-mail messages at least once a day for any changes or updates that I may need to announce regarding our class. For your information, you, as a SDSU graduate student, you are entitled to obtain SDSU ROHAN account for e-mail and web-storage. If interested, you can find more about how to obtain Rohan account at <http://www.rohan.sdsu.edu>.
3. I expect you to turn in your assignments by due dates. You should keep a copy of all the files that you send to your instructor. You may ask the instructor to send a confirmation reply for the record when the assignment is submitted via e-mail.
4. I encourage you to ask questions to an instructor when you encounter any problems. Also, I strongly encourage you to find yourselves workmates in learning new materials in this class. However, we expect your assignments to represent your own work.

V. REQUIRED TEXT

Rowntree, D. (2004). Statistics without fear: A primer for non-mathematicians. Boston: MA. Allen and Bacon Classics.

Kirkpatrick, L. A., & Feeney, B. C. (2006). A Simple Guide to SPSS for Windows for Version 12.0. Wadsworth Publishing.

Suggested book:

Pett, M. (1997). Nonparametric Statistics in Health Care Research : Statistics for Small Samples and Unusual Distributions. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication

I post additional course reading materials on SW610 Blackboard site each week. Normally, readings will be posted at least two weeks prior to the week when we plan to discuss them in class. The majority of readings will be available in *.pdf* format, so you will need to have Adobe Acrobat Reader program installed on your computer for viewing and printing the readings. Course reading materials typically range from a collection of research journal articles on social work practice (for example, "Research on Social Work Practice") to the detailed instructions on the use of SPSS and other software program used in this class.

Supplies Required for Class is a storage device to save and keep your computer files such as USB memory key (32MB, 64MB or more).

VI. CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1 1/23/2008	Introduction to Course
Week 2 1/30/2008	The Use & Role of Research in Social Work Practice: Survey & Intervention Research Assignment #1 (Article Worksheet) Due
Week 3 2/6/2008	Development of valid and reliable questions for Social Work Practice Research Reading: Fowler, F. J. (1993). <i>Survey Research Methods</i> (2 nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication. (Chapters will be posted on Blackboard in <i>.pdf</i>). Chapter 5: Designing Questions to be Good Measures Chapter 6: Designing and Evaluating Survey Questions
Week 4 2/13/2008	No Class Meeting: Group Work on Assignment #2 (Conference Attendance)
Week 5 2/20/2008	SPSS for Windows (1): Introduction: What SPSS is and why we use it in Social Work Practice - Creating a new data file & data entry - Cleaning a data file READING: Kirkpatrick & Keeny (2005) – Chapters 1, 2, & 5 Assignment #2 Development of Reliable and Valid Research Questions/Scale
Week 6 2/27/2008	Student Presentation on Scales Development
Week 7 3/5/2008	SPSS for Windows (2): Using SPSS to summarize and describe sample Descriptive statistics vs. inferential statistics Central tendency and dispersion statistics READING: Kirkpatrick & Keeny (2005) – Chapter 6 Rowtree, Introduction, Chapter 1, 2, 3
Week 8 3/12/2008	How To Report Results in MS-Word: Tables and Write-up Kirkpatrick & Feeney, Chapters 3, 4, &5, pp. 9-16. Kirkpatrick & Feeney, Appendix A & B pp. 103-115. Rowtree, Chapter 3 Assignment #3 (SPSS data file assignment) Due

Week 9 3/19/2008	SPSS for Windows (3): Data manipulation (COMPUTE, RECODE, & SELECT procedures) READING: Kirkpatrick & Keeny (2005) – Appendix B
Week 10 3/26/2008	SRPING RECESS
Week 11 4/2/2008	SPSS for Windows (4): Exploring relationship among variables: Part 1 <i>Chi-square and Pearson's correlation coefficient statistics</i> READING: Kirkpatrick & Feeney, Chapter 17, pp. 97-102 Rowntree, Chapter 5, 6, 7.
Week 12 4/9/2008	SPSS for Windows (5): Exploring relationship among variables: Part 2 <i>Chi-square and Pearson's correlation coefficient statistics</i> READING: Kirkpatrick & Feeney, Chapter 14 & 15, pp. 75-86 Rowntree, Chapter 8 Assignment #4 (Survey Research Data Analysis) Due
Week 13 4/16/2008	SPSS for Windows (6): Examining differences in SPSS for Windows: Part 1 <i>Paired Sample and Independent Samples T-tests</i> READING: Kirkpatrick & Keeny (2005) – Chapters, 7, 8, & 9
Week 14 4/23/2008	SPSS for Windows (7): Examining differences in SPSS for Windows: Part 2 <i>One-way and Two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)</i> READING: Kirkpatrick & Keeny (2005) – Chapter 10
Week 15 4/30/2008	Nonparametric Statistics in Social Work Practice Research Pett, M. (1997). <u>Nonparametric Statistics in Health Care Research</u> (A copy of selected chapter will be posted on Blackboard.
Week 16 5/7/2008	Examination
Finals Week 5/14/2008	Assignment #5 (Intervention Research Data Analysis) Due

VII. GRADING

A total of five assignments will be expected for this course. Assigned percentage and due dates for the assignments are found below. Assignments turned in past the due date will be penalized 20% of a total score. The grade for the semester will be determined according to the following scale.

- 1) Assignment 1: Research article worksheet (Due 1/30/2008): 5%
- 2) Assignment 2: Development of reliable and valid research questions (due 2/20/2008, 2/27/2008): 20%
- 3) Assignment 3: Data Entry Assignment (Due 3/12/2008): 5%
- 4) Assignment 4: Survey Research Data analysis (Due 4/9/2008): 25%
- 5) Assignment 5: Intervention Research Data analysis (Due 5/14/2008): 25%
- 6) Examination (5/7/2008): 20%

Point Scores:

A: 94-100	A-: 90-93	
B+: 88-89	B : 83-87	B-: 80-82
C+: 78-79	C: 73-77	C-: 70-72
D: 60-69	F: Less than 59	

VIII. ASSIGNMENTS

1. Research Article Worksheet (5%)

Date Due: 1/30/2008

In this assignment, you will be asked to read one article on social work research and to complete an article worksheet.

2. Development of Reliable and Valid Research Questions (20%)

Date Due: 2/20/2008 and presentation on 2/27/08

In this group assignment, your group will develop a series of questions that are designed to measure a concept relevant to practice. The questions should be both reliable and valid. Also, each group will present and share their work in class for feedback and input from an instructor and classmates.

3. SPSS - Data Entry (5%)

Date Due: 3/12/2008

In Assignment #3, you are asked to create a SPSS data file based on a survey questionnaire (or agency form) and corresponding data that will be provided to you. An agency form and its corresponding data will be posted in Blackboard Assignment section. You will complete the followings:

1. Create a new data file in SPSS for Windows, using the form and data provided.
2. Make sure that the data file is free of any coding or data entry errors, using a data cleaning procedure.

For Assignment #3, you are to submit a SPSS data file that you create by e-mail attachment. Please submit a completed SPSS data file to the instructor via e-mail at jwmin@rohan.sdsu.edu (Please note that this address is only for submitting your assignments. This is different from my usual e-mail at jwmin@mail.sdsu.edu). Make sure that "Subject:" line reads "SW610 – Assignment #3 with your SECTION." Your grade will be posted in the online gradebook in blackboard.

4. SPSS Data Analysis and Report on Survey Research: 25%

Date Due: 4/9/2008

In Assignments #4, you will have an opportunity to perform data analysis on survey dataset to be provided to you. There are several research questions that you can choose from in analyzing survey data. Select TWO questions that interest you and conduct data analyses appropriate for answering the two questions that selected. A more detailed instruction on this assignment and description of the dataset will be posted on Blackboard Assignment section. A final submission is in the form of a mini-research article with 4-6 pages.

5. SPSS Data Analysis and Report on Intervention Research: 25%

Date Due: 5/14/2008

In a final assignment, you will be presented data from intervention research. A primary research question to be addressed in this assignment is to assess the efficacy of an intervention. A description of the intervention program and its data will be provided. What you will do is to use the data to examine whether the intervention is efficacious or not. As with Assignment #4, a final submission is in the form of a mini-research article with 4-6 pages.

REFERENCES:

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Valerie L. Gordon-Garofalo, V. L., & Rubin, A. (2004). Evaluation of a Psychoeducational Group for Seronegative Partners and Spouses of Persons With HIV/AIDS. *Research on Social Work Practice*, Vol. 14, 14-26.