

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

**ScWk 298, Special Project, Section 6, CODE 43913**

|                         |                                 |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Instructor:</b>      | E Michael Gorman Ph.D.,MPH,MSW  |
| <b>Office Location:</b> | WSQ 215 G                       |
| <b>Telephone:</b>       | 408.924.5812                    |
| <b>Email:</b>           | Mike.Gorman@sjsu.edu            |
| <b>Office Hours:</b>    | Tu 5:30-6:30 ; We 4:00-6:00     |
| <b>Class Days/Time:</b> | Tu 3:00-5:30                    |
| <b>Classroom:</b>       | Clark Hall 122                  |
| <b>Prerequisites:</b>   | ScWk 242 and Writing Competency |

***Research Sequence Web Page***

Copies of the course assignments and assignment examples can be found on the [Research Sequence Web Page](http://www.sjsu.edu/socialwork/courses/Research/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/socialwork/courses/Research/> or accessible through the “Courses” page on the School of Social Work website.

**Catalog Description**

Planning and implementation of research 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***

This required Advanced Year course emphasizes the application of research, theory, policy and practice concepts and the acquisition of skills for systematic examination of social work issues and evaluation of professional social work practice with the Transcultural Perspective. 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***

The Program Objectives covered by this course, which are also linked to the course's student learning objectives, are as follows:

- PO 2. *Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice*
- PO 3. *Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments*
- PO 4. *Engage diversity and difference in practice*
- PO 6. *Engage in research informed practice and practice informed research*
- PO 7. *Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment*
- PO10. *Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities*

Upon completion of ScWk 298 the student should accomplish the following student learning objectives:

1. Student demonstrates the ability critically to appraise, integrate and apply evidence-based knowledge and practice principles (Program Objective 3a)
2. Student demonstrates the capacity to analyze the gathering, assessment and evaluation of information to inform practice model design and use (Program Objective 3b)
3. Student demonstrates a beginning capacity and skills to gather and synthesize practice evaluation findings, including client feedback, to support and increase the professional knowledge base (Program Objective 6a)
4. Student demonstrates knowledge of how to consult and utilize research evidence to inform ongoing practice and policy at all levels (Program Objective 6b)
5. Student demonstrates a beginning ability to systemically monitor, analyze and evaluate interventions, including the use of evidence to determine future action (Program Objective 10d)
6. Student demonstrates knowledge of ethical decision making methods and the capacity to apply these in research (Program Objective 2c)
7. Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate the effectiveness of particular research methods within the transcultural perspective, for special populations and populations at risk including cultural and ethnic minorities, women, gays and lesbians and the disenfranchised and other marginalized groups. (Program Objectives 3b; 5a)
8. Demonstrate effective professional, oral and written communication skills in understanding general process of social work research and application to real social problems. (Program Objective 3c)

### **Required Texts/Readings**

The following textbooks are required:

American Psychological Association. (2011). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author. ISBN 9781557987914. Available at Spartan Bookstore.

Pyrzczak, F., & Bruce, R. R. (2011). *Writing empirical research reports: A basic guide for students of the social and behavioral sciences* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Los Angeles: Pyrczak Publishing. ISBN 1-884585-97-3. Available at Spartan Bookstore.

**\*\*Padgett, D.K. (2008). *Qualitative methods in social work research (2nd ed.)*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.\*\*** for those considering qualitative methods this book is required.

### Recommended Sources

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions* (2nd 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. (2010). *ScWk 240 course reader*. Available through the School of Social Work.

IBM/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 or most recent edition). *Statistics for social workers* (7th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

### **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 assignments listed below. It is essential that students carefully proofread and edit all assignments prior to submission. (See the School of Social Work Writing Policy, below.) 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 83.0% or higher.

### ***Assignments and Grading Policy***

Your grade in this course will be based on your presentations, written work, tests and participation as follows:

| <b>Assignment</b>  | <b>Points</b> | <b>Due Date</b> | <b>Course Student Learning Objective/Competency</b> |
|--|---------------|-----------------|---|
| #1 Preliminary Research Plan                                       | 15            | 9/13/11         | 1, 4, 5, 7, 8                                       |
| #2 Introduction and Literature Review                              | 25            | 10/04/11        | 1, 4, 5, 7, 8                                       |
| #3 – Human Subjects Protocol                                       | 25            | 11/01/11        | 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8                                    |
| #4 Research Proposal— Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology | 25            | 12/6/11         | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8                              |
| Participation  | 10            |                 | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8                              |

#### **Class Participation**

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

#### **Course Assignments**

Assignment #1 – Preliminary Research Plan (due September 13, 2011)

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

Assignment #2 – Introduction and Literature Review (due October 11, 2011)

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

Assignment #3 – Human Subjects Protocol (due November 1, 2011)

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

Assignment #4 – Research Report: Introduction, Literature Review, and Methodology (due December 6, 2011)

*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 (6th edition) with the following exceptions: (1) margins should be 1.00 inches left and 1.00 inches top, right, and bottom; (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), please discuss your situation with me 24 hours prior to the time the assignment is due. If you submit an assignment after the due date and time without making prior arrangements 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 Policies***

### **Academic integrity**

Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The [University's Academic Integrity policy](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm), located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm>, requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The [Student Conduct and Ethical Development website](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html) is available at [http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial\\_affairs/index.html](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html).

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include your assignment or any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy S07-2 requires approval of instructors.

### **Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Disability Resource Center](http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/) (DRC) at <http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/> to establish a record of their disability.

## ***School of Social Work Policies***

### **School of Social Work Writing Policy**

#### **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.**

### **Classroom Writing Policy**

The Instructor will return selected assignments (as specified elsewhere in the syllabus) ungraded if at least five unique errors are found in grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, spelling, typos,

APA style, or other basic writing errors. Late penalty points may apply, as specified in the syllabus.

**A unique error is an error that will be counted 1 time.** For example, if a possessive apostrophe is left off of a word 5 times in a paper, it will be counted as 1 error (i.e. a possessive apostrophe error). It is the student's responsibility to make corrections throughout the paper and ensure there are no additional instances of the error in the paper before re-submitting the paper and submitting next assignments.

### *University Resources*

#### **Student Technology Resources**

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Clark Hall and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

Learning Assistance Resource Center

*The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center. It is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to inspire them to become independent learners. The Center's tutors are trained and nationally certified by the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA). They provide content-based tutoring in many lower division courses (some upper division) as well as writing and study skills assistance. Small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring are available. Please visit [the LARC website](http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/) for more information at <http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/>.*

#### **SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. The [Writing Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/) is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/>.

#### **Peer Mentor Center**

The Peer Mentor Center is located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Clark Hall in the Academic Success Center. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. On the road to graduation, Peer Mentors are navigators, offering "roadside assistance" to peers who feel a bit lost or simply need help mapping out the locations of campus resources. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop-in basis, no reservation required. The [Peer Mentor Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/) is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/>

### **ScWk 298 Section \_\_\_\_ Special Project, Fall, 2011, Course Schedule**

This schedule is subject to change with fair notice. I will announce any changes in class.

**Table 1 Course Schedule**

| <b>Week</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</b>  |
|-------------|-------------|--|
| 1           | 8/30/11     | <p>Course overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course goals and objectives</li> <li>• Course structure and major topics</li> <li>• Grading</li> <li>• APA style review</li> <li>• Managing assignments, especially the human subjects protocol</li> <li>• Peer-assisted learning (PAL), using classmates and colleagues for support</li> </ul>   |
| 2           | 9/6/11      | <p><u>Topic formulation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choosing an interesting and feasible 298 topic</li> <li>• Strategies for negotiating topic with field agency</li> <li>• Obtaining letter of support from agency (required for IRB)</li> </ul> <p><u>Readings:</u> Pyrczak &amp; Bruce, Chaps. 1, 2<br/>Padgett, Chaps 1,2</p>   |
| 3           | 9/13/11     | <p><u>Topic Formulation (con't) &amp; Research Methods Overview</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantitative and Qualitative Research</li> <li>• Exploratory, Descriptive, Explanatory Research</li> <li>• Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Research</li> <li>• Sampling: Probability and Non-Probability</li> <li>• Reliability and Validity; Credibility, Trustworthiness, Verification</li> </ul> <p>Pyrczak &amp; Bruce, Chaps. 3, 4,<br/>Padgett, Chap 3</p> <p><b>ASSIGNMENT #1:</b><br/><b>Preliminary Research Plan due at beginning of class</b></p> |
| 4           | 9/20/11     | <p><u>Hypotheses and Research Questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of theory in research and 298 paper</li> <li>• Developing and writing hypotheses and research questions</li> <li>• Beginning your literature review—a review of topic and keyword searches</li> </ul> <p><u>Pyrczak &amp; Bruce , Chaps 5,6; Padgett, Chap 4</u></p>   |
| 5           | 9/27/11     | <p>Introductions and Literature Reviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing and writing introductions and literature reviews</li> <li>• How to read, assess, and cite references</li> <li>• Proper attribution of references and avoidance of unintended plagiarism</li> </ul> <p><u>Readings:</u><br/>Pyrczak &amp; Bruce, Chap. 6</p>  |
| 6           | 10/4/11     | <p><u>Operational Definitions, Variables</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing and writing operational definitions</li> <li>• Surveys, instruments</li> <li>• Developing questions</li> </ul>  |

| Week | Date     | Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines   |
|------|----------|--|
|      |          | <u>Readings:</u><br>Pyrczak & Bruce, Chap. 7<br>Review 242 class materials   |
| 7    | 10/11/11 | <b>ASSIGNMENT #2: Introduction and Literature Review due at beginning of class</b><br><br><u>Qualitative Themes</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding qualitative themes and concepts</li> <li>• Interview protocols for qualitative research</li> <li>• Tips and techniques for organizing data</li> </ul> Padgett: Chap 1 , 3 and 5   |
| 8    | 10/18/11 | <u>Human Subjects</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of human subjects protection</li> <li>• SJSU human subjects protocol</li> <li>• Research and professional ethics</li> <li>• Confidentiality versus anonymity</li> <li>• Implied consent versus informed consent</li> <li>• SJSU HS-IRB forms and instructions</li> </ul> <u>Readings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SJSU Human Subjects-Institutional Review Board Packet for Investigators</li> <li>• Tour IRB Website: <a href="http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/irb/">http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/irb/</a></li> </ul> <b>IRB Orientation location TBA</b> |
| 9    | 10/25/11 | <u>Methodology</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of qualitative and quantitative methods and research designs</li> <li>• Developing and writing a methodology section</li> <li>• Introduction to Humans Subjects application</li> </ul> <u>Readings:</u><br>Pyrczak & Bruce, Chaps. 8 and 9<br>Review 242 class materials  |
| 10   | 11/01/11 | <b>ASSIGNMENT #3: Human Subjects Protocol due at beginning of class</b><br><u>APA, Writing, and Research Tips</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing for the final paper of the first semester of ScWk 298</li> </ul> <u>Readings:</u><br>Pyrczak & Bruce, Chaps. 12, 13, and 14<br>Review 242 class materials   |
| 11   | 11/08/11 | <u>Review of Quantitative Methods and Data Analysis</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to prepare for your data collection and analysis</li> </ul> <u>Readings:</u><br>Review 242 class materials  |

| Week | Date     | Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines   |
|------|----------|--|
| 12   | 11/15/11 | <p><u>Review of Qualitative Methods and Data Analysis</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Triangulated and mixed methods</li> <li>• Sample size and sample selection</li> <li>• Differentiating Qual and Quan methods throughout report</li> </ul> <p><u>Readings:</u><br/>Review 242 class materials</p>   |
| 13   | 11/22/11 | <p><u>Qualitative Data Analysis and Interpretation Review</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coding and thematic analysis</li> <li>• Narratives</li> <li>• Content Analysis</li> </ul> <p><u>Readings:</u><br/>Review 242 class materials</p>  |
| 14   | 11/29/11 | <p><u>SPSS Review ~ All Sections</u><br/><u>Location TBA</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to SPSS</li> <li>• Special issues related to data management</li> </ul> <p><u>Readings:</u><br/>Review 242 class materials</p>  |
| 15   | 12/6/11  | <p><b>ASSIGNMENT #4: Introduction, Literature Review, and Methodology due at the beginning of class</b></p> <p><u>SPSS and Data Analysis Review</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logic of measurement</li> <li>• Creating a data file</li> <li>• Univariate statistics</li> <li>• Creating charts and tables</li> <li>• Introduction to bivariate analysis Variable and value labels</li> </ul> <p><u>Readings:</u><br/>Review 242 class materials</p> |

### 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* (2nd 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* (3rd 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* (2nd 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* (4th 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:** *Dr Mike Gorman*    **Semester(s):** **fall, 2011**

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

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

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

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

**ScWk 298 Special Project Paper Guidelines**  
**SJSU School of Social Work**  
**2007-2010**

Title Page

*Please see page 17 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 you 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 is 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 your study. In particular, you need to articulate the implications of your research from a transcultural perspective by explaining how your findings: 1) address the needs of ethnic minorities, communities, groups, families, or individuals who are disenfranchised, oppressed and/or marginalized, and 2) advance 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 recommend options 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 hypothesis(es) 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)

## 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)

### 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 instructors 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.

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

### 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 SJSU Human Subjects 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 subject's 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)

**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+ | 7 |
| 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.

---

<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>)

## **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**