

**SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

**ScWk 298 – SPECIAL PROJECT  
Course Codes: 49736, Section 15**

**Fall 2009**

**Fred Prochaska, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.S.W.**

**Class Meeting Time: Mondays 4:30-5:45 PM**

**Classroom Location: BBC 130**

**Office Hours: Mon. 8:45-10 PM in BBC-126**

**and Tues-Fri 11 AM – 5 PM at West Valley College in AAS-35**

**Office Location: BBC-126 (Monday evening  
and & Tues-Fri 11 AM-5 PM at WVC by appt.**

**Phone: (408) 741-2117 (+ 24-hr voice mail)**

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**West Valley College Address: 14000 Fruitvale Avenue; AAS-35; Saratoga, CA 95070-5698**

**AAS-35 = Applied Arts and Sciences Building. Room 35 - office is in back of Career Center**

**Papers can be dropped off in the mail slot marked “Work Experience” on the AAS-35 door.**

**Free 45 minute parking available in Visitor Parking section along Fruitvale Ave. (follow signs).**

**Catalog Description**

Planning and implementation of research practica emphasizing culturally appropriate measures and design strategies. Students produce a professionally written project demonstrating an understanding of the knowledge base underlying social work issues and appropriate interventions. (Prerequisite: ScWk 242, Credit/No Credit, 1 Unit).

**Course Description**

The course emphasizes the application of concepts and the acquisition of skills for systematic examination of social work issues and evaluation of professional social work practice. Students conceptualize and organize a Master’s Special Project, which serves as the “capstone” experience for the Master of Social Work degree.

The fall semester ScWk 298 course focuses on the conceptualization of the Special Project and the development of a written proposal for systematic examination of a social work issue or the evaluation of the student's own practice related to his/her concentration year field practicum setting. In the spring semester students will implement their projects, analyze their data, and write a final research report.

Topics to be covered this semester include: an overview of professional writing styles; guidance in the selection of an appropriate research topic; the formulation of research questions and hypotheses; the development of measurement strategies and utilization of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies; and a review of SPSS software applications. Students are expected to demonstrate in their Special Project that they have sufficient mastery of social work professional skills in their assigned agency setting.

## **Learning Objectives**

Upon successful completion of this Special Project course, students will be expected to:

1. Understand the role of scientific investigation in the building of knowledge for social work practice, and understand applied research and its link to evidence-based practice;

Program Objectives: M 4.3 (Research)

2. Apply concepts of quantitative and/or qualitative research in a culturally appropriate manner regarding the investigation of social work issues and evaluation of social work practice;

Program Objectives: M 4.3 (Research)

3. Critically review the literature, pose relevant hypotheses and research questions, propose an appropriate research methodology, and prepare for analysis of data relevant to the investigation of social work issues and evaluation of social work practice;

Program Objectives: M 4.3 (Research)

4. Work effectively with university, agency, and community officials in planning and implementing a research project and investigation of social work issues and evaluation of social work practice;

Program Objectives: M 4.3 (Research)

5. Assess ethical issues and risks involved in social work research, apply appropriate principles for the protection of human subjects, and complete an institutional review board process allowing students to implement their proposed research projects; and

Program Objectives: M 1.4 (Ethics) and M 4.3 (Research)

6. Complete a written research proposal for their investigation of a social work issue and evaluation of social work practice.

Program Objectives: M 4.3 (Research)

## **Title IV-E Competencies**

This class covers the following curriculum competencies for the Title IV-E Child Welfare Training Programs:

7.8 - Student understands the purpose of outcome measurement and is able to seek client, organization, and community feedback for purposes of monitoring practice, service refinement, and outcome evaluation.

8.10 - Student understands how to use information, technology, and evidence-based research to evaluate and improve policy, practice, and program effectiveness.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS - *please note – dates subject to change***

### **Learning Experiences**

This semester's course covers the essentials of APA Style; preparation of a scholarly report; developing a human subjects protocol; review of qualitative methods and analysis, and quantitative methods and analysis using SPSS. Students are expected to complete all the readings prior to the class session and to contribute to the class discussions. Four written assignments have been designed to help begin the process of developing the final ScWk 298 research report. Each assignment is indicated below and all four assignments must be completed in order to receive credit for the course. More details regarding each assignment will be distributed.

### **Grading and Evaluation**

The course grade of Credit/No Credit will be based on the following:

Class Participation:	10%
Assignment #1:	15% (due 9/21/09)
Assignment #2:	25% (due 10/5/09)
Assignment #3:	25% (due 10/26/09)
Assignment #4:	25% (due 11/30/09)

It is essential that students carefully proofread and edit all assignments prior to submission. Assignments with multiple errors will be returned unread or substantially downgraded.

**In order to receive “Credit” for this course, the student must complete all four formal class assignments and have a total score of 83% or higher.**

### **Class Participation**

Class participation will be assessed according to engagement in class discussions and involvement in group exercises.

### **Course Assignments - Be sure to attached the required Checklist Forms with each assignment**

Assignment #1 – Preliminary Research Plan (due 9/21/09)

*This assignment consists of the research questions and hypotheses, sampling plan, study site, and research design that will used as the foundation of the ScWk 298 project.*

Assignment #2 – Introduction and Literature Review (due 10/5/09)

*Please refer to the attached ScWk 298 guidelines for instructions.*

Assignment #3 – Human Subjects Protocol (due 10/26/09)

*Guidelines for the completion of the human subject protocol will be provided in class.*

Assignment #4 – Introduction, Literature Review, and Methodology  
(due 11/30/09)

*Please refer to the attached ScWk 298 guidelines for instructions.*

## **APA Format and Writing Requirements**

ScWk 298 papers must follow current American Psychological Association (APA) format guidelines (5<sup>th</sup> edition) with the following exceptions: (1) margins should be 1.25 inches left and 1.00 inches top, right, and bottom to allow for binding; (2) pages must be consecutively numbered within either the top right or bottom center margins starting with the abstract; and (3) the use of running heads is optional. All papers must use standard, 12-point fonts (e.g., Times Roman) and be free of typographical, formatting, spelling, and content errors. Be sure to carefully review and edit all drafts prior to submission. **All ideas, quotes, and information taken or derived from other sources must be appropriately cited and referenced in accordance with APA rules.**

## **Late Assignments**

It is your responsibility to submit assignments on time. If you are unable to submit an assignment by the date and time indicated on this syllabus (or announced in class), you must discuss your situation with me at least 48 hours prior to the time the assignment is due. If you submit an assignment after the due date and time without discussing with me, 10% of the total assignment point value will be deducted automatically. For example, if an assignment is worth 30 points, 3.0 points will be deducted prior to grading. Another 10% of the total grade will be deducted for each additional week, or fraction thereof, that the assignment is late. You can avoid the late deduction(s) by planning ahead and contacting me to make alternative arrangements.

## **UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE, & DEPARTMENT POLICY INFORMATION**

### **Reasonable Accommodation of Disabilities**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me, see me during office hours, or contact me by e-mail as soon as possible. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to establish record of their disability. No matter where students reside, they should contact the SJSU DRC to register. The DRC Web site: <http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/>

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is essential to the mission of San José State University. As such, students are expected to perform their own work (except when collaboration is expressly permitted by the course instructor) without the use of any outside resources. Students are not permitted to use old tests, quizzes when preparing for exams, nor may they consult with students who have already taken the exam. When practiced, academic integrity ensures that all students are fairly graded. Violations to the Academic Integrity Policy undermine the educational process and will not be tolerated. It also demonstrates a lack of respect for oneself, fellow students and the course instructor and can ruin the university's reputation and the value of the degrees it offers. We all share the obligation to maintain an environment which practices academic integrity. Violators of the Academic Integrity Policy will be subject to failing this course and being reported to the Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Development for disciplinary action which could result in suspension or expulsion from San José State University. Additional information on academic integrity can be found at:

[http://sa.sjsu.edu/judicial\\_affairs/index.html](http://sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html). Due to the increase of scholarly works being plagiarized, San José State University and its faculty are beginning to implement safeguards, one of which is an electronic anti-plagiarism service called *Turnitin.com*. For the protection and education of all students, using an anti-plagiarism service will add your scholarly papers to the academic database so that others cannot plagiarize your hard work. Details will be discussed in class.

## **ScWk 240/242 and Social Work Professional Writing Competency Policy**

Students admitted after September 1, 1987 must comply with the English Competency policy adopted by the Academic Senate of SJSU (S94-7). In the MSW Program the Professional Writing Competency policy is that all students must successfully pass a written assessment assignment administered in ScWk 240 (i.e., Assignment #3). Students who do not pass the written assessment assignment in ScWk 240 may be reassessed in ScWk 242 through the final research proposal. Please refer to the full policy located at the end of the syllabus.

**Students must pass the written assessment assignment before being enrolled in ScWk 298.**

### **Key Concepts and Activities**

Exploratory Research	Instruments
Descriptive Research	Ethics and Human Subjects Protocols
Explanatory Research	Data Entry (SPSS)
Quantitative and Qualitative Methods	Data Verification and Cleaning
Hypotheses and Research Questions	Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis
Sampling Techniques	Data Interpretation and Implications
Reliability and Validity	Preparing a Scholarly Research Manuscript
Rigor, Trustworthiness, and Credibility	
Selecting and Designing Psychometric	

### **Relationship of the Master's Special Project to the Mission of the Social Work Program**

Master's Special Project topics can utilize a wide range of systems, i.e., individual clients, families, small groups, programs within the field practicum, and the larger community. Regardless of the system that is involved, students are expected to address issues relevant to the cultural and/or socioeconomic background of at-risk populations. This must be addressed in the literature review, which provides the background and rationale for the topic, including policy, sociodemographic, and/or epidemiological contexts. It also must be addressed in the research design, with clear discussion of how sociocultural factors may be involved in the selection of appropriate outcome measures, the methods of outreach to the population, and the process followed if formal instruments are translated into a different language. The summary and conclusions section of the project should address the relevance and broader implications of the findings for the target population.

### **Role of Faculty Field Liaison in ScWk 298/299 Process During the Fall Semester**

The faculty member teaching the ScWk 298 course in the fall semester has the final authority to approve a student's Master's Special Project research plan; likewise, the faculty member chairing the ScWk 298 project in the Spring semester has the responsibility for approving the finished project. The Faculty Field Liaison (FFL) participates in the process in a consultative capacity. At the discretion of the FFL, she or he may make comments on a draft of your 298 and forward them to you prior to your final submission. The sole responsibility for approving the proposal rests with the chairperson who is the designated instructor of record for the ScWk 298 project.

If problems arise in the field placement, such as getting the approval signature of the director and the field instructor (FI), the FFL may be asked to facilitate approval or clarify issues for the students, agency and/or the research chairperson.

## **Human Subjects Protection Committee and Agency Approval**

All students must obtain written approval from the San José State University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (SJSU IRB) prior to conducting any recruitment efforts or data collection. This requirement applies both to data gathered through personal interviews and surveys, as well as to data gathered from secondary sources. In order to gain this university approval, students must submit a protocol for review (i.e., a human subjects protocol) to the SJSU IRB through their ScWk 298 professor.

In addition, students are also responsible for completing all requirements for the human subjects committee in your field agency, if one exists, by the end of the fall semester. Agency approval of your research project is necessary for the SJSU IRB to grant full approval for your project. You may, however, submit human subjects protocols concurrently in order to save time. Your ScWk 298 professor will help you prepare your protocol before submitting it to SJSU IRB. You must also obtain written approval in the form of a letter (i.e., the agency letter of support) on the agency's letterhead signed by a person who is designated to grant official approval on behalf of that agency or institution, (e.g., field instructor, unit manager, supervisor, executive director, or school principal). In addition, this agency letter of support and the "*Field Agency's Approval of Research Project Prospectus*" form (see attached) must be completed, signed, and included as part of your human subjects protocol.

Your goal is to submit your completed SJSU IRB protocol and receive university permission to conduct your study prior to the end of the fall semester so you can begin data collection in spring.

**It is very important that you do not submit a human subjects protocol without your ScWk 298 instructor's signature.**

## **TEXTBOOK AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

The following textbooks are required:

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Pyrczak, F., & Bruce, R. R. (2007). *Writing empirical research reports: A basic guide for students of the social and behavioral sciences* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Los Angeles: Pyrczak Publishing.

### **Recommended Sources**

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kirkpatrick, L. A., & Feeney, B. C. (2007). *A simple guide to SPSS for Windows for versions 14.0*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Rubin, A., Babbie, E., & Lee, P.A. (2008). *Research methods for social work: Custom edition prepared exclusively for San Jose State University*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

School of Social Work Research Sequence. (2007). *ScWk 240 course reader*. Available through the School of Social Work.

SPSS for Windows, full version. This will be discussed more in class, including availability of software at a discounted price through the university help desk in Clark Hall.

Weinbach, R. W., & Grinnell, R. M. Jr. (2006). *Statistics for social workers (7<sup>th</sup> ed)*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

## TOPIC OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

The readings listed below should be read by the week indicated, and students should be prepared to discuss this material in class (subject to change with fair notice).

### Week 1 -- Course Overview

- (8/24/09)
- Course goals and objectives
  - Course structure and major topics
  - Grading
  - APA style review
  - Managing assignments, especially the human subjects protocol
  - Peer-assisted learning (PAL), using classmates and colleagues for support

### Week 2 -- Research Review and Hypotheses and Research Questions

- (8/31/09)
- Revoew pf Types of Research, Sampling, and Reliability/Validity
  - Developing and writing hypotheses and research questions

#### Readings:

Pyrczak & Bruce, Chaps. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

### Week 3 -- Labor Day – No Class!!!

(9/7//09)

### Week 4 -- Introductions and Literature Reviews

- (9/14/09)
- Developing and writing introductions and literature reviews

#### Readings:

Pyrczak & Bruce, Chap. 6

### Week 5 -- Operational Definitions, Variables, and Themes

- (9/21/09)
- Developing and writing operational definitions
  - Understanding qualitative themes and concepts
  - Surveys, instruments, and interview protocols

#### Readings:

Pyrczak & Bruce, Chap. 7  
Review 242 class materials

**ASSIGNMENT #1: Preliminary Research Plan due at beginning of class**

Week 6 -- Methodology

- (9/28/09) • Review of qualitative and quantitative methods and research designs  
• Developing and writing a methodology section

Readings:

Pyrczak & Bruce, Chaps. 8 and 9  
Review 242 class materials

Week 7 -- Human Subjects

- (10/5/09) • Importance of human subjects protection  
• SJSU human subjects protocol  
• Research and professional ethics  
• Confidentiality versus anonymity  
• Implied consent versus informed consent  
• SJSU HS-IRB forms and instructions

Readings:

SJSU Human Subjects-Institutional Review Board Packet for Investigators

**ASSIGNMENT #2: Introduction and Literature Review  
due at beginning of class**

Week 8 -- Human Subjects

- (10/12/09) • **IRB Orientation (10/14 for all Monday sections and 10/15 for all Tuesday sections, location TBA)**

Week 9 -- NO CLASS – Mandatory Furlough Day

Readings:

Pyrczak & Bruce, Chaps. 12, 13, and 14  
Review 242 class materials

Week 10 -- Review of Qualitative and Quantitative Methods and Data Analysis

- (10/26/09) • Considering triangulated and mixed methods  
• How to prepare for your data collection and analysis

Readings:

Review 242 class materials

**ASSIGNMENT #3: Human Subjects Protocol due at beginning of class**

Week 11 -- Qualitative Data Analysis and Interpretation Review

- (11/2/09)
- Thematic Analysis
  - Narratives
  - Content Analysis

Readings:

Review 242 class materials

Week 12 -- SPSS Review

- (11/9/09)
- Introduction to SPSS
  - Strengths and limitations of SPSS full and student versions
  - Theory and research
  - Logic of measurement
  - Codebooks
  - Creating a data file
  - Variable and value labels

Readings:

Review 242 class materials

Week 13 -- SPSS Review

- (11/16/09)
- Univariate statistics
    - Creating charts and tables
    - Introduction to bivariate analysis
    - Recoding Variables
    - Creating Composite Measures
  - Course Review

Readings:

Review 242 class materials

Weeks 14/15/16 -- Individual/Small Group Consultations

(11/23/09, 11/30/09, and 12/07/09)

**ASSIGNMENT #4: Introduction, Literature Review, and Methodology  
due at the beginning of class on November 30**

## RESEARCH SEQUENCE BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bloom, M., Fischer, J., & Orme, J. G. (2006). *Evaluating practice: Guidelines for the accountable professional* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Bye, L., & Alvarez, M. (2007). *School social work: Theory to practice*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.
- Cox, D., & Pawar, M. (2006). *International social work: Issues, strategies, and programs*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Fong, R., & Furuto, S. (2001). *Culturally competent practice*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Frame, M. W. (2003). *Integrating religion and spirituality into counseling: A comprehensive approach*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.
- Gibbs, J.T., & Huang, L.N. (2003). *Children of color: Psychological interventions with culturally diverse youth* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Glicklen, M. D., & Sechrest, D. K. (2003). *The role of the helping professions in treating the victims and perpetrators of violence*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Johnson, J. (2004). *Fundamentals of substance abuse practice*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.
- McGoldrick, M., Giordano, J., & Garcia-Preto, N. (2005). *Ethnicity and family therapy* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: Guilford Press.
- McInnis-Dittrich, K. (2005). *Social work with elders: A biopsychosocial approach to assessment and intervention*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Moniz, C. & Gorin, S. (2007). *Health and mental health care policy: A biopsychosocial perspective* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Morgan, D. L. (1988). *Focus groups as qualitative research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Press.
- Neukrug, E. S., & Fawcett, R. C. (2006). *Essentials of testing and assessment: A practical guide for counselors, social workers, and psychologists*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.
- Polansky, N. A. (1986). There is nothing so practical as a good theory. *Child Welfare*, 65(1), 3-15.
- Rothman, J. (2003). *Social work practice across disability*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Royse, D., Thyer, B. A., Padgett, D. K., & Logan, T. K. (2006). *Program evaluation: An introduction* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.
- van Wormer, K., Wells, J., & Boes, M. (2000). *Social work with lesbians, gays and bisexuals: A strengths perspective*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Winton, M. A., & Mara, B. A. (2001). *Child abuse and neglect: Multidisciplinary approaches*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

**San José State University  
School of Social Work**

**Field Agency's Approval of Research Project Prospectus**

**Instructions:** This form must be completed by all students participating in University-related research projects, including ScWk 298 projects. The form should be completed and submitted to the student's ScWk 298 instructor or faculty sponsor. All students are expected to advise their agencies of the content of their research projects as well as plans related to their proposed methodology, data collection, and data analysis activities. Completion of this form does not remove the obligations of students to complete other school, university, or agency research review and approval procedures/policies.

If significant changes are made in the project a new form must be completed and submitted. All ScWk 298 students must complete and submit this form prior to commencing their actual research work with data collection or clients; and in any event before the end of their first semester of study.

The field instructor's (F.I.) or other agency representative's signature certifies that the student has discussed and shared their plans with the agency, and that the agency is not in opposition to the project. The ScWk 298 instructor and/or other school officials should be contacted if there are any concerns, questions, or objections.

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_

F.I.'s Name: \_\_\_\_\_ F.I.'s Telephone # (    ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

SJSU Instructor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Semester(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Description of Project – Timelines, Sample/Subjects, and Methodology:

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

F.I./Agency Rep.'s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

298 Instructor/School Rep.'s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

**ScWk 298 Special Project Paper Guidelines**  
**SJSU School of Social Work**  
**2009-2010**

Title Page

*Please see page 16 for a sample ScWk 298 report title page.*

Abstract (separate page, maximum 250 words)

The abstract provides a general overview of the study and its main findings. More specifically, it should contain a brief description of the study's purpose, the methodology utilized, a statement about the main findings as they relate to the research questions and/or hypotheses, and the implications of your findings to the profession.

The abstract length should not exceed 250 words and is typed single spaced on a separate page. Also, for the final draft, two copies of the abstract should be provided: one with the paper and one that will be filed with the School of Social Work in our cumulative index for reference.

Introduction (3-4 pages)

The introduction has two important objectives: it provides a context for the study and it presents the research questions and/or hypotheses. This section needs to incorporate up-to-date literature (e.g., current demographic statistics and trends, new and innovative studies) to articulate clearly the problem that you wish to investigate in addition to providing a rationale for the methodology used. The essential questions that should be answered by this section are: (a) what is the practical and theoretical importance of this study?; and (b) how will the findings of this study contribute to knowledge both in social work and other disciplines?

Literature Review (4-5 pages)

The literature review provides an integrated and synthetic summary of the literature that pertains to your problem area, with a particular focus on the variables you examined in your study. Themes, findings or chronology may be used to organize this section. Please note that the literature review is not an annotation (i.e., direct summary of each article, book, book chapter or report); rather, it presents an overview of how these sources of information converge or diverge to illustrate and support your research goals. It is strongly recommended that you review the formats of various literature reviews found in your ScWk 240 reader and examine articles in scholarly journals such as *Social Work Research*, *Health & Social Work*, *Social Work*, *Social Services Review*, and *Child Welfare* to assist in the development of this section.

A theoretical framework section is also needed to explain, organize and predict the findings of your study. You need to present in a brief fashion the theory or conceptual model (e.g., ecological systems theory, stages of racial identity development) that informed your study design and method of analysis. It is strongly recommended that you select only one theory/conceptual framework for your study, but more than one is acceptable. Sometimes the study's research questions and/or hypotheses are presented at the end of the literature review instead of in the introduction.

## Methodology (5-6 pages)

### *Study Design*

Describe the research approach(es) you used: quantitative and/or qualitative along with the exact design within that approach. For example, for a quantitative project, state specifically that this was a quantitative project utilizing cross-sectional survey research, a type of group design, a type of single-subject design, etc. Projects using qualitative approaches also need to clarify the format, whether it be grounded theory, ethnography, etc. If you used a triangulated approach, describe each approach in a clear and direct manner.

### *Sampling Method and Size*

Describe your sampling method (e.g., random sampling, convenience sampling, purposive sampling, cluster sampling, theoretical sampling, etc.), sampling frame, and sample size. Briefly explain why this the best sampling approach given your study. If you sampled hard-to-reach individuals, describe how you accessed them. If you did a phone survey or a mailed questionnaire, report the response rate based on the number of phone numbers called/surveys mailed and the total number of responses. For all projects, even qualitative ones, provide a demographic profile of the study sample.

### *Variables and Measures*

Identify and operationally define the key variable(s) and/or concepts.

*Qualitative.* Identify themes or concepts that guided your inquiry. What questions did you use to collect data (e.g., closed-ended, open-ended, semi-structured or a combination)? What were the major areas of questioning that you covered in the interview? If you did an observation-based study, describe how you conducted your observations and documented your field notes. If possible, provide a copy of the protocols or other instruments used in collecting the qualitative data in the appendix.

*Quantitative.* Identify all variables relevant to your study. Identify and describe the measures and instruments used to collect data on these variables, including the name and appropriate citation if published. Say if the measures were self-administered or administered by the researcher. Provide a brief description of each measure including the number of items, how scores were summarized, and a few key items that illustrate the scale if you are unable to duplicate the measure due to copyright restrictions. If possible, provide a copy of the instrument in the appendix.

Describe any translation that was done to your measure(s), e.g., one-way translation, double translation, decentering. Again, refer the reader to the appendix for a copy of all the study materials, data collection forms, and interview guides. Please note that some published measures cannot be duplicated and placed in the appendix due to copyright restrictions. In that case, simply refer the reader to the written correspondence that you had with the author or distributor of the measure.

### *Reliability and Validity*

*Quantitative.* Describe the reliability and validity of the quantitative instrument(s) you used as reported in the literature or by the author of the published measures. For example, state the test-retest reliability, alpha reliability, face validity, etc. If you are using a new or self-created instrument, describe how you established reliability and validity (e.g., pilot testing).

*Qualitative.* If you used qualitative measures, discuss them and the extent to which your ethnic background, gender, and/or observer role may have affected your results, such as your ability to elicit and observe "natural behavior" when people are aware that they are being observed. See Kirk and Miller (1986), listed on the recommended reading list of the ScWk 298 syllabus, for a detailed discussion of reliability and validity in qualitative research.

### *Human Subjects*

Describe how the confidentiality or anonymity of the study participants and data were protected and the type of consent that was obtained (e.g., informed consent, implied consent, and parental consent). Please refer the reader to the appendix for a copy of your SJSU HS-IRB approval letter, agency support letter, and any other approval letters you obtained. Your 298 project will not be approved without a copy of the human subjects' letter and agency approval letter included with your final report.

### *Procedures*

Describe the time frame for your study, details of your method (e.g., curriculum if doing an intervention), the data collection procedures you employed, and any other protocols followed in the implementation process.

### *Analysis of Data*

If you collected quantitative data, discuss what statistical procedures you used to test your research hypotheses. If your data were qualitative, how did you approach analysis and interpretation of the text or ethnographic notes (e.g., content analysis, grounded theory)? Your analysis should relate to your research questions (for qualitative and quantitative studies) and hypotheses (for quantitative studies only).

## Results (4-10 pages)

The result section provides a summary of your quantitative and/or qualitative findings that relate specifically to your research questions/hypotheses. Here are some tips for writing this section (taken from F. Pyrczak & R. Bruce, *Writing Empirical Research Reports*, 2003, pp. 85-92): (1) organize the result section around the research hypotheses, purposes, or questions stated in the introduction; (2) standard statistical procedures need only be named—you do not have to show formulas; (3) present descriptive statistics first; (4) organize large amounts of data in tables and give each table a number and a descriptive title; (5) statistical symbols should be underlined or italicized; and (6) qualitative findings should be organized and the organization made clear to the reader.

It is important to note that for quantitative studies the result section DOES NOT contain interpretation of any statistical findings. You merely present in a clear, direct and scholarly fashion the findings you obtained from your analysis and state their "statistical" significance. Please be sure to use the proper case for each statistical symbol. For example, *t* (for a *t* test); *f* (for frequency); *F* (for ANOVA);  $\chi^2$  (for Chi square); *p* (for probability). Note that the statistical symbols are in italics, or you should underline anything that needs to be in italics.

Qualitative studies should provide excerpts from interviews or field notes as exemplars of the major themes obtained from analysis of the narrative data. Unlike the result section of a quantitative study, it is expected that the researcher's interpretations and impressions will accompany these exemplars in order to allow for a more cohesive organizational framework. When presenting illustrative excerpts or anecdotes, it is imperative to use pseudonyms to preserve the confidentiality of the respondents.

Since qualitative studies rely heavily on extensive quoting to illustrate findings, it is often assumed that a qualitative result section will be longer than a quantitative one.

### Discussion (3-5 pages)

The discussion section provides an interpretation of the study's main findings in the context of the literature and theoretical framework presented earlier. Here are some tips for writing the discussion section (taken from F. Pyszczak & R. Bruce, *Writing Empirical Research Reports*, 2003, pp. 93-100): (1) consider starting the discussion with a summary; (2) in the discussion, refer to the research hypotheses, purposes, or questions stated in your introduction; (3) point out the extent to which results of the current study are consistent with the results in the literature reviewed; (4) present a clear interpretation of the results; and (5) mention important strengths and limitations. It is usually inappropriate to introduce new data or new references in the discussion section.

### Implications for Social Work (2-3 pages)

This section provides a social work context for the results of your study. In particular, you need to articulate the implications of your research to the profession from a transcultural perspective, i.e., how your findings are related to: cultural knowledge; cultural competence; power, privilege, oppression, and structural contexts; positionality and self-reflexivity; and/or respectful partnership. Also keep in mind your findings in terms of: 1) addressing the needs of ethnic minorities, communities, groups, families, or individuals who are disenfranchised, oppressed and/or marginalized, and 2) advancing the knowledge base by informing social policy, practice and/or social work education. Since the ScWk 298 project constitutes a capstone experience for your graduate education at San José State University, you must integrate your knowledge from other courses in the social work curriculum (i.e., HBSE, policy, practice, and research), relate it to your study, and make recommendations for future study

### References

The reference section contains *complete* bibliographic information for each of the citations in your manuscript. Citations should be listed in alphabetical order and written in APA style (5<sup>th</sup> edition). Only include references used in the manuscript.

### Appendices

Each appendix section contains a distinct document or set of documents, e.g., approval letters from Human Subjects, copies of flyers used for recruitment, scales and measures used in the study (if allowed by the author or distributor), so that the reader can review them if necessary. Please note that you will need to adjust all documents in the appendix sections so that they have a 1.25" left margin. Although it is easy to modify documents that are already on your computer (be sure to recheck the formatting), preprinted documents need to be reduced using a photocopier. Each appendix section is lettered A, B, C, et cetera and must be in the same order as presented in the text.

Title of Project (Limited to two lines)

by

Author's Name

A Social Work 298 Special Project

Presented to the Faculty of the School of Social Work

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Social Work

Your ScWk 298 Instructor's Name, and  
your Agency Field Instructor's Name

Month, Year

## Student S.W. 298 Checklist – Assignment #1

Review and attach this checklist to the end of Assignment #1. If you have not completed any of the items listed you must circle those items and provide an explanation in the *student comments* section below.

\_\_\_\_\_ Proposed title page for the project is provided.

\_\_\_\_\_ Topic and primary research question(s) and hypothesi(e)s are clearly addressed

\_\_\_\_\_ Subjects (sample) for the proposed project are clearly identified

\_\_\_\_\_ Study Site (e.g., agency, community) is clearly identified

\_\_\_\_\_ Basic Research Design is outlined (e.g. quantitative vs. qualitative, client vs. program eval.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Your proposed project implementation timeline (one page) is included

\_\_\_\_\_ Assignment has been carefully edited in terms of grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.

\_\_\_\_\_ Have had at least one other person review a draft for comments and suggestions.

\_\_\_\_\_ Have discussed proposed project's feasibility with an appropriate agency representative

**Student's Comments/Explanation** (if applicable - attach additional sheet, if needed)

**Certification:** I certify that this assignment has been prepared by me, that all work done by others has been properly cited, and that I have completed the checklist items indicated above.

---

Student's Signature

Date

## Student S.W. 298 Checklist – Assignment #2

Review and attach this checklist to the top of Assignment #2. Include the checklist from assignment 1 that was returned to you. If you have not completed any of the items listed you must circle them and provide an explanation in the *student comments* section below.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Issues with Assignment #1 addressed and incorporated into this assignment
- \_\_\_\_\_ Introduction includes project's purpose, relevancy, and need for the project
- \_\_\_\_\_ Topic is clearly identified and major research questions are outlined
- \_\_\_\_\_ At least 12-15 literature references are included and presented in a coherent manner
- \_\_\_\_\_ All reference sources cited in the narrative are listed (same name first) in reference list
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reference list has been checked for alpha order and APA format adherence
- \_\_\_\_\_ Literature review provides a theoretical framework for your project's overall approach
- \_\_\_\_\_ Literature sources cited/described are all linked to the dynamics of your proposed project
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assignment has been carefully edited in terms of grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have had at least one other person review a draft for comments and suggestions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Margins are 1 inch; with page #'s in margins
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have discussed proposed project's feasibility with an appropriate agency representative

**Student's Comments/Explanation** (if applicable - attach additional sheet, if needed)

**Certification:** I certify that this assignment has been prepared by me, that all work done by others has been properly cited, and that I have completed the checklist items indicated above.

---

Student's Signature

Date

## Student S.W. 298 Checklist – Assignment #3

Review and attach this checklist to the top of Assignment #3. Include the checklist forms from assignments 1 and 2 that were returned to you. If you have not completed any of the items listed you must circle those items and provide an explanation in the *student comments* section.

\_\_\_\_\_ Have discussed proposed project with appropriate agency official, and allowed to proceed

\_\_\_\_\_ SJSU HS-IRB form is completed with required attachments included

\_\_\_\_\_ Form and attachments are all typed (form available at the SJSU web site: [www.sjsu.edu](http://www.sjsu.edu))

\_\_\_\_\_ Participant consent issues addressed. Copy of proposed consent form/letter attached

\_\_\_\_\_ Issues/Problems identified in Assignments #1 and #2 are corrected/adequately addressed

\_\_\_\_\_ Have discussed with 298 instructor any special problems/issues your project faces

\_\_\_\_\_ Provisions for protecting the privacy/anonymity of clients/respondents have been made

\_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian approval process included if minors or incapacitated adults are involved

\_\_\_\_\_ Agency Approval Form and/or letter from appropriate agency official included

\_\_\_\_\_ Application is signed by you.

\_\_\_\_\_ Application has been carefully edited in terms of grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.

\_\_\_\_\_ Have had at least one other person review a draft for comments and suggestions.

\_\_\_\_\_ Any potential risks to subjects is clearly described

\_\_\_\_\_ Draft letter to subjects is attached to application that certifies participation is voluntary, that participation can be withdrawn at any point, and names an SJSU reference person.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Three complete copies of the application and all attachments are provided.**

**Student's Comments/Explanation** (if applicable - attach additional sheet, if needed)

**Certification:** I certify that this assignment has been prepared by me, that all work done by others has been properly cited, and that I have completed the checklist items indicated above.

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Student's Signature

Date

## Student S.W. 298 Checklist – Assignment #4

Review and attach this checklist to the top of Assignment #4. Include the checklist from assignments 2 and 3 that was returned to you. If you have not completed any of the items listed you must circle those items and provide an explanation in the *student comments* section below.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Issues/Problems identified in earlier assignments have been addressed/completed
- \_\_\_\_\_ All references cited in the text are listed in alpha order in the reference list, in APA format
- \_\_\_\_\_ Copy of measurement instrument(s) is (are) attached to the paper
- \_\_\_\_\_ Copy of either the SJSU Human Subjects Approval Letter or Application attached
- \_\_\_\_\_ Title page, using the format described on page 14, is included
- \_\_\_\_\_ Methodology section is consistent with, flows from, and closely linked to earlier chapters
- \_\_\_\_\_ Variables and measures are clearly described, as well as the procedures for data collection
- \_\_\_\_\_ Time frame is clearly identified for the project
- \_\_\_\_\_ Margins are 1 inches with page #'s in margins
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student's role in collecting data/information is clearly described, as well as others roles
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reliability, validity, data analysis, and human subjects issues are all adequately addressed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assignment has been carefully edited in terms of grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have had at least one other person review a draft for comments and suggestions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have discussed problems/unresolved issues with 298 instructor and/or agency officials

**Student's Comments** (if applicable - attach additional sheet, if needed)

**Certification:** I certify that this assignment has been prepared by me, that all work done by others has been properly cited, and that I have completed the checklist items indicated above.

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Student's Signature

Date

# San José State University

## Social Work Programs Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Instructors in the Social Work program promote and evaluate critical thinking<sup>1</sup> and communication<sup>2</sup> skills to help students achieve academic and professional excellence. These skills encompass one's ability to organize ideas, reason concretely and abstractly, and apply objective and subjective reasoning to ideas, situations, and theories.

One method to evaluate students' critical thinking and communication skills is via written assignments. The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA; 5<sup>th</sup> ed.) is a format guide widely used in many social work assignments. However, alternate formats may be expected for writing assignments such as, but not limited to, process recordings, case or progress notes, court reports, and biopsychosocial and family assessments. Please refer to your course syllabus for guidance on APA assignment requirements. If you need writing or editing assistance, please consult with your instructor.

Grades are calculated based upon the scale below:

98-100	A+	87-89	B+	77-79	C+	67-69	D+	59 or less	F
93-97	A	83-86	B	73-76	C	63-66	D		
90-92	A-	80-82	B-	70-72	C-	60-62	D-		

Plagiarism<sup>3</sup> is unacceptable. It may be monitored by your instructor with commercial plagiarism detection services.<sup>4</sup> Cheating is also unacceptable.<sup>5</sup> Any student who plagiarizes or cheats will be dealt with according to San José State University policies and procedures, which may include expulsion from the university.

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<sup>1</sup> Critical thinking is the use of intellectual skills that address relevance, accuracy, clarity, depth, and breadth of ideas, situations, and theories. It enables one to self-assess mindfully her or his understanding and thought processes; it includes analyzing an issue or situation, its context, and its elements from multiple perspectives; and, it generates self-improvement as one becomes sophisticated in theorizing, conceptualizing, and communicating.

<sup>2</sup> Communication is fundamental to social work and occurs in written, oral, and nonverbal forms. All communications, including case notes, reports, and proposals, should be clear and cohesive. Effective communication is essential to effective and efficient social work practice on micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

<sup>3</sup> According to SJSU Academic Senate policy F88-10, “. . . plagiarism is the act of representing the work of another as one's own (without giving appropriate credit) regardless of how that work was obtained, and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements. Plagiarism at SJSU includes, but is not limited to, 1.2.1. The act of incorporating the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, or parts thereof, or the specific substance of another's work, without giving appropriate credit, and representing the product as one's own work” ([http://www.cob.sjsu.edu/FACSTAFF/KWAN\\_S/conduct.htm](http://www.cob.sjsu.edu/FACSTAFF/KWAN_S/conduct.htm)).

<sup>4</sup> See Academic Senate policy on plagiarism detection (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S02-4.htm>)

<sup>5</sup> At SJSU, cheating is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means. Cheating at SJSU includes but is not limited to: Copying in part or in whole, from another's test or other evaluation instrument; submitting work previously graded in another course unless this has been approved by the course instructor or by departmental policy; submitting work simultaneously presented in two courses, unless this has been approved by both course instructors or by departmental policy; altering or interfering with grading or grading instructions; sitting for an examination by a surrogate, or as a surrogate; any other act committed by a student in the course of his or her academic work which defrauds or misrepresents, including aiding or abetting in any of the actions defined above.

# **SJSU Campus Emergency Procedures**

## **FIRES EARTHQUAKES AND OTHER DISASTERS**

- Call 911 or use a blue light telephone to summon University Police assistance for all campus police, fire or medical emergencies. Give your name, the nature of the emergency and your specific location. Stay on the line until the University Police Dispatcher tells you to hang up.
- Use extinguishers for minor fires. If a fire appears uncontrollable, close all room doors to confine the fire and evacuate the area or building.
- Remain calm during an earthquake. “Duck and cover” under a desk or table or stand in a doorway or against an interior wall. Move away from exterior wall windows, overhead lights, etc. Wait at least two minutes after shaking stops before leaving a building. Move to a clear area well away from structures or overhead hazards such as trees or power lines.
- Help disabled persons evacuate the building. Follow instructions of Building Emergency Team members and University Police.
- Tune to radio station KSJS 90.7 FM for campus information.

## **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

- Call 911. Give your name, the nature of the emergency and your specific location. Tell the University Police Dispatcher what assistance you need (ambulance, paramedics, etc.)
- Assist the victim until help arrives. If you or someone in the area is trained in CPR perform CPR or Rescue Breathing if necessary. Stop the bleeding with direct pressure to the wound. Do not move a victim unless his or her life is in immediate danger. Do not leave victims unattended.
- For first aid, report in person to the Student Health Center weekdays from 8:00 am - 5:00 pm or call University Police at 924-2222.

## **EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

- Leave by the nearest safe exit when you hear the building emergency alarm (fire alarm) or if you are told to do so by University Police or a Building Emergency Team member.
- Take keys, books, wallets or billfolds, prescription medicines and important personal belongings with you in case this building cannot be reentered immediately. Move at least 150 feet away from all structures.
- Use the stairs. Do not use elevators — in case of fire or earthquake many elevators stop in place and you may be trapped.
- Reenter a building only when University Police or Building Emergency Team members tell you that it is safe to do so.

**POLICE - FIRE - MEDICAL EMERGENCY**

**DIAL 9 – 1 – 1**

For further information visit the University Police Web site at: <http://www.sjsu.edu/police/>