City University of Hong Kong
Course Syllabus

offered by Department of <u>Social and Behavioural Sciences</u>
with effect from <u>Semester B 2017/ 2018</u>

Part I   Course Overview

Course Title:	Social Work Research Methods
Course Code:	SS5213
Course Duration:	One Semester
Credit Units:	3
Level:	P5
Medium of Instruction:	English
Medium of Assessment:	English
Prerequisites: *(Course Code and Title)*	Nil
Precursors: *(Course Code and Title)*	Nil
Equivalent Courses: *(Course Code and Title)*	Nil
Exclusive Courses: *(Course Code and Title)*	Nil

Part II   Course Details

1.   Abstract

Social workers are guided by theories, research and practice wisdom in their work. It is important for students to be able to understand the importance of knowledge developed from research and to utilize this knowledge in their clinical and administrative practice.   In order to build a firm conceptual foundation for research practice and the integration of research into a wide range of social work activities, this course will expose students to social science research ethics and the fundamental elements of social science research methods. Approaches to intervention research, social research and development, clinical research with individuals and groups, single-subject design, case study, qualitative approaches, use of narratives, and process studies will be explored. Students will be required to design an intervention research project and assess its strengths and weaknesses.

This course aims to

- Develop a scientific attitude towards the empirical research process and become familiar with the basic characteristics of social research.
- Understand the nature of the components which are fundamental to the development, and completion of social science research.
- Critically examine the factors involved in the selection of research designs appropriate to the study of social services.
- Acquire knowledge and understanding of various research methods and statistical analysis applicable to social work settings.

2.   Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)
(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	*A2*	*A3*
1.	Understand the nature and methods of social research and program evaluation; comprehend the appropriate applications of each method.		√	√	
2.	Understand the strengths and limitations of various research methods in scientific inquires.		√	√	
3.	Demonstrate capabilities of applying research methods and statistical analysis to the social work settings in order to help build up an attitude of evidence-based practice; and can identify strengths and weaknesses of social work research in the process of professional inquires.		√	√	√
4.	Develop a manner of scientific and logical inquires in social work practice for enhancement of the profession development.		√	√	√
		100%			

A1: *Attitude*
Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: *Ability*
Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.

A3: *Accomplishments*
Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)
(TLAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

TLA	Brief Description	CILO No. 1	2	3	4	Hours/week (if applicable)
Lecture	Explain key concepts, theories, methods and skills related to social work research	√	√			
Small study/ project group learning and class discussion	Students are organized into small study/ project groups to discuss and consult the relevant intellectual inputs they learnt in the lectures, and develop their own research projects by the research knowledge and skills they obtained.	√	√	√	√	
SPSS workshop	Live demonstrations and hand-on exercises of using SPSS for data analysis are organized in workshop formats to enhance students' application of empirical data and evidence to their social work inquires.	√		√	√	
Group presentation	Students of respective study/ project groups are required to deliver a presentation to their peer colleagues in order to convey and exchange research ideas, knowledge, methods, skills and results they obtained in their research group projects.	√	√	√	√	
Group research proposal	Students in the small study/ project groups are required to work together to formulate a research proposal as a demonstration of their research knowledge and skills learned in the course.	√	√	√	√	

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.				Weighting	Remarks
	1	2	3	4		
Continuous Assessment: __100__ %						
AT1: Class Participation and Discussion: Students' attendance, active involvement in class discussion, initiation in sharing and contributing ideas, attitudes in learning together, and willingness to improve learning will all be taken into account.	√	√	√	√	10%	
AT2: Short Quiz: During the first semester, a 1.5 hour quiz in multiple-choice format will be carried out to test their research methodology knowledge from the lectures, reference reading book list and essential texts.	√	√			25%	
AT3: SPSS Exercise: Students in the class need to analyse a dataset that was collected by themselves as the practice of SPSS knowledge in order to enhance their statistical procedures skills.	√		√	√	10%	
AT3: Group Presentation: The group presentation aims at assessing students' competence and ability to demonstrate, organize, and convey research knowledge learnt as a means of professional growth.	√	√	√	√	15%	
AT4: Group Research Proposal: Students will team up not more than 4 classmates to write a research proposal based on social welfare issues as study topic to demonstrate the research knowledge, methodology and skills learned.	√	√	√	√	40%	
Examination: ____% (duration: , if applicable)						
					100%	

5. **Assessment Rubrics**

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
1) Class Participation and Discussion	1.1 Capacity for demonstrating the research knowledge and methods required for scientific inquries in the social work settings	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
2) Quiz	2.1 Capacity for demonstrating the research knowledge and methods required for scientific inquires in the social work settings 2.2 Ability to analyse and use the research knowledge and methods learnt	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
3) SPSS Exercise	3.1 Capacity for presenting knowledge and skills of statistical procedures for social work research purpose 3.2 Ability to comprehend suitable statistical procedures to be used in an appropriate social work context	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
4) Group Presentation	4.1 Capacity for demonstrating the research knowledge and methods required for scientific inquries in the social work settings 4.2 Ability to use and deliver the research knowledge and methods learnt 4.3 Demonstration of the application of acquired research knowledge and methods in the social work settings	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
5) Group Research Proposal	5.1 Capacity for demonstrating the research knowledge and methods required for scientific inquires in the social work settings 5.2 Ability to use and deliver the research knowledge and methods learnt 5.3 Demonstration of the application of acquired research knowledge and methods in the social work settings 5.4 Understating the strengths and constraints of research methods in the social work settings	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels

Part III Other Information (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

1. **Keyword Syllabus**
    (An indication of the key topics of the course.)

    1.1 Social Science Research Methods
        Scientific inquiry. Scientific logic. Epistemology. Problem formulation. Reliability and validity of measurement. Single-subject design. Survey research. Qualitative research methods. Quantitative research methods. Mixed methods. Causal inference. Internal validity. Threats to internal validity. Alternative and rival hypotheses. External validity. Probability and non-probability sampling methods. Statistics. Descriptive and inferential data analysis. Program evaluation.

    1.2 Research Ethics
        Human subjects research. Informed consent. Voluntary participation. Protection of human subjects. Anonymous and confidential studies. Incentive vs. inducement. Ethics review boards. Expedited and full ethics reviews. Promoting the development of research knowledge.

2. **Reading List**

    Essential Texts

    Engel, R.J. & Schutt, R.K. (2010). The Fundamentals of Social Work Research, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
    Engel, R. J., & Schutt, R. K. (2013). The practice of research in social work. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
    Shaw I. et al. (Eds) (2010). The SAGE handbook of social work research. Los Angeles: SAGE.
    Rubin, A. & Babbie, E.   (2008) *Research methods for social work* (6th ed.) Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

    Supplementary Texts
    Blanksby, P. E., & Barber, J. G. (2006). SPSS for social workers : An introductory workbook. Boston: Pearson.
    Creswell, J. W. (2003). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches (2 ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
    Jones, J. H. (1981). Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment. London, England: Free Press.
    Minkler, M. & Wallerstein, N. (2003). Community based participatory research for health. San Francisco, CA.: Jossey-Bass.
    Monette, D.R., Sullivan, T.J., & DeJong, C.R. (2005). Applied social research: A Tool for the Human Services.   (5th ed.).   Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole-Thompson Learning.
    Padgett, D. K. (2004). The qualitative research experience.   Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
    Strauss, A. L. & Corbin, J. (1998). Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
    Tashakkori & Teddlie (2002). Mixed methods for the social and behavioral sciences.   Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

    Recommended Guidebook for APA Style Formatting
    American Psychological Association. (2010). Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.). Washington, DC: APA.

Szuchman, L. T. & Thomlison, B. (2007). Writing with style: APA Style for social work (3rd Edition). Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Articles

Bae, S.-W., & Brekke, J. S. (2003). The measurement of self-esteem among Korean Americans: A cross-ethnic study. Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 9(1), 16-33.

Gibbs, L., & Gambrill, E. (1999). Introduction: The role of critical thinking in the helping professions. In Critical thinking for social workers: Exercises for the helping profession (Rev. ed., pp. 3-25). Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Herie, M., & Martin, G.W. (2002). Knowledge diffusion in social work: A new approach to bridging the gap. Social Work, 47 (1), 85-95.

Heineman, M.B. (1981). The obsolete scientific imperative in social work research. Social Service Review, 55(3), 371-397.

Klein, W. C., Bloom, M., & Chandler, S. M. (1994). Is there an ethical responsibility to use practice methods with the best empirical evidence of effectiveness? In W. W. Hudson & P. S. Nurius (Eds.), Controversial issues in social work research (pp. 100-112). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Proctor, E. K. (1990). Evaluating clinical practice: Issues of purpose and design. Social Work Research & Abstracts, 26(1), 32-40.

Schuerman, J.R. (1982). Debate with authors: The obsolete scientific imperative in social work research. Social Service Review, 56(1), 144-148.

Sherraden, M. (2000). Asking questions well: The role of theory in applied social research, keynote address. Proceedings of the twelfth national symposium on doctoral research in social work. (pp. 1-21). Columbus, Oh. Ohio State University, College of Social Work.

York, R. O. (1997). Developing the literature review for a research study. In Building basic competencies in social work research: An experiential approach (Appendix A, pp. 349-358). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Online Resources

The Elements of Style - A rule book for writing. You can read it online: http://www.bartleby.com/141/.

USC Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism:
http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct/ug_plag.htm.

Forum: Qualitative Research - An online journal of qualitative research: http://www.qualitative-research.net.

Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research: http://www.iaswresearch.org.

Society for Social Work Research: http://www.sswr.org.

American Evaluation Association: http://www.eval.org.

Social Work Resources and Research Guide http://libguides.usc.edu/socialwork

Guide to locating Tests and Instruments http://www.apa.org/science/faq-findtests.html.
http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm
on survey research and sample size calculator.

http://ihome.cuhk.edu.hk/~b103405/ls2001/
web site introducing social research methods   by CUHK in Chinese.

http://www.cityu.edu.hk/mpu/research/index.html
  research projects of SS and SA staff.

http://www.socialwork.com.hk
sites on social work resources in Hong Kong.

http://www.surveyconsole.com/console/showSurveyLibrary.do?surveyID=169
free Survey Template Library.

http://www.odh.state.oh.us/Data/OFHSurv/OFHSChartBk8Cover.htm
Women's Health By Race and Ethnicity, Ohio, 1998.

http://www.kff.org/womenshealth/20020507a-index.cfm
2001 Kaiser Women's Health Survey - Women's Health in the United States: Health Coverage and Access to Care.