



Fall 2024

Course & Session Number	SOWK 741 S01	Classroom	In-Person Calgary
Course Name	Research Foundations: Epistemology and Professional Knowledge Building		
Dates and Time	Dates and Time: Tuesdays, 9:00 a.m. - 11:50 a.m., Sept. 3 – Dec. 3, 2024 Add/Drop/Withdrawal Dates: Please refer to the course-specific deadline in your Student Centre ¹ .		
Instructor	Jackie Sieppert, PhD, RSW Professor	Office Hours	By appointment
UCalgary E-mail	sieppert@ucalgary.ca	UCalgary Phone	403-220-6983

OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUITY, RACIAL JUSTICE, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND DECOLONIZATION

The Faculty of Social Work (FSW), University of Calgary (UCalgary), is committed to promoting and actualizing equity, racial justice, diversity, inclusion and decolonization. We affirm that diversity and uniqueness are enriching and valuable, and that they can strengthen our teaching, learning, research, scholarship, and community connections. We aim to foster an inclusive, thriving and equitable environment for our students, non-academic and academic staff, and community members. We take the stand that equity does not mean sameness in treatment of people, but rather requires measures and accommodations for diverse life experiences and circumstances to ensure that no one of a particular social group is disadvantaged, underrepresented or overlooked in all aspects of our work. We intend to address systemic inequities and compounded disadvantages due to intersectionality of social locations, particularly for those who are members of racialized communities, Indigenous peoples, Black peoples, persons with disabilities, migrant groups (including refugees and immigrants), 2SLGBTQ+ communities, linguistic minorities as well as those who have experienced socioeconomic, caregiving, religious, political, and/or cultural barriers to their education and employment. We also recognize, honour, and integrate into our work diverse perspectives, ways of knowing and doing, experiences, and strengths. An anti-oppressive

¹ In the Enrolled Courses table, under Deadlines, click on the Calendar icon by each course and the deadlines will appear.

lens, particularly intersectional, anti-colonial, anti-racist and decolonizing frameworks, will inform our work.

Please refer to our full statement of our [Commitment to Equity, Racial Justice, Diversity, Inclusion and Decolonization](#), our [Statement on Anti-Black Racism](#) and the work of the faculty's [Anti-Black Racism Task Force](#), our [Statement on Anti-Asian Racism](#), and the university's [Indigenous Strategy](#).

SYLLABUS STATEMENT

An exploration of major philosophical issues that have shaped social work's diverse approaches to knowledge building and research methods. The relevance of this exploration to the student's area of interest is emphasized.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar course will offer students the opportunity to place the types of research social work scholars undertake within their larger philosophical and methodological traditions, including conceptions of knowing (epistemology), nature of reality (ontology) and doing (praxis). Students are expected to be familiar with basic research methods concepts and processes. This course has no prerequisites or co-requisites. This course will take place in-person. Students will engage in interactive class discussions, presentations and critical reading, group work, and individualized brainstorming sessions.

Provision will also be made to facilitate online discussion among students using a course D2L site. Additional, optional learning tasks and opportunities will be available on this site as well. When unable to participate in class, students are expected to inform the instructor in advance and propose and implement an alternative participation activity to reflect their learning process.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

1. Describe the distinguishing features of several sets of research approaches (post-positivist, pragmatic, interpretive, social constructionist, post-modernist, post-structural, transformative and Indigenous) used in social work knowledge building.
2. Critically assess strengths and weaknesses of each approach for their own research interest areas.
3. Demonstrate an appreciation for diverse points of view and research approaches.
4. Articulate their own positions about the generation of social work knowledge.
5. Students will develop or deepen presentation and discussion facilitation skills.
6. Demonstrate academic writing skills (research manuscript development for academic journals).

LEARNING RESOURCES

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND/OR READINGS

There is no textbook for this course. A list of required readings is provided below. Links for these readings and additional, optional readings are provided in D2L. Students are also expected to identify and explore readings directly relevant to their chosen area of research, and to be prepared to share those in class.

The following are required readings for the course.

Knowledge Building, Scientific Research Paradigms and Integrating Research and Practice

Fazlıođulları, O. (2012). Scientific research paradigms in social sciences. *International Journal of Educational Policies*, 6(1), 41-55. <http://ijep.icpres.org/2012/v6n1/Fazliogullari.pdf>

Fook, J. (2002). Theorizing from practice. *Qualitative Social Work*, 1(1), 79-95.

Gambrill, E. (2015). Integrating Research and Practice: Distractions, Controversies, and Options for Moving Forward. *Research on Social Work Practice*. 25 (4) 510-522.

LeCroy, C.W. (2010). Knowledge Building and Social Work Research: A Critical Perspective. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 20(3) 321 -324

Zeira, A., & Rosen, A. (2000). Unraveling “tacit knowledge”: What social workers do and why they do it. *Social Service Review*, 74(1), 105-123.

Systematic Reviews

Bronson, D. E., & Davis, T. S. (2011). *Finding and evaluating evidence: Systematic reviews and evidence based practice*. Oxford University Press.

Crisp, B. R. (2015). Systematic reviews: A social work perspective. *Australian Social Work*, 68(3), 284-295.

Victor, L. (2008). *Systematic reviewing*. Social Research Update, 4. <http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU54.pdf>.

Post Positivist and Pragmatic Approaches

Chaumba, J. (2013). The use and value of mixed methods research in social work. *Advances in Social Work*, 14(2), 307-333. <https://journals.iupui.edu/index.php/advancesinsocialwork/article/view/1858>.

Denzin, N.K. (2017). Critical qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 23 (1) 8-16.

laysjiev, I. (2013). A pragmatic approach to social sciences. *E-International Relations Student*. <https://www.e-ir.info/2013/03/01/a-pragmatic-approach-to-social-science>

Ryan, A.B. (2006). *Post-Positivist Approaches to Research*. In: Researching and writing your thesis: a guide for postgraduate students. MACE: Maynooth Adult and Community Education, pp. 12-26.

Interpretive and Social Constructionist Approaches

Butt, T., & Parton, N. (2005). Constructivist social work and personal construct theory: The case of psychological trauma. *British Journal of Social Work*, 35(6), 793-806.

Carter, S., & Little, M. (2007). Justifying knowledge, justifying method, taking action: Epistemologies, methodologies and methods in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 17(10), 1316- 1328.

Lietz, C. A., & Zayas, L. E. (2010). Evaluating qualitative research for social work practitioners. *Advances in Social Work, 11*(2), 188-202. Retrieved from: http://ksumsc.com/download_center/Archive/3rd/432/Male/First%20semester/Research/13Qualitative%20Research_/13-589-5582-1-PB.pdf

Revise Sociology. (2015). *Positivism and interpretivism in social research*. Retrieved from: <https://revisesociology.com/2015/05/18/positivism-interpretivism-sociology/>

Post-Modernist and Post-Structural Approaches

Bryman, A. (2016). Integrating quantitative and qualitative research: How is it done? *Qualitative Research: QR, 6*(1), 97-113.

Campbell, C., & Ungar, M. (2003). Deconstructing knowledge claims: Epistemological challenges in Social Work education. *Journal of Progressive Human Services, 14*(1), 41-59.

Dominelli, L. (2007). The postmodern 'turn' in social work: The challenges of identity and equality. *Social Work and Society International Online Journal, 5*(3). <http://www.socwork.net/sws/article/view/144/513>

Peters, H.I. (2009). Navigating the Shifting Sands of Social Work Terrain: Social Work Practice in Postmodern Conditions. *Journal of Progressive Human Services, 20*(1), 45-58.

Indigenous Approaches

Kovach, M. (2010). Conversational method in indigenous research. *First Peoples Child & Family Review, 5*(1), 40-48.

Little Bear, L. (2000). Jagged worldviews colliding. In M. Battiste (Ed.). *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Peters, W. (2013). *Use of indigenous/indigenist research methodologies*. http://crcaih.org/assets/documents/Use_of_Indigenous-Indigenist_Research_Methodologies.pdf

Rowe, S., Baldry, E., & Earles, W. (2015). Decolonising Social Work Research: Learning from Critical Indigenous Approaches. *Australian Social Work, Vol. 68, No. 3*, 296–308.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Honouring the truth, reconciling for the future: Summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*.

Transformative Approaches

Barbera, R. (2008). Relationships and the Research Process: Participatory Action Research and Social Work. *Journal of Progressive Human Services, 19*:2, 140-159.

Bergold, J., & Thomas, S. (2012). Participatory research methods: A methodological approach in Motion *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 13*(1). Retrieved from <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs1201302>.

Danso, R. (2015). An integrated framework of critical cultural competence and anti-oppressive practice for social justice social work research. *Qualitative Social Work, 14*(4) 572–588

Rogers, J. (2012). Anti-oppressive social work research: Reflections on power in the creation of knowledge. *Social Work Education-The International Journal, 31*(7), 866-879.

Arts-Based Approaches

Camargo-Borges, C. (2017). Creativity and Imagination: Research as World-Making! In Patricia Leavy (Ed.), *Handbook of Arts-Based Research* (pp. 88-100). Guildford Press.

Walsh, C. A., St-Denis, N., & Eaglebear, A. (2018). Decolonizing reflexive practice through photography: Storying Place. *Special Issue of Critical Pedagogical Inquiry Creating a Canvas: Blending Visual Arts and Storytelling into the Curriculum Pallet*, 10(1), 103-118.

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES AND REQUIREMENTS

A D2L site is set up for this course, which contains optional readings and other relevant class resources and materials. A laptop, desktop or mobile device with Internet access, microphone and speaker is required for D2L access.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER COURSES

SOWK 741 is a core research methods course for PhD students. Collectively, SOWK 741, SOWK 745 (*Quantitative Research Methods*), SOWK 747 (*Qualitative Research Methods*) will assist PhD students to develop competency in research design and implementation.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Course content will be presented through instructor, student-led class discussion, and experiential activities. The instructor will provide a framework for discussion and a preliminary bibliography of essential and recommended readings. Students will be expected to attend class and participate fully, including leading or co-leading discussion on selected topics/readings. As this is a doctoral level course, students are expected to spend approximately 8-10 hours per week on average on coursework outside of class time. Several weeks have been set aside for independent work or student-directed activities. D2L may be employed at the students' discretion for continuing dialogue and sharing of materials collected.

Important Dates for the Fall 2024 Semester

- Start of Term: Monday, August 26, 2024
- First Day of Class: Tuesday, September 3, 2024
- End of Term: Tuesday, December 24, 2024
- Last Day of Class: Friday, December 6, 2024
- Fee Deadline: Friday, September 20, 2024
- Labour Day, no classes: Monday, September 2, 2024
- National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, no classes: Monday, September 30, 2024
- Thanksgiving Day, no classes: Monday, October 14, 2024
- Term Break, no classes: Sunday, November 10, 2024 to Saturday, November 16, 2024

Weekly Schedule

Date	Topics	Readings/Assignments
Sept 3, 2024	Introductions and Course Outline Course Expectations and Approach Knowledge Building, Scientific Research Paradigms and Integrating Research and Practice	Fazlıoğulları, O. (2012). Fook, J. (2002). Gambrill, E. (2015). LeCroy, C.W. (2010). Zeira, A., & Rosen, A. (2000).
Sept 10, 2024	Knowledge Building, Research Paradigms, Post Positivist and Pragmatic Approaches	Readings continued as above.
Sept 17, 2024	Systematic Reviews Exploring Concepts of Evidence	Bronson, D. E., & Davis, T. S. (2011). Crisp, B. R. (2015). Victor, L. (2008).
Sept 24, 2024	Post Positivist and Pragmatic Approaches	Chaumba, J. (2013). Denzin, N.K. (2017). Ilyajiev, I. (2013). Ryan, A.B. (2006).
Oct 1, 2024	Approaches to Knowledge Building Student led presentations on approaches to knowledge building	Assignment 1 due
Oct 8, 2024	Interpretive and Social Constructionist Approaches	Butt, T., & Parton, N. (2005). Carter, S., & Little, M. (2007). Lietz, C. A., & Zayas, L. E. (2010). Revise Sociology. (2015).
Oct 15, 2024	Interpretive and Social Constructionist Approaches continued	Readings continued as above.
Oct 22, 2024	Post-Modernist and Post- Structural Approaches	Bryman, A. (2016). Campbell, C., & Ungar, M. (2003). Dominelli, L. (2007). Peters, H.I. (2009).
Oct 29, 2024	Indigenous Worldviews & Approaches	Kovach, M. (2010). Little Bear, L. (2000). Peters, W. (2013). Rowe, S., Baldry, E & Earles, W (2015). Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015).

Nov 5, 2024	Transformative and Arts-Based Approaches	Barbera, R (2008). Bergold, J., & Thomas, S. (2012). Danso, R. (2015). Rogers, J. (2012). Camargo-Borges, C. (2017). Walsh, C. A., St-Denis, N., & Eaglebear, A. (2018).
Nov 10- 16, 2024	Reading Week: No class.	Enjoy the break!
Nov 19, 2024	Student class presentations – Approaches to Knowledge Building	Students selected readings and presentations Assignment 2 presentation due
Nov 26, 2024	Student class presentations – Approaches to Knowledge Building	Students selected readings and presentations Assignment 2 presentation due
Dec 3, 2024	Course Wrap Up	Assignment 3 due

ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS

Assignment 1: Your Approach to Knowledge Building (20% of final grade)

In the first three weeks of the course students will be required to reflect on their own approach to knowledge building within the context of their area(s) of research and practice interest. Using criteria that will be discussed in class, students will summarize their position in a written, 1-page description and/or table/graphic representation. Students will bring copies of this statement for all class members and post it on D2L before class. During class (October 1), students will introduce the statements on their approach to knowledge building and lead the class discussion on that topic.

Due Date: In-class presentation, October 1, 2024.

Assignment 2: Critical Positioning Assignment (40% of final grade)

Part 1: Annotated Bibliography: Complete an annotated bibliography of at least 10 peer reviewed sources that relate to your topic of interest. An annotation is a summary of the reading including summary and/or evaluation of each of the sources. What topics are covered? What are the main arguments? How will this reading contribute to your current research? (2000 words maximum for the bibliography).

Part 2: Class Presentation: Based on the readings you have selected, discuss the implications of your learning as it relates to social work research, practice and policy. The goal is to identify key epistemological, theoretical and methodological foundations that shape your chosen research area. You will assess the quality of the authors’ arguments and position your own unique perspective as an

emerging researcher. You must provide classmates with references you have used for preparation of this presentation.

Your class presentation will be reviewed by your peers, who will each complete a written review using a template provided by the instructor.

Due Dates: Class presentations, November 19 & 26, 2024.

Assignment 3: Journal Manuscript - Theories and Theoretical Frameworks (40% of final grade)

Write a paper focusing on aspects of epistemology and social work scholarship, in a style that can be submitted for publication to a journal of your choice. The topic of the paper can address any theories or theoretical frameworks and discourses relevant to your area of research. To maximize value for your own research process, it is recommended that you select a topic useful to building your specific theoretical and/or research methods expertise.

It is expected that students will write the manuscript according to the selected journal's "instructions to authors" in terms of formatting, referencing style, etc. A typical word count to expect for such a paper is approximately 4000 words (double spaced 12 font).

There are several paper formats that might be used for this assignment. Examples include:

- a synthesis and/or critique of existing theories/frameworks relevant to your area of research;
- a conceptual discussion that expands or reimagines theoretical foundations in your substantive area;
- an in-depth critique of research methods applied to your substantive area;
- a self-reflection or autoethnography that positions your unique position as a researcher;
- a systematic or scoping review in your chosen area of research.

To assist your writing process, individual consultation times will be available with the instructor. Any aspect of the paper – general ideas, selection of topics and journals, paper outlines, etc. – are open for discussion. When you hand in the final paper in electronic version, please submit the "instructions to authors" for the journal you have selected in document form or link to the journal. The assessment of the paper will include adherence to the journal requirements (formatting, reference style, etc.). You are strongly encouraged to continue to develop the paper for submission to a journal after the course is completed

Due Date: December 3, 2024

Please Note: Use APA (7th edition) formatting for citations in your assignments.

(https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html)

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to be fully present and engaged in class activities and discussions. Collegial dialogue and debate are foundational to doctoral studies, and your involvement in these discussions is critical to the learning process.

If you must miss a class, please notify the instructor in advance.

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS

Please submit all assignments electronically through their respective Dropbox in D2L. Assignments must be submitted in Word format. Assignments should have a file name as follows: Full name and assignment number” (e.g., Jane Smith Assignment 2). Assignments are due by 11:59pm on their due date. Please note that it is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments will be accepted only in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the instructor.

EXPECTATIONS FOR WRITING

All assignments will be assessed partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented and referenced in APA 7th edition format. If you need writing support, please connect with the Student Success Centre, at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support>

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

It is expected that all work submitted in assignments is the student’s own work, written expressly by the student for this particular course. Students are reminded that academic misconduct, including plagiarism, has serious consequences, as set out in the University Calendar: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

GRADING

A student's final grade for the course is the sum of the separate assignments. It is not necessary to pass each assignment separately in order to pass the course.

The University of Calgary [Graduate Grading System](#) and Faculty of Social Work Percentage Conversion will be used.

Grade	Grade Point	Description	Percentage Range
A+	4.0	Outstanding	95-100
A	4.0	Excellent – superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter	95-100
A-	3.7	Very Good Performance	90-94
B+	3.3	Good Performance	85-89
B	3.0	Satisfactory performance. Note: The grade point value (3.0) associated with this grade is the minimum acceptable average that a graduate student must maintain throughout the programme as computed at the end of each year of their program.	80-84
B-	2.7	Minimum pass for students in Graduate Studies. Note: Students who accumulate two grades of “B-” or lower can be required by the Faculty to withdraw from the programme regardless of the grade point average.	75-79
C+	2.3	All grades below “B-” are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted towards Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements.	70-74
C	2.00		65-69
C-	1.70		60-64
D+	1.30		55-59
D	1.00		50-54
F	0.00		Below 50

COURSE EVALUATION

Student feedback will be sought at the end of the course through the standard University and Faculty of Social Work course evaluation forms. Students are welcome to discuss the process and content of the course at any time with the instructor.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED READINGS

Additional recommended readings are provided in D2L

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY POLICIES AND SUPPORTS

Professional Conduct

As members of the University community, students and staff are expected to demonstrate conduct that is consistent with the University of Calgary's [Code of Conduct](#).

Students and staff are also expected to demonstrate professional behaviour in class that promotes and maintains a positive and productive learning environment. Consistent with the aims of the Social Work Program and the University of Calgary, all students and staff are expected to respect, appreciate, and encourage expression of diverse world views and perspectives; to offer their fellow community members unconditional respect and constructive feedback; and to contribute to building learning communities that promote individual and collective professional and personal growth. While critical thought and debate is valued in response to concepts and opinions shared in class, feedback must always be focused on the ideas or opinions shared and not on the person who has stated them.

Students and staff are expected to model behaviour in class that is consistent with our professional values and ethics, as outlined in the [Canadian Association for Social Workers, Code of Ethics](#) (2005) and the [Alberta College of Social Work Standards of Practice](#) (2019).

Academic Accommodation

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations according to the University policies and procedures. Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS). SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their instructor. Please refer to the full policy on [Student Accommodations](#).

Research Ethics

"If a student is interested in undertaking an assignment that will involve collecting information from members of the public, they should speak with the course instructor and consult the [CFREB Ethics Website](#) before beginning the assignment.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please refer to the [Integrity and Conduct](#) section in the University of Calgary Calendar.

Instructor Intellectual Property

Course materials created by professor(s) (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the professor(s). These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the professor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

Copyright Legislation

All students who use materials protected by copyright are expected to comply with the University of Calgary policy on [Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright](#) and requirements of the [Copyright Act](#) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the [NonAcademic Misconduct Policy](#).

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

Student information will be collected in accordance with typical (or usual) classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Policy

The University recognizes that all members of the University Community should be able to learn, work, teach and live in an environment where they are free from harassment, discrimination, and violence. The University of Calgary's [Sexual and Gender-based Violence Policy](#) guides us in how we respond to incidents of sexual violence, including supports available to those who have experienced or witnessed sexual violence, or those who are alleged to have committed sexual violence. It provides clear response procedures and timelines, defines complex concepts, and addresses incidents that occur off-campus in certain circumstances.

Other Important Information

Please visit the [Registrar's website](#) for additional important information on the following:

- Wellness and Mental Health Resources
- Student Success
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information