

School Vision: Building upon a foundation of social justice and an ethic of care, we are a community of learners actively engaged in the development of critical, transformative knowledge for social work practice.

BSW Mission Statement: The Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program addresses issues of power and issues of discrimination based on age, race, gender, sexual orientation, class and culture. The educational objective of the BSW curriculum is to provide students with the knowledge, values and skills necessary for an initial level of professional practice, focusing on the interface between personal problems and public issues. Critical thinking and structural analysis are central to the learning experience offered by the School and to the promotion of social justice and human well-being.

Year/Term	2018 - 19 Winter
Course Title	SOWK 320: Introduction to Social Work Research
Course Schedule	Mondays, 9:00 – 12pm, Term 1
Course Location	SOWK Room 124

INSTRUCTOR	OFFICE LOCATION	OFFICE HOURS	TELEPHONE NUMBER	E-MAIL ADDRESS
Simon Davis	Room 342	By appointment	604-822-9302	simon.davis@ubc.ca
TEACHING ASSISTANT	OFFICE LOCATION	OFFICE HOURS	TELEPHONE NUMBER	E-MAIL ADDRESS
Rae Morris	Room 215	By appointment	n/a	raemor@mail.ubc.ca

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the theory and conduct of social research as applied to social welfare and social work practice. The focus is on ways of generating new knowledge, and on understanding the strengths and limitations of various research methods.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. To be able to define, and appropriately apply to practice, basic terms, concepts, and processes of both quantitative and qualitative research.
2. To define and argue the logic of various research methods, and the strengths and limitations of each method.
3. To demonstrate the ways in which research can inform social work practice.
4. To critically evaluate research methodologies, analysis, and interpretation.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

“Regular attendance is expected of students in all their classes (including lectures, laboratories, tutorials, seminars, etc.). Students who neglect their academic work and assignments may be excluded from the final examinations. Students who are unavoidably absent because of illness or disability should report to their instructors on return to

classes.” (UBC Calendar)

Academic Dishonesty: Please review the UBC Calendar “Academic regulations” for the university policy on cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty. Also visit www.arts.ubc.ca and go to the students’ section for useful information on avoiding plagiarism and on correct documentation.

Retaining Assignments: Students should retain a copy of all submitted assignments (in case of loss) and should also retain all their marked assignments in case they wish to apply for a Review of Assigned Standing. Students have the right to view their marked examinations with their instructor, providing they apply to do so within a month of receiving their final grades. This review is for pedagogic purposes. The examination remains the property of the university.

COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE

The attendance policy is in the student handbook on page 11: <https://socialwork.ubc.ca/current-students/>.

The School considers class attendance to be an essential component of integrated learning in professional social work education. Therefore, regular attendance is *required* in all social work courses. Instructors may count repeated late arrivals or early departures as an absence, and a meeting should be setup to discuss this with the student.

The University accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with Access and Diversity. Students, who will require accommodation for attendance due to disability, are encouraged to inform the instructor, and if necessary, to contact Access and Diversity preferably not later than the first week of class. The School will also accommodate religious observance, according to University Policy 65, and students are expected to inform the instructor. Students who wish to be accommodated for unavoidable absences due to varsity athletics, family obligations, or other similar commitments, must notify their instructors in writing at least two weeks in advance, and preferably earlier. This reflects expectations for professional social workers in their place of employment.

If students miss three or more classes, they may be considered to have not met the requirements of the course. If students have valid reasons, they could be withdrawn from the course with the approval of the instructor – otherwise, they would fail the course.

SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignments are due as noted in this course outline, unless otherwise informed by the instructor.

RETURN OF MARKED STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS:

All assignments are to be submitted via the UBC Canvas course site. Assignments will be marked with track changes and comments provided in the same manner.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS:

Generally, late assignments will not be accepted. In emergency situations, students must discuss any potential lateness with their instructor and be prepared to have a medical certificate available. Assignments submitted after the deadline with no documentation will be penalized by one percentage point per day.

FORMAT OF THE COURSE:

Classroom-based lectures with discussion and exercises.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:

Engel, R. & Schutt, R. (2016). *The Practice of Research in Social Work*, 4th ed. Sage Publishing.

Other readings will be provided online, at the Canvas website.

COURSE SCHEDULE

SESSION 1:	September 10, 2018
TOPIC:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to the course.• Why do research?• Gathering and evaluating research evidence.• Evidence-based practice.
READING:	Engel & Schutt, chapter 1. CASW Code of Ethics; see p. 8, "Competence in professional practice": https://www.casw-acts.ca/sites/default/files/attachements/casw_code_of_ethics.pdf Position paper on the questionable use of off-label prescribing in psychiatry (prescribing drugs when there is no clear indication or evidence base for their use): https://choosingwiselycanada.org/psychiatry/
SESSION 2:	September 17, 2018
TOPIC:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Philosophy and theory in social work research.
READING:	Engel & Schutt, chapter 2.
SESSION 3:	September 24, 2018
TOPIC:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research ethics.
READING:	Engel & Schutt, chapter 3.
SESSION 4:	October 1, 2018
TOPIC:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indigenous perspectives on research; Guest speaker: Prof. Ashley Quinn.
READING:	Simonds, V.W. & Christopher, S. (2013, December). Adapting Western research methods to Indigenous ways of knowing. <i>American Journal of Public Health</i> . 103(12). 2185-2190. Retrieved August 9, 2017 from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3828951/pdf/AJPH.2012.301157.pdf
SESSION 5:	October 8, 2018: NO CLASS (stat holiday)
SESSION 6:	October 15, 2018
TOPIC:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sampling• Survey research (class will include students designing a mini-online survey).• Contrasting questionnaires and interviews.
READING:	Engel & Schutt, chapters 5 and 9.
SESSION 7:	October 22, 2018
TOPIC:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Survey research, continued.• Making causal inferences in research.

	• Experimental and quasi-experimental designs.
READING:	Engel & Schutt, chapters 6 and 7.
SESSION 8:	October 29, 2018
TOPIC:	• Experimental and quasi-experimental designs, continued. • Introduction to quantitative data analysis.
READING:	Engel & Schutt, chapters 8 and 14.
SESSION 9:	November 5, 2018
TOPIC:	• Mid-term exam: details to be given in class.
SESSION 10:	November 12 NO CLASS (stat holiday)
SESSION 11:	November 19, 2018
TOPIC:	• Qualitative Research, part I.
READING:	Engel & Schutt, chapter 10.
SESSION 12:	November 26, 2018
TOPIC:	• Qualitative Research, part II.
READING:	Engel & Schutt, chapter 11.
SESSION 13:	December 3, 2018
TOPIC:	• Reading and critiquing research articles.
READING:	Engel & Schutt, Appendices A - D

ASSIGNMENTS

- Attendance: 10%.
 - Completion of research ethics tutorial (by Sept. 30th): 5%
 - Mid-term exam (Nov. 5th): 40%
The mid-term will be based on course lectures and readings and will use multiple choice and short answer questions. Length: 90 minutes.
 - Final exam (in exam period): 45%.
The final exam will involve students writing a research proposal, concerning the hypothetical evaluation of a social work program. More details and guidelines will be given in class.
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UBC GRADING CRITERIA

Letter Grade	Percent Range	Mid-Point	
A+	90-100	95	Represents work of exceptional quality. Content, organization and style are all at a high level. Student demonstrates excellent research and reference to literature where appropriate. Also, student uses sound critical thinking, has innovative ideas on the subject and shows personal engagement with the topic.
A	85-89	87	
A-	80-84	82	

B+	76-79	77.5	Represents work of good quality with no major weaknesses. Writing is clear and explicit and topic coverage and comprehension is more than adequate. Shows some degree of critical thinking and personal involvement in the work. Good use of existing knowledge on the subject.
B	72-75	83.5	
B-	68-71	69.5	
C+	64-67	65.5	Adequate and average work. Shows fair comprehension of the subject, but has some weaknesses in content, style and/or organization of the paper. Minimal critical awareness or personal involvement in the work. Adequate use of literature.
C	60-63	62.5	
C-	55-59	57	
D	50-54	52	Minimally adequate work, barely at a passing level. Serious flaws in content, organization and/or style. Poor comprehension of the subject, and minimal involvement in the paper. Poor use of research and existing literature.
F	0-49		Failing work. Inadequate for successful completion of the course or submitted beyond final date of acceptance for paper.

COURSE INSTRUCTORS

Simon Davis, MSW, PhD.

Simon has been an instructor at the UBC School of Social Work since 1998, teaching courses in research methods, community mental health practice, and social work and the law. He is also an instructor with the Douglas College post-diploma program in psychosocial rehabilitation. His professional practice has been as a clinician and administrator in the field of mental health and addictions.

Rae Morris, MSW, RCSW (teaching assistant)

Rae is a doctoral candidate at the UBC School of Social Work, and a Registered Clinical Social Worker, who has a private practice as an individual and family therapy.