

	School of Health Education and Human Services Bachelor of Social Work
	SW451 Social Work Research
	Term: Fall 2023 Number of Credits: 3 Credit Course
Course Outline	

INSTRUCTOR: Jordan Aslett, MSW

LOCATION: Zoom

E-MAIL: jaslett@yukonu.ca

TELEPHONE: 867.456.8535

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays 12pm-1pm

METHOD: Blended Synchronous/Asynchronous

TIME: Tuesdays 9am – 11:50pm

DATES: September 7th - November 30th

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on the contributions of research to effective social work practice and policy. Emphasis is placed on understanding and critically assessing social work research, and on how to employ a variety of quantitative, qualitative, and community-based research methodologies to advance social work knowledge and practice.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Prerequisite(s): Admission to the BSW Program

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate basic knowledge and critical understanding of the research process, including the interrelationships between research, theory, and practice
2. Identify various research methods, both quantitative and qualitative, and discuss their strengths and limitations
3. Apply basic skills in a range of research methods applicable to social work or social welfare settings, with particular emphasis on diverse populations relevant to the territory [e.g. First Nations, rural populations, newcomers, children, youth, women, seniors, unemployed, those with health issues or disabilities, etc.]
4. Explain the process of ethical review in the local context [eg. First Nations ethics processes and Northern research ethics] as well as the relevance of the CASW Code of Ethics to human service research
5. Evaluate the quality and applicability of research reports and studies
6. Describe emerging trends in social work research, particularly with regards to anti-oppressive research, indigenous knowledge(s), Northern research, Queer and disability perspectives, anti-racist approaches and the influence of feminism.

7. Compare scientific and alternative research approaches and describe how they inform individual, organizational and community based social work practice.

COURSE FORMAT

Delivery Format

This course blends synchronous and asynchronous delivery of content. First, students will be required to prepare for class by watching pre-recorded video lectures that have been uploaded to Moodle by the instructor. Next, students will attend weekly class meetings via Zoom that will focus on discussion of content and learning activities.

Weekly Breakdown of Hours

Activity	Estimated Time
Synchronous Class Activities & Discussion via Zoom	110 minutes
Asynchronous Video Instruction via Moodle	45 minutes
Weekly Readings (2 to 3 per week)	100 minutes
Assignments (varies week to week)	120 minutes
Total	375 minutes (approx. 6.5 hours)

It is important to note that the time required will vary by individual.

EVALUATION

Assignments	100%
Total	100%

All Assignments Due on Fridays at 11:59am

Assignment 1 (3 x 10%) – Research Reports (FlipGrid) – Due Weeks 3, 8 & 11

Students will create three 5-minute FlipGrid videos. Each video will contain a report on a study from a social work (or closely related) research journal. Students must choose at least one qualitative and one quantitative study to report on.

Assignment 2 (30%) – Community Research Happenings – Due Week 6

Students will investigate social research occurring in either a) the Yukon, b) the Canadian North, or c) Indigenous communities in Canada. Students will then write up a report on the various projects underway and how social workers are already or can be involved in them.

Assignment 3 (40%) – Assessing a Research Methodology - Due Week 13

Students will choose a research approach (either quantitative or one of the qualitative

approaches examined in class) to explore in-depth. Students will write a report that describes:

- a) the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the approach,
- b) the methods of data collection and analysis used in the approach
- c) exemplary studies using that approach.

Students will then assess the approach by looking at its:

- a) potential value for service users/practitioners/policy/society.
- b) ethical implications
- c) political positioning

COURSE WITHDRAWAL INFORMATION

Last date of withdrawal for this course without academic penalty is Thursday November 2, 2023

TEXTBOOKS & LEARNING MATERIALS

Parada, H. & Whebi, S. (2018). Reimagining anti-oppression social work research. Canadian Scholars Press. (Available in bookstore or as a PDF or EPUB from publisher) (\$53.00)

Van de Sande, A., & Schwartz, K. (2017). Research for social justice: A community-based approach (2nd ed). Fernwood Press. (Available in bookstore or as a PDF or EPUB from publisher) (\$35.00)

Other Readings will be made available through the course Moodle

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to contribute toward a positive and supportive environment and are required to conduct themselves in a responsible manner. Academic misconduct includes all forms of academic dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, fraud, deceit, using the work of others without their permission, aiding other students in committing academic offences, misrepresenting academic assignments prepared by others as one's own, or any other forms of academic dishonesty including falsification of any information on any Yukon University document.

Please refer to Academic Regulations & Procedures for further details about academic standing and student rights and responsibilities.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. Plagiarism occurs when a student submits work for credit that includes the words, ideas, or data of others, without citing the source from which the material is taken. Plagiarism can be the deliberate use of a whole piece of work, but more frequently it occurs when students fail to acknowledge and document sources from which they have taken material according to an accepted manuscript style (e.g., APA, CSE, MLA, etc.). Students may use sources which are public domain or licensed under

Creative Commons; however, academic documentation standards must still be followed. Except with explicit permission of the instructor, resubmitting work which has previously received credit is also considered plagiarism. Students who plagiarize material for assignments will receive a mark of zero (F) on the assignment and may fail the course. Plagiarism may also result in dismissal from a program of study or the University.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

Yukon University is committed to providing a positive, supportive, and barrier-free academic environment for all its students. Students experiencing barriers to full participation due to a visible or hidden disability (including hearing, vision, mobility, learning disability, mental health, chronic or temporary medical condition), should contact [Accessibility Services](#) for resources or to arrange academic accommodations: access@yukonu.ca.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT, PREPARATION, PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

Social workers are expected to behave in courteous, mature and respectful ways towards others. This is also the expectation of social work students. Appropriate behaviour is required between students in the classroom, with the instructor and at any time when students are approaching others in relation to projects originating from this class.

Part of professional conduct involves being punctual, prepared and self-aware. Being present in class, prepared for class (by completing the readings and assignments on the dates due) and fully participating in class activities is expected.

Regular and punctual attendance is expected. Students who are persistently tardy (this includes arriving late, leaving early, taking extended breaks) or absent or who neglect academic work may be asked to withdraw from the class, or be excluded from the final examination. Students who miss more than 2 classes will have 5% of their final grade deducted for each additional class missed.

If a student misses more than 2 classes, they may choose to speak with the instructor and ask for an additional assignment to complete in lieu of this missed class, thereby avoiding a deduction in your term grade. The instructor has discretion over a) whether to grant this option to the student and b) the content and format of the assignment. Without exception, this additional assignment must be completed prior to the end of term.

COURSE COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

To pass this course students must not receive at least 50% on each assignment, except for assignment 1 for which the student must receive an average of 50% between all three submissions.

TOPIC OUTLINE

Part 1

Weeks 1 – 4

The Theoretical, Ethical and Political Underpinnings of Social Work Research

Week 1

September 7th, 2023

Approaches to Research Design: Qualitative & Quantitative

Students will be introduced to the two traditional approaches to research. Qualitative research, which focuses on gathering in-depth accounts of experiences and knowledge, and quantitative research, which collects data in the form of numerical values about larger population.

Week 2

September 14th, 2023

Research Ethics & Investigating Social Work

Lecture and discussions this week will have a dual focus. First, students will deepen their knowledge of issues and principles with respect to research ethics. Second, students will examine the rationale for, and approach to, researching social work practice and social policy.

Week 3

September 21st, 2023

Community Based Research (CBR) & Participatory Action Research (PAR)

The approaches of CBR & PAR share many similarities with social work, particularly community-based practice. This week students will examine the techniques and principles of these two approaches and assess their potential for investigating social work and social issues.

Week 4

September 28th, 2023

Decolonizing Social Inquiry: Indigenous & Settler Research

Social inquiry and academic research are steeped in western epistemological and ontological assumptions, many of which are deeply embedded in the philosophies of settler-colonialism. Furthermore, mainstream research has long been used as a tool to marginalize and disenfranchise Indigenous people around the globe. In this class we critically analyze some of the assumptions of western scientific research while at the same

time examining two streams of research that are pushing back against the ongoing consequences of colonialism: Indigenous Research & 'Settler' Research

Part 2
Weeks 5 -10
Qualitative Research

Week 5
October 5th, 2023
Qualitative Research: Assumptions, Theories & Philosophies
Qualitative Research in/on the Yukon

Qualitative research is an approach to social inquiry that examines people's experiences and their methods of making meaning. When combined with a critical lens, qualitative research can also provide insights into the role that power (through institutions, relationships, and systems) plays in our everyday lives. This class provides an overview of the assumptions, philosophies and politics that lie behind qualitative research.

Week 6
October 12th, 2023
Qualitative Research: Continued

This week is a continuation of the content and themes from Week 5.

Week 7
October 19th, 2023
Narrative Research & Arts Based Research

The methodologies discussed in week seven are concerned with how people make meaning. Narrative research looks at the role of storytelling in how people express and comprehend their human experiences. Arts-based research challenges the notion that words are best suited for the expression and interpretation of life and emphasizes the use of various art forms as 'data' in social research.

Week 8
October 26th, 2023
Critical Ethnography & Autoethnography

Ethnographic inquiry is the act of examining the rituals, beliefs, norms, and values of a group of people. This long-standing approach to social research influences a good portion

of qualitative undertakings. This week we look at the basic tenets of ethnography and examine two specific varieties – critical ethnography and autoethnography.

Week 9

November 2nd, 2023

Grounded Theory & Institutional Ethnography

Another long-standing approach to qualitative inquiry is grounded theory (GT). GT uses qualitative data (observations, interviews etc.) to develop theories about how things work. Somewhat related is Institutional Ethnography, which focuses on observing how systems work within institutions. This week looks at examples of each.

Week 10

November 9th, 2023

Phenomenology & Discourse Analysis

This week covers two very different methodologies. Phenomenology is the study of how humans experience events and phenomena (e.g., grief, fear, loss etc.). This methodology uses qualitative data such as interviews and focus groups to describe the 'essence' of a specific human experience. Discourse analysis is the study of written and spoken texts. DA investigates the 'what' and 'how' of texts to uncover how those texts shape the politics of our everyday lives.

Part 3

Weeks 11 - 13

Quantitative Research

Week 11

November 16th, 2023

Quantitative Research: Assumptions, Theories & Philosophies Quantitative Research in/on the Yukon

Quantitative research attempts to describe the social world through numerical data. Quantitative researchers typically collect information about large numbers of people to highlight trends in behaviour, demographics, and social conditions. In some cases, quantitative designs use experiments to determine whether a treatment such as therapy causes a desired effect. This week we will look at the broad theories that underly quantitative research as well as some research from the Yukon that draws conclusions through numerical data.

Week 12

November 23rd, 2023

Quantitative Research Design & Data Collection - Surveys

Surveys are a common strategy for collecting quantitative data. Designing a survey is deceptively challenging and often results in surveys that don't measure what they are intended to. In this class we will explore the use of surveys in social research and examine some of the common pitfalls that accompany them.

Week 13

November 30th, 2023

Quantitative Data Collection & Data Analysis - Surveys

Assignment 3 Due Friday

This week continues to examine the development and use of surveys as a method for gathering information. We will also look at how survey data is analyzed and put to use within the context of social work practice.