

**SW 499A : Senior Research Project/Design**  
**3 Semester Hours**  
**Thursdays 12-2:45 PM, Room 107**

Lewis-Clark State College  
Social Work Department  
Sw499A.ahlman.F09  
Revised 8/09  
Term: Fall 09

Instructor: Chris Ahlman, Ph.D.  
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Office Hours: Please see the instructor for office hours or to arrange an appointment.

**Mission Statement**

The mission of the social work program at Lewis-Clark State College is to prepare students for entry-level generalist practice. Through courses, internships, research projects, and student activities delivered by traditional and nontraditional methods (technology), the program fosters in its' students a celebration of differences among people, and a belief that respecting these differences enriches the quality of life for all. We are committed to the preparation of professional social workers who possess the knowledge, skills, and values to address the needs and potential of individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations. Drawing on an ecological and liberal arts based background and a strength's based perspective; the program prepares students for the pursuit of a more just, humane society. Graduates are prepared for practice particularly with the oppressed and at-risk members of society. Graduates are expected to practice from a set of ethical principles inherent in the social work profession, including the recognition that professional development is a life-long learning process.

**Note:** Last day to add class/es or to drop without "W" grade on transcript is September 4, 2009.  
Last day to withdraw from class/es or college for the semester is October 30, 2009.

**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**This is the second course in a series designed**

This course is designed to facilitate the completion of the senior research project, required of all students who are in Field practicum. In this course, students utilize the knowledge and skills acquired in SW 385 to develop their research project. The course involves a review of research methodologies and statistical procedures relevant to the student's investigation. The student is required to complete the project literature review and, if applicable, any IRB applications during this course. The study itself is to be completed in SW 499B (Research Seminar II).

**II. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

Social work generalist practice entails the steps of engaging and assessing the client system, planning an intervention strategy, implementing the intervention with the client system, evaluating each step in the process, terminating with the client system appropriately, and following-up with the client and referral sources where needed.

This course focuses on the above evaluation step. Much of our understanding about individuals, groups, families, communities, and organizations is obtained through the testing of theories about these entities. As Social Work practitioners, we need the knowledge and skills to assess, identify, develop and test interventions to measure success with the client system and to improve services we offer to these clients. In addition, **The Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers** requires us to add to the knowledge base of the profession wherever possible.

### **III. PURPOSE OF THE COURSE IN THE CURRICULUM**

The expected student outcomes in the Research sequence consolidate learning from all other components of the curriculum. Skills learned in the first year knowledge building sequence are built on and enhanced. The Human Behavior and Social Environment sequence is built on and enhanced. The Human Behavior and Social Environment sequence is one of the major foundations for understanding the philosophies, processes, product and context of Group-centered social work research. The various theory and methods courses, field work, and the student's specialized interests as pursued through selective focusing in various courses, aid them in the formulation of researchable questions. The Social Welfare Services and Policy sequence provides a foundation for understanding the environment for social research including constraints, incentives, and ethical issues, as well as being the source of policy and service delivery questions requiring empirical investigations. The sequence draws heavily upon the HBSE knowledge and the generalist practice perspective.

### **IV. PROGRAM/COURSE OBJECTIVES**

This course addresses the follow Social Work Program Goals:

- # 1 To provide learning experiences and opportunities in a variety of settings that develop generalist practice social work knowledge and skills needed to achieve BSW career objectives and meet client needs
- # 2 To educate students on the ethical foundation of social work as stated in the NASW Code of Ethics where self reflection of ones' own values and the understanding of how they influence relationships are emphasized
- # 5 Engage and require students to develop, use and critique research for evaluating practice and adding to the knowledge base of the profession
- # 7 Encourage students to understand and participate in the ethical requirement of life long learning

#### **Course Objectives**

By the end of this course the students should be able to:

1. Understand the integration of research into social work practice.
2. Understand the similarities and differences between quantitative and qualitative investigation.
3. Select a methodology (either qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods to answer their research question.
4. Select the appropriate statistical procedures to their study of choice.
5. Integrate the ethical principals of research practice into his/her investigation.
6. Critically review research articles
7. Use critical thinking skills to formulate problem statement and research question/hypothesis.
8. Develop a research question and hypothesis
9. Complete a professionally written literature review.
10. Complete the IRB process.

The objectives of the course will be covered through readings, class lectures, discussions, and occasional class exercises around specific topics. Measurement will include class participation to demonstrate the student has read the assigned readings and through the completion of the project design, approval of the study by the Institutional Review Board, and the completion of an acceptable Literature Review.

### **V. TEXTS AND REQUIRED READING**

REQUIRED:

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, D.C.: Author.

Szuchman, L. & Thomlinson, B. (2008) *Writing with Style: APA Style for Social Work*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Brook/Cole Publishers.

RECOMMENDED:

Blanksby, P. & Barber, J. (2006). *SPSS for Social Workers: An Introduction Workbook*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon Publishers.

Rubin, A. & Babbie, E. (2007). *Essential Research Methods for Social Work*. Belmont, CA: Thompson Higher Education.

Weinbach, R. & Grinnell, R. Jr. (2007). *Statistics for Social Workers*. (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon Publishers.

**VI. TEACHING METHODS/CLASS CLIMATE**

The primary teaching approach in this class will be collaborative learning. Materials in the course will be presented through discussion, lectures, group work, and media presentations. Students will be responsible for all materials presented in class and all outside assignments. Assigned readings and topics for the day are outlined in the Schedule and students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assignments. An absence is not an excuse for not coming to class prepared to be actively involved.

Students in a professional program should conduct themselves as professionals in relation to the class session and assignments. It is not acceptable to be late for classes except in unusual circumstances. Frequent lateness or other unprofessional class conduct is likely to result in a lowered grade. Students are also evaluated on their personal and professional behavior or conduct in this class as described in the Student Handbook. Please refer to the Handbook for further clarification.

*Students with Disabilities*

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504/508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, LCSC provides services and accommodations to students who experience barriers in the educational setting due to learning, emotional/psychiatric, physical, visual, or hearing disabilities. For more information please contact LCSC-CdA located at 1000 W. Hubbard Street, Suite 144, Coeur d' Alene, ID (208)666-6707.

*Shared Client and Agency Information:* In the classroom, students and professors will occasionally discuss clients and agencies. In these discussions, it is expected that information about clients and agencies should be disguised or eliminated, if clients could be identified, and that this information is to be held in confidence, within the bounds of the Code of Ethics. You must disguise the identity of clients in written assignments including changing the name of the client.

**VII. CLASS ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING PROCEDURES**

Details about class assignments can be found in Part IX of this syllabus.

**Grades based on:** # points or percentage \_\_\_\_\_ Course \_\_\_\_\_

Assignments:	<u>Objectives</u>
1- Ethics in Writing	10
2- IRB Training	10
3- Critical Research Analysis	10
4- Library Search-	15
5- Introduction Draft	10
6- Research Proposal	35
7- IRB Forms submitted	10
	<hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> 100

### **Grading Scale**

A= 100-95 points  
 A- = 94-90 points  
 B+ =89-86 points  
 B = 85-83 points  
 B- = 82-80 points  
 C+ = 79-76 points  
 C = 75-73 points  
 C- = 72-70 points  
 D = 69-60 points  
 F = 59 and below

### **Deadline for Submission of Class Assignments**

1. Assignments must be submitted to the instructor during class sessions unless otherwise arranges. Faxing class assignments is NOT permitted.
2. Tests and assignments are due on the dates listed on the syllabus or as scheduled by the instructor of this course. Late papers and tests will not be accepted. On the rare occasion of a medical, personal, or family emergency, the student may write a letter of explanation requesting permission to hand in a late paper. Discretion of late paper acceptance is entirely up to the instructor. Grade will automatically be reduced by 10% per day.
3. In the event a quiz or test is missed, to make up the work, the student must contact the instructor and request permission to make up the work assigned by the instructor. Makeup work is due within 7 days of the test, or the student will receive a failing grade for the test. A student may not miss the final exam, as there will be no make up work.
4. Only work submitted before the close of the last scheduled class session of the course will be accepted for inclusion in the grade for that semester.
5. Extra-Credit: This credit, if earned, will only count towards your final grade if all assignments have been completed and turned in on time and a satisfactory class attendance record has been maintained.

### **Policy Regarding GPA**

Social work majors must achieve a C- in all required social work courses. In the event that a student does not achieve at least a C- in the course, they will be required to retake the course. Additionally, students must maintain an overall GPA of 2.5 and a 2.7 cumulative GPA in social work courses.

### **Policy Regarding Course Incompletes : New**

Students are expected to complete all work before the final session of the class. Incompletes are not granted automatically. A grade of "I" may be assigned only in cases of illness, accident, or other catastrophic occurrence beyond the student's control. It is the responsibility of the student to request an Incomplete prior to the end of the term.. All work must be completed by the deadline specified by the instructor, which must be on or before the last day of the fourth week of classes in the next term, excluding summer session. Students who fail to complete the required work by the date assigned by the instructor will be assigned a grade of "F". Instructors submit the deadline to the Registrar at the time "final grades" are due for the semester.

### **Academic Honesty and Plagiarism**

Part of the mission of this college is to educate students to be ethical. Students share with the faculty the responsibility for academic honesty and integrity. The University expects its students to do their own academic work. In addition, it expects active participation and equitable contributions of students involved in group assignments. Violation of the Academic Integrity Statement, in whole or part, could result in an "F" grade for the course. The following acts of academic dishonesty are not acceptable:

- **Cheating**: using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise (e.g., an exam).
- **Fabrication**: unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise (e.g., a paper reference).
- **Plagiarism**: representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise (e.g., failing to cite references appropriately or taking verbatim from another source).
- **Facilitating academic dishonesty**: helping or attempting to help another to commit academic dishonesty (e.g., allowing another to copy from your test or use your work).

**\*\* In addition to action by the professor, all incidents will be reported to Student Affairs.**

### **Professional Writing Standards**

All printed work submitted to this professor should be prepared at a college standard of professional editing in accordance with the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Therefore, allow sufficient preparation time for proofreading and correction of typos, misspellings, and grammatical errors.

The reason for this expectation is that professionals are often judged based upon the quality of their written work. Carelessness in spelling and editing suggests that there will also be mistakes in the substance of the work. Therefore, written work, which has misspellings and other editing problems, will be graded down on this basis alone.

**Note:** If you need help with your writing skills, the Writing Center (792-2433) may be able to assist you in improving them. The efforts you make will help you with your courses at LCSC as well as throughout your professional career because you will continue to be judged by other professionals on the basis of your written work.

**\*\* The instructor reserves the right to waive one or more of the policies listed above in rare, but special circumstances.**

## **VIII. TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE**

**SESSION 1 (Aug 27):** CO# 1

**Topics:** Introduction to the Course  
Review of Syllabus  
Expectations for the academic year.

Timeline!!  
Relationship to Agency  
Individual or group projects.

**Reading:** Detailed outline of Research Project.

**Assignment:** Find one research article on your topic or on research in general for use in next week's assignment.

**If you are a graduating senior you MUST print out a Program Evaluation of your course work and hand into your advisor by next week. Students have NOT graduated because of glitches!!!! Do not wait: October 1<sup>st</sup> to Registrar with \$\$.**

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**SESSION 2 (Sept 3):** CO # 1,5

**Topics:** Research as Practice.  
Touring Brian's Website (<http://www.lcsc.edu/bchristenson/>)  
Ethical and professional responsibilities.  
Research process:  
What is the problem?  
Who is it a problem for?  
What do we already know?  
What still needs to be known?  
How can we find it out?

Writing Process

**Reading:** Szuchman & Thomlinson, Chap 1,2 and 3 .

**Activity:** Using article you have brought to class, complete exercises 2-7 Pages 27-30.

**Assignment 1 Due today.**

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**SESSION 3 (Sept 10)** CO # 1

**Topics:** Problem statement checklist:  
Issues in deciding  
Issues in refining  
Evaluating Problem statements (Introductions)  
Writing your problem statement (Introduction)

**Reading:** Checklist for Analysis of Research,  
Szuchman & Thomlinson, Chaps. 4 and 5.

**Assignment:** for next session prepare a draft of your problem statement. It will need to be turned in at end of next session after used in classroom discussion. **Assignment 2 due today.**

**Q&A: this time will be reserved at the end of each class to answer specific questions from students about their projects. It will be done in a classroom format as several students have similar questions and all students can benefit from hearing their classmates questions and the processes used to make decisions.**

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**SESSION 4 (Sept 17)** CO # 1,5

**Topics:**  
**Librarian visit**  
Project feasibility  
Do-able Research": Things to consider:  
Alone or with others.  
Sanction of Agency: PERMISSION

A sample to research.

A question, intervention, or program to research.

IRB process

**Readings:** On line at <http://www.lcsc.edu/grants> download IRB application.

**Activity:** Each student will present their problem statement: Classmates will use checklist from Session 3 to help define and refine for the purpose of establishing a working problem statement.

**Q&A:** this time will be reserved at the end of each class to answer specific questions from students about their projects. It will be done in a classroom format as several students have similar questions and all students can benefit from hearing their classmates questions and the processes used to make decisions.

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**SESSION 5 (Sept 24)** CO # 6

**Topics:** Reviewing the literature  
Review checklist  
Evaluating Literature Reviews.

**Readings:** Szuchman & Thomlinson, Chap 6

**Q&A:** this time will be reserved at the end of each class to answer specific questions from students about their projects. It will be done in a classroom format as several students have similar questions and all students can benefit from hearing their classmates questions and the processes used to make decisions.

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**SESSION 6 (Oct. 1):** CO # 7

**Topics:**  
Writing Questions/hypothesis  
Evaluating Research Methods  
Sampling  
Instrumentation  
Experimental Procedures  
Choosing a design

**Readings:** Rubin and Babbie.

Complete individual meeting schedule for next week (note that times may be other than class time if that fits your schedule better).

**Q&A:** this time will be reserved at the end of each class to answer specific questions from students about their projects. It will be done in a classroom format as several students have similar questions and all students can benefit from hearing their classmates questions and the processes used to make decisions.

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**SESSION 7(Oct. 8)** CO # 3

**THERE WILL BE NO CLASS: USE AS LIBRARY TIME.**

**Activity:** Review literature on your topic: to locate a number of peer reviewed, journal articles to use to support your problem statement, question/hypothesis, and methodology. These articles will be used to complete your annotated bibliography assignment due Oct 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Assignment 3 due today.**

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**SESSION 8 (Oct. 15):**                      **CO # 6**

Individual sessions with instructor. Come at scheduled time prepared to discuss your topic.

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**SESSION 9 (Oct. 22):**                      **CO # 3**

Individual sessions with instructor. Come at scheduled time prepared to discuss your topic.

**Assignment:4 due today.**

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**SESSION 10 (Oct. 29):**                      **CO # 3,4**

**Topics:**

- Choosing an instrument.
- Creating an instrument.
- Questionnaire design.

**Readings:** Review Rubin and Babbie

**Assignment 5 due today.**

**Q&A: this time will be reserved at the end of each class to answer specific questions from students about their projects. It will be done in a classroom format as several students have similar questions and all students can benefit from hearing their classmates questions and the processes used to make decisions.**

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**SESSION 11 (Nov. 5):**                      **CO # 9**

**Topics:**

- Writing IRB application.

**Activity: Each student will complete their IRB application in class: all sections will be completed.**

**Assignment: Introduction Draft due today.**

**Q&A: this time will be reserved at the end of each class to answer specific questions from students about their projects. It will be done in a classroom format as several students have similar questions and all students can benefit from hearing their classmates questions and the processes used to make decisions.**

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**SESSION 12 (Nov 12):**                      **CO # 6**

Individual sessions with instructor. Come at scheduled time prepared to discuss your topic.

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**SESSION 13 (Nov. 19):**                      **CO # 6**

**Topics:**

Individual sessions with instructor. Come at scheduled time prepared to discuss your topic.

**THERE IS NO CLASS NEXT WEEK: FALL BREAK**

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**SESSION 14 (Dec. 3): CO #6**

**Topics:**

Individual sessions with instructor. Come at scheduled time prepared to discuss your topic.

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**SESSION 15 (Dec. 10): CO # 1-8**

**Topics:** Individual sessions at scheduled times. Each student will come with their completed IRB forms and all necessary permission letters. Also due is completed Research Proposal.

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**IX. DESCRIPTIVE MATERIAL REGARDING ASSIGNMENTS**

**All papers will be double spaced, 12 pitch with 1” margins on all sides. Points will be deducted for other formats. APA must be used at all times. (\*\*new paragraphs are to be indented with double spacing throughout).**

**1. Ethics in Writing Assignment.**

**10 points**

Read Chapter 2, Szuchman & Thomlinson and write an outline (bulleted form) including every rule about the use of someone else’s words, ideas, conceptualization. You will then sign and date the assignment indicating that you have read and understand all the rules.

Due Session 2.

**2. IRB on-line training.**

**10 points**

Go to <http://ohsr.od.nih.gov/IRBCBT/intro.php>. Take the training and print certificate when finished. Submit Certificate. Due Session 7.

**3. Critical Research Analysis (2)**

**10 points**

1) Using Checklist Handout (entire list) complete Evaluation on one peer-reviewed, journal, research article to be used in your final project. (10 pts.) Due Session 9.

**(Answers to checklist must be in full sentences with explanations when appropriate)**

**4. Library Search.**

**15 points**

Make a “Reference List” of 12-15 books, website articles, and peer reviewed, journal articles (must have at least 10 peer reviewed journal articles). Then for each, provide an **annotation** about the study’s population, the purpose of the study, the research methods used, and or the theoretical basis for the information. Due Session 10

**5. Introduction Draft**

**10 points**

Using Detailed outline of Research project AND all information in Szuchman and Thomlinson’s chapters 1-5 turn in a 3-4 paged, APA formatted Introduction. Note that no errors discussed in the Szuchman and Thomlinson chapters 1-5 will be permitted. You will either receive 10 pts. or 0 pts. Due Session 11

**6. Research Proposal**

**35 points**

Using outline provided in class, turn in 12 – 15 page paper that includes the Introduction,

Literature Review, and Methodology. **Due Session 15 MUST BE EMAILED TO [rcahlman@lsc.edu](mailto:rcahlman@lsc.edu).**

**7. IRB forms submitted. 10 points**

Turn in IRB Standard forms with all necessary information. **Due Session 15**

**X. ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Those students unable to attend are responsible for all work and class material. Missing fifteen percent (15%) or more of the scheduled class sessions is considered excessive absences, and **will** result in the reduction of your final grade by 1 (one) letter grade.

**XI. FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY**

**There is no final exam.**

**XII. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, D.C.: Author.
- Allen, Mary (1995). *Introduction to psychological research*. Itasca, Illinois: Peacock Publishers
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- Hair, Joseph; Anderson, Rolph; Tatham, Ronald; Black, William (2005). *Multivariate data analysis*. (6<sup>th</sup> ed). Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
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**Web Sites:**

[www.lcsc.edu/bchristenson](http://www.lcsc.edu/bchristenson) \*\*\*\*

Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research      [www.cosw.sc.edu/iaswr](http://www.cosw.sc.edu/iaswr)

National Institute of Mental Health      [www.nimh.nih.gov/](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/)

Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research      <http://obsr.od.nih.gov/>

Buros Institute - Provides professional assistance and information to users of <u>commercially</u> published tests, meaningful test selection, utilization and practice.	<a href="http://www.unl.edu:80/buros/subburos.html">www.unl.edu:80/buros/subburos.html</a>
Glossary of Statistical Terms	<a href="http://www.animatedsoftware.com/statglos/statglos.htm">www.animatedsoftware.com/statglos/statglos.htm</a>
Qualitative Research Information	<a href="http://don.ratcliff.net/qual">Http://don.ratcliff.net/qual</a>
Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)	<a href="http://www.spss.com">www.spss.com</a>
Research Writing Help	<a href="http://cpmcnet.columbia.edu/research/writing.htm">http://cpmcnet.columbia.edu/research/writing.htm</a>
Bill Trochim's Center for Social Research Methods - An excellent resource for the entire research proposal / project. This site will walk you through almost any question from research question development to data analysis.	<a href="http://trochim.human.cornell.edu/">http://trochim.human.cornell.edu/</a>
Census and Demographic Data	<a href="http://www.clark.net/pub/Ischank/web/census.html">http://www.clark.net/pub/Ischank/web/census.html</a>
ESRC Data Archive	<a href="http://www.ciesin.org/IC/esrc/ESRC-home.html">http://www.ciesin.org/IC/esrc/ESRC-home.html</a>
Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division	<a href="http://www.census.gov/org/hhes/index.html">http://www.census.gov/org/hhes/index.html</a>
PARnet: Participatory Action Research	<a href="http://www.parnet.org">http://www.parnet.org</a>
Socioeconomic Data and Applications Center-Home Page home.html	<a href="http://www.ciesin.org/IC/SEDAC/SEDAC-home.html">http://www.ciesin.org/IC/SEDAC/SEDAC-home.html</a>
StatLib	<a href="http://www.stat.cmu.edu/">http://www.stat.cmu.edu/</a>
The Statistics Homepage	<a href="http://www.statsoftinc.com/textbook/stathome.html">http://www.statsoftinc.com/textbook/stathome.html</a>
Trends in Developing Economics Database Search	