Note: This is a shortened version of the syllabus that highlights the assignments. Please refer to the full syllabus on the course site for complete details.

GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

Department of Social Work

SWRK 440A: Social Work Research Methods
Fall 2025
Tuesdays and Thursdays
9:25-10:40 am
Stevens 101

Instructor: Young-IL Kim, Ph.D.	Title: Associate Professor of Sociology
Office: Roberts Center 220	Office Phone: 503.554.2684
Office Hours: MWF 2-3 pm	Email: ykim@georgefox.edu

Catalog Description:

This course provides basic knowledge about research methods as it applies to social work practice. Students learn how to access, critique, synthesize, and articulate research findings derived from interprofessional and diverse research methods, approaches, and sources. Students learn the inherent bias in research and evaluate design, analysis, and interpretation using an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective to inform decisions pertaining to practice, policy, and programs. Topics specific to social work research, such as agency-based research, program evaluation, outcomes evaluation, and single-subject design, will be emphasized. This course demonstrates the need for and encourages the use of research in social work practice. Prerequisites: SWRK 240 Statistical Procedures; formal admission into the social work program.

Course Purpose:

The general goal of this basic research course is to introduce and develop skills needed to conceptualize a problem, make use of available literature, design a research strategy, evaluate, organize, and integrate relevant data (both existing and new), derive useful solutions based on knowledge, and communicate those solutions to clients and colleagues. Students will be prepared to continue their own professional education, contribute to the development of the profession as a whole, and maintain their service to clients at a standard commensurate with their current level of knowledge. As a professional social worker, students will need to have several specific research skills to be effective in their work. These research skills include critically consuming relevant research studies in the field of their interest; appropriately using research findings to strengthen their practice; evaluating the effectiveness of their practice; gathering data to plan for new agency programs;

assisting in evaluating existing agency programs; creating research instruments for numerous other purposes (e.g., intake, assessment, client satisfaction, facilitating group services, etc.). This course will provide you with beginning research competencies to develop these and other skills.

CSWE Competencies:

The primary 2022 CSWE EPAS competencies addressed in this course are:

- **Competency 1**: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
- **Competency 4**: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
- **Competency 9**: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Course Objectives:

At the conclusion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Organize, evaluate, and synthesize knowledge from social work research literature in a systematic literature review (Competencies 1, 4).
2. Demonstrate knowledge of research design, methodology, ethics, and data analysis through the development of a research proposal and poster presentation (Competencies 1, 4, 9).
3. Express awareness of the contribution of research to social work practice knowledge development and evaluation (Competency 4).
4. Show increased knowledge of program/agency outcome evaluation through summary and analysis of field agency outcome measurement and data (Competencies 4, 9).
5. Understand and apply social work ethical standards to research practices with diverse human subjects (Competencies 1, 4).
6. Identify culturally competent research practices and the implications of such practices with oppressed and marginalized populations (Competency 4).

BSW Course Policies:

The following policies are designed to

1. Support and empower students to meet the BSW program goals and expectations of CSWE educational standards and competencies.
2. Provide clear guidelines to help students engage in their learning in alignment with CSWE Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior and the NASW Code of Ethics core values of integrity and competence.
3. Develop students' social work skills and knowledge while caring for their well-being.

Attendance Policy

The goal of the BSW Program is for students to attend all classes to obtain the knowledge and skills to become competent social workers. To navigate conflicts with scheduled classes, the student needs to engage in communication with their professor to ensure ongoing learning occurs.

Expectations for communication of absences: A student has the responsibility to communicate all absences to their professor by email before a missed class. In case of emergency, when communication

cannot be sent before the date of absence, the student is responsible for communicating their absence to the professor within 48 hours.

Excused absences:
Excused absences may be related to individual or family illnesses/emergencies, student cultural or religious holidays, or sanctioned university events (sports, music/theater, scholarship requirements, etc.). The professor and student will collaborate to identify a plan for the student to make up missed course content to ensure the student receives information relevant to competent social work practice.

Unexcused absences:
When a student misses more than twenty percent (20%) of classes due to unexcused absences, the highest grade the student can receive is a C- (72%). When the course is required for the BSW degree, and the student is a declared social work major, the student will need to retake the course and complete it with a C (73%) or higher (BSW Student Handbook: Grade Requirements).

Course Texts:

Required Textbook:
American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Washington, D.C.: Author. Alternatively, students can use a more concise version of the book *Concise Guide to APA Style, Seventh Edition*.

Recommended Textbook:
Carr, D., Boyle, E. H., Cornwell, B., Correll, S., Crosnoe, R., Freese, J., & Waters, M. C. (2017). *Art and Science of Social Research* (1st ed.). WW Norton & Company.

All other assigned readings will be posted as PDFs on the course website.

Assignments:

A. About Me: 6 points; 2% of course grade
Early in the term, you'll post an introduction in our Canvas discussion board to help classmates get to know you beyond just your name and major. Share only information you're comfortable making public, as posts may be referenced in class and you may be invited to elaborate. This activity helps build connections and fosters a supportive learning community.

B. Agency Research Needs Memo: 30 points; 10% of course grade
In order to connect classroom learning with fieldwork, students will identify research needs from their Agency Field Instructors that could directly support the agency, supervisor, or client population. These conversations should take place during the learning agreement meeting with AFIs. Detailed instructions will be provided on the course site.

C. Professional Behaviors in the Classroom: 27 points total; 9% of course grade

Punctual attendance. If you arrive on time and stay for the duration of each class, you will earn 1 point each. If you anticipate arriving late or leaving early, please request approval in advance—not at the last minute! Unapproved tardiness will be marked as tardy. The class will decide on a grace period for tardiness on the first day. Entering the classroom after the grace period without prior approval will result in a deduction of 0.5 points for the day. The same penalty will apply to those who leave the classroom early without approval. To help maintain a focused learning environment, please refrain from

entering the classroom once the grace period ends. Those who punctually attend all classes will receive a one-half letter grade increase on their final grade (e.g., a B+ will become an A-).

Attentiveness. I ask that you give your full attention throughout the class. Inattentive and distracting behaviors—including, but not limited to, moving across the classroom to your usual seat after the grace period for tardiness, leaving and re-entering the classroom, avoiding eye contact, engaging in side conversations while the instructor and classmates are speaking, having materials for another class on your desk, and packing up before the class ends—will result in the loss of your professionalism point for the day. Thank you for contributing to a focused and respectful classroom.

D. Response Memo: 27 points total; 9% of course grade

Before coming to each class, you will have the opportunity to write a short paragraph on an index card, engaging with the assigned materials. Your response memo includes one or two sentences analyzing an aspect of the lectures or readings, followed by one or two sentences asking questions about the material. You will have the opportunity to respond to your classmate's questions. Bringing an index card with clear, legible, and thoughtful engagement with the material will earn one point. Please ensure your handwriting is legible and avoid using cursive. Since response memos are designed to support in-class peer exchanges, students will lose points for absences. Memos submitted at the next class session will be worth half credit.

E. Learning Check: 60 points total; 20% of course grade

On most Thursdays, we will have a short learning check, typically at the beginning or end of class. This self-assessment tool is designed to help you gauge your understanding of course material. Each learning check is worth 6 points. A total of 11 Learning Checks will be given, and the lowest score will be dropped from your final grade. You must be physically present in the classroom to participate. No makeup will be provided for missed learning checks unless absences.

F. Short Assignments (Literature Review Benchmark Assignment): 90 points total; 15 points each; 30% of the final grade (Competencies 1, 4, 9).

Students will complete a series of 6 short assignments to help them advance various stages of their research project in a timely manner. Students will utilize these assignments when they submit their research poster at the end of the semester. Further details regarding format and expectations will be discussed in class and made available on the course site. Detailed instructions will be provided on the course site.

G. Long Assignments (Poster Production and Presentation): 60 points; 20% of the final grade (Competencies 1, 2, 4, 9).

This is the final version of your research poster, which should include all components that you worked on earlier this semester. You are expected to revise your earlier draft by incorporating feedback from the instructor. You will present your final poster during finals week. Further details will be discussed in class and made available on the course site.

Assignment	Point	Percentage
About Me (1 x 6 points)	6	2%
Agency Research Needs Memo	30	10%
Professional Behavior (28 given, 27 x 1 point)	27	9%
Response Memo (28 given, 27 x 1 point)	27	9%
Learning Check (11 given, 10 x 6 points)	60	20%
Short Assignment (6 x 15 points)	90	30%
Long Assignment: Poster Production	30	10%
Long Assignment: Poster Presentation	30	10%
TOTAL	**300**	**100%**

Grading Scale:

A	= 93-100%	B+	= 87-89%	C+	= 77-79%	D+	= 67-69%
A-	= 90-92%	B	= 83-86%	C	= 73-76%	D	= 60-66%
		B-	= 80-82%	C-	= 70-72%	F	< 60%

Academic Honesty:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in this Class

George Fox University has a university-wide AI policy for students and faculty, here. In this course, our policy is considered a "Yellow Light" one, which means that AI tools will be allowed or encouraged for some activities, but not others. Students may not assume AI use is permitted for any graded element of the course unless that permission is explicitly granted. The instructor will clarify when, where, and how AI may be used. Please see the assignment or the professor for details and clarification of generative AI (other than incidental use) and default to disclosing such assistance when in doubt. All work submitted by a student is expected to be the student's own original work.

Tentative Course Schedule

W	Day	Date	Topic/Event	P	RM	LC	SA/LA
1	Tue	8/26	Introduction & Course Overview				
	Thu	8/28		P1	RM1		
2	Tue	9/2	Social Research 101	P2	RM2		
	Thu	9/4		P3	RM3	LC1	SA1
3	Tue	9/9	Linking Theory to Research	P4	RM4		
	Thu	9/11		P5	RM5	LC2	
4	Tue	9/16	Conceptualization and Measurement	P6	RM6		
	Thu	9/18		P7	RM7	LC3	SA2
5	Tue	9/23	Sampling	P8	RM8		
	Thu	9/25	Anti-Racist and Anti-Oppressive Research	P9	RM9	LC4	
6	Tue	9/30	Research Meeting	P10	RM10		
	Thu	10/2	Cont.	P11	RM11		SA3
7	Tue	10/7	Survey Research	P12	RM12		
	Thu	10/9		P13	RM13	LC5	
8	Tue	10/14	Experimental Research	P14	RM14		
	Thu	10/16		P15	RM15	LC6	SA4
9	Tue	10/21	Evaluation Research	P16	RM16		
	Thu	10/23		P17	RM17	LC7	
10	Tue	10/28	Ethnography	P18	RM18		
	Thu	10/30		P19	RM19	LC8	SA5
11	Tue	11/4	In-Depth Interviewing	P20	RM20		
	Thu	11/6		P21	RM21	LC9	
12	Tue	11/11	In-Depth Interviewing 2	P22	RM22		
	Thu	11/13		P23	RM23	LC10	SA6
13	Tue	11/18	Ethics and IRB	P24	RM24		
	Thu	11/20		P25	RM25	LC11	
14	Tue	11/25	In-Class Work	P26	RM26		
	Thu	11/27	*No Class (Thanksgiving Break)*				
15	Tue	12/2	In-Class Work: Poster Revision	P27	RM27		
	Thu	12/4		P28	RM28		LA1
16		TBA	Poster Presentation				LA2

Notes. P = Professionalism. RM = Response Memo. LC = Learning Check. SA = Short Assignment. LA = Long Assignment. This schedule may change as the semester progresses. All changes will be announced in class.