SOCIAL WORK (MSW)

MSW 510: Research Methods in Clinical Social Work Practice

3 Credits

This course is designed to introduce social research methods in the context of social work practice. Research and evaluation are critical components of professional social work practice, and this foundation course hones in on critical thinking skills and examines methods of inquiry for testing theory and evaluating the effectiveness of social work practice. This course covers research skills and covers how research is integrated into social work practice. Steps in this process are covered in depth, and students will receive practice in moving from problem identification to research design to analysis to writeup. These are the same steps students will use for their capstone experience project at the end of the program. Research skills will be integrated with other areas of the MSW curriculum, and this course will examine the relationship between theory and research, the conceptualization of research questions and hypotheses, and elements of research design and analysis. It will introduce both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to build knowledge for practice.

Recommended Preparation: Students should have completed an undergraduate research methods course.

MSW 560: Applied Research in Clinical Social Work Practice

3 Credits

This advanced research course builds on material covered in the foundation research course about the design, development, and execution of sound scientific practices. Emphasis will be placed on areas of sampling, measurement, and proposal writing. Topics will include practical sampling design, question formation, questionnaire/interview construction and format, scaling, critiquing proposals, budget development, budget justification, timelines, etc. Special attention will be given to randomized clinical trials (RCT), with the understanding that this is often not feasible in social work practice for ethical and practical reasons. As a result, selection bias is of substantial concern and how results are written and interpreted need to consider the impacts of selection. This class will focus on the application of research methodology to increase student’s understanding of the tradeoffs and limitations of various designs within the parameters of a naturalistic setting. The importance of balancing rigorous scientific methods with ethics, practicality and feasibility to answer important questions for social work practice will be emphasized. This course will also focus on preparing students for their capstone experience and assignments will be tailored to student’s individual projects.

Prerequisite: MSW 510 Recommended Preparation: Students should have completed the first year social work courses.