



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Our students, faculty and staff are located across Indigenous lands. On our Calgary campus, we acknowledge and pay tribute to the traditional territories of the peoples who made Treaty 7, which include the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprised of the Siksika, the Piikani and the Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut'ina First Nation and the Stoney Nakoda (including Chiniki, Bearspaw and Goodstoney First Nations). The city of Calgary is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta (Districts 5 and 6). Our Calgary campus is situated on land northwest of where the Bow River meets the Elbow River, a site known as Moh'kins'tsis to the Blackfoot, Wîchîspa Oyade to the Îyâxe Nakoda (Stoney Nakoda), and Guts'ists'i to the Tsuut'ina and Otos-kwunee to the Metis.

At our Edmonton campus, we acknowledge the Treaty 6 region, the traditional homelands of Cree, Blackfoot, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway/Saulteaux/Anishinaabe, Inuit and Métis people (Districts 9 and 10). We recognize the rich cultural history of the place, now called the City of Edmonton, which has, for centuries, been a traditional gathering place of Indigenous peoples from across Alberta, BC, and Saskatchewan.

At our Lethbridge campus, we acknowledge the traditional territories of the Blackfoot people of the Canadian Plains and pay respect to the Blackfoot people past, present and future while recognizing and respecting their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship to the land. We offer respect to the Metis and all who have lived on this land and made Lethbridge their home.

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 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](#).

Course & Session Number	SOWK 645 S01	Classroom	Online
Course Name	Issues in Social Work Research		
Dates and Time	Start of Classes: September 8, 2025 End of Classes: December 1, 2025 Dates and Time: All classes on Zoom from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on September 8, 15, 22 & 29; October 6, 20 & 27; November 3, 17 & 24; and December 1 Add/Drop/Withdrawal Dates: Please refer to the course-specific deadline in your <u>Student Centre</u> ¹ .		
Instructor	Rick Enns, PhD, MSW, RSW	Office Hours	Via Zoom as arranged
UCalgary E-mail	renns@ucalgary.ca	UCalgary Phone	Not applicable

SYLLABUS STATEMENT

An overview of social work research topics and issues.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, you will develop your understanding of social work research through examining various approaches, paradigms, and methods. Competence in research is a foundational notion of social work practice and is highlighted in professional codes of ethics. As producers and consumers of research, often in collaboration with and across cognate disciplines, social workers must also ensure that research is conducted with and for the benefit of those served by the profession, across all levels and fields of social work practice, and that it aligns with the values of the profession. A thorough understanding of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research, and Indigenous and critical approaches, supports ethical practice. This course will consider the wider array of research methodologies, with a focus on quantitative and qualitative approaches. Students will engage in immersive class discussions, group work and critical readings.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

1. understand various knowledge-building paradigms and research methods;
2. develop advance knowledge base and skillset required to critique, apply, and participate in social work research;
3. cultivate advance understanding of ethical issues in social work research and their direct practice implications;

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

4. identify unique populations and specific research considerations (e.g., cultural sensitivity) when conducting research with these populations; and
5. understand the role of research in informing social work practice and policy, and demonstrating accountability to the profession.

LEARNING RESOURCES

REQUIRED READINGS, TEXTBOOKS AND LEARNING MATERIALS

Csiernik, R., & Birnbaum, R. (2024). *Practising social work research*, (3rd ed.). University of Toronto. The 3rd edition of the book is available in paperback or as an ebook through Chapters/Indigo ([click here](#)) or directly from the publisher ([click here](#)) and please allow up to 2 weeks for delivery of the paperback. You can use either the 3rd or 2nd edition of the text and the 2nd edition is available free-of-charge as an ebook through the University of Calgary library ([click here](#)), and it can be downloaded as a pdf file through the library.

Additional supplementary and required readings will be listed on the D2L site for the course.

INSTRUCTOR EMAIL POLICY

All course communication must occur through your @ucalgary email account. I will try to respond to these emails within 24 hours, excluding weekends and statutory holidays.

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES AND RESOURCES

A D2L site is set up for this course and contains required readings and other relevant class resources and materials. Zoom will be used for all classes and students can use their UC student Zoom accounts for groupwork sessions and other purposes. You will need a laptop, desktop, or mobile device with Internet access and a camera to participate in Zoom sessions.

GUIDELINES FOR ZOOM SESSIONS IN ONLINE CLASSES

You are expected to participate actively in all Zoom sessions. Please be prepared, as best as you are able, to join class in a quiet space that allows you to be fully present and engaged in Zoom sessions. **Your video camera should be turned on (and preferably in gallery mode) during classroom and group-based discussions and you are expected to manage your microphone as required.** Please reach out to your instructor if you experience challenges that prevent you from having your camera turned on as expected. You are expected to behave in a professional manner during all Zoom sessions. Please do not share the Zoom links with anyone who is not registered in this course.

MEDIA RECORDING FOR ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING (By Instructor)

The instructor may use Zoom media recordings as part of the assessment of students. This may include but is not limited to classroom discussions, presentations, clinical practice, or skills testing that occur during the course. These recordings will be used for student assessment purposes only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose. Students will be advised before the instructor initiates a recording of a Zoom session.

RECORDINGS OF ONLINE CLASSES (By Students)

Recording of lectures is generally not permitted. You must seek authorization from your instructor to record any lecture. Any student with a disability who is registered with Student Accessibility Services

(SAS), and who requires an accommodation to make audio and/or video recordings of course material shall be provided with an accommodation if determined necessary by an Access Advisor in SAS. Please refer to the [Recording of Lectures Policy](#) and [Student Non-Academic Misconduct Policy](#) for additional information. These requirements shall apply to AI generated transcriptions of class lectures, presentations and discussions.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER COURSES

This course is an integral part of the MSW Foundation year. It provides an opportunity for students entering social work from other disciplines to explore research topics and issues specific to the profession and within a context of social work practice and policy. Topics introduced in other Foundation year courses will be directly applicable to this course and will be critically analyzed from a research perspective. This course will provide a foundation for the Specialization year research course in which students will apply their knowledge of social work research topics and issues to exploring research designs, methodologies, and methods.

CLASS SCHEDULE with Assignment Due Dates			
Week	Date	Topic	Required readings
Preliminary Considerations			
1	Sept. 8	Introduction to course	
2	Sept. 15	Critical and anti-colonial approaches	Case study 21
Finding Focus and Developing a Plan (Assignment 2)			
3	Sept. 22	Identifying the problem and research ethics	Case studies 1 to 5 (select 2)
4	Sept. 29	Conceptualizing, operationalizing, and sampling	Case studies 6 to 8
5	Oct. 6	Research design and causality	Case studies 9 to 14
6	Oct. 13	No class: Thanksgiving holiday	
Assignment 2 due by 11:59 p.m. on October 19			
Implementing the Plan, Drawing Conclusions and Taking Actions (Assignment 3)			
7	Oct. 20	Qualitative approaches	Case studies 16 & 17
8	Oct. 27	Quantitative methods	Case studies 24 to 27
9	Nov. 3	Quantitative methods	Case studies 24 to 27

10	Nov. 10	No class: Fall term break	
Assignment 3 due by 11:59 p.m. on November 19			
11	Nov. 17	Critiquing research and academic voyeurism	Pages 337 to 341 & 342 to 390
12	Nov. 24	Group work class	
Assignment 1 due by 11:59 p.m. on November 28			
13	Dec. 1	Class wrap-up	Case study 18
Assignment 4 due by 11:59 p.m. on December 1			

Important Dates for Fall 2025

- Start of Term: Monday, August 25
- First Day of Class: Tuesday, September 2
- End of Term: Wednesday, December 24
- Last Day of Class: Friday, December 5
- Fee Deadline: Friday, September 19
- Labour Day, no classes: Monday, September 1
- National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, no classes: Tuesday, September 30
- Thanksgiving Day, no classes: Monday, October 13
- Remembrance Day, no classes: Tuesday, November 11
- Term Break, no classes: Sunday-Saturday, November 9-15

COMMITMENTS UNDERLYING THIS COURSE

- The classroom is an inclusive and affirming space where all are welcome and should be free from exclusion or prejudice because of gender, race, ethnicity, class, age, ability, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity.
- The instructor and students shall aspire to full inclusion through self-reflection, peer support, and constructive dialogue.
- Ideas, rather than individuals, are open to challenge. Students' familiarity with the topics we discuss in this course will differ; all questions contribute to learning and all voices should be heard.
- Students can regulate their engagement in specific discussions or topic areas in response to personal or family experience and emotional or other discomfort they may experience and within a personal commitment to full and timely participation in the course.
- Everyone in the classroom is a potential teacher and learner. Everyone brings valuable life experiences from which we can all learn. Some may contribute prior learning and experience: others' contributions may come through skill and consideration in asking questions, or experience in and knowledge of other cultures, protocols, or contexts. All contributions will be honoured and appreciated.
- Students are responsible for their own learning and commit to reading and viewing assigned materials; contributing to group planning, discussions, or presentations in an ongoing and

timely fashion; and to supporting one another to achieve course and personal learning objectives.

ADDITIONAL CLASSROOM CONDUCT AND RELATED INFORMATION

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ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS

Assignment 1: A group journey through social work research

This is a group assignment, and groups will be established by the instructor. Using class-based discussions, each group will compile a group journal utilizing group discussions and identifying specific themes, points of agreement and divergence, and critical issues for social work research. Each group can decide on a strategy to note, track and compile discussions from across the term to complete the presentation. Additional details will be provided on the course D2L site.

Weight: 30%

Due date: November 28th by 11:59 p.m.

Format: Narrated PowerPoint presentation

Length: 45 minutes

Aligned course learning outcome: 2 & 3

Assignments 2 to 4: An individual journey through social work research

Assignments 2 and 3 include, but are not limited to, basic elements of a research proposal. In assignment 4, each student will select and critique 5 peer-reviewed* research articles. See descriptions below and additional details will be provided on the course D2L site.

Assignment 2: What am I interested in?

This is an individual assignment. The authors describe the “research process” in chapters 1 and 2. Using their discussion and referencing the research topic you have selected, develop the first elements of a research proposal including your research question or hypothesis, research rationale based on a review of the literature, your theoretical perspective if appropriate, research design and sampling strategy. Identify potential ethical issues and indicate how you will attempt to address these.

Weight: 20%

Due date: October 19th by 11:59 p.m. (submit as WORD document to designated D2L dropbox)

Length: 6 pages (not including title or reference page)

Format: APA 7th ed., 12 pt. Times New Roman or Aptos font, 1” margins

Aligned course learning outcomes: 3, 4 & 5

Assignment 3: How will I collect and analyze data?

This is an individual assignment. Building on assignment 1, this assignment considers data collection strategies, data analysis, and knowledge sharing strategies.

Weight: 20%

Due date: November 19th by 11:59 p.m. (submit as WORD document to designated D2L dropbox)

Length: 4 pages (not including title or reference pages)

Format: APA 7th ed., 12 pt. Times New Roman or Aptos font, 1” margins

Aligned course learning outcomes: 3, 4 & 5

Assignment 4: What does the research already say?

This is an individual assignment. Select one quantitative peer-reviewed article and one non-quantitative peer-reviewed article related to the “research proposal” developed in assignments 2 and 3. Critique each article using guidelines provided by the authors in section 4 of the text. Students can choose to complete this assignment in an alternative (non-written) format and should discuss their ideas with the instructor. Alternative formats will be considered if the instructor agrees that the learning objectives for the assignment can be met.

Weight: 40%

Due date: December 1st by 11:59 p.m. (submit as WORD document to designated D2L dropbox)

Length: 4 to 6 pages (not including title or reference pages)

Format: APA 7th ed., 12 pt. Times New Roman or Aptos font, 1" margins

Aligned course learning outcomes: 3, 4 & 5

ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION INFORMATION

GRADING CONVENTIONS USED IN THIS COURSE

Grades assigned for each assignment will be rounded to 2 decimal points if necessary and all grades will be added and rounded at the end of term to determine the final grade for the course. Students must meet or exceed the lower threshold of the percentage range indicated for each grade point category to achieve the corresponding letter grade for the course.

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS

Dropbox folders will be set up in D2L for assignment submissions. Please submit all assignments electronically – and as WORD documents – to the appropriate Dropbox in D2L. The assignment number and student name should be included in the filename and it is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment, and to ensure that the proper version is submitted and in case there are any problems with submitting or retrieving the assignment.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are due by the date and time indicated on the course outline, unless an extension has been discussed and agreed upon with the instructor, as a result of emergency or unexpected circumstances, or for other reasons approved by the instructor. Five percent of the grade allocated for the assignment will be deducted for each day or portion thereof for late assignments if an extension has not been approved.

EXPECTATIONS FOR WRITING

Quality of writing is an important component of all written assignments. Students are expected to use APA 7th edition guidelines for formatting, and each written assignment will be evaluated for the quality and clarity of writing. Grading guidelines for each written assignment will include further details. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented and referenced in APA 7th edition format. [Click here](#) to connect with the Student Success Centre and [click here](#) for abbreviated APA 7th ed. resources. Additional APA resources can be found [here](#).

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: <https://calendar.ucalgary.ca/pages/eb50d7931bba4da5942de21f51d1f514>

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TOOLS

In this course, you are expected to draw upon the required readings, learning activities, and additional research to complete the assignments. Academic and peer-reviewed sources identified by author(s) represent the standard for academic writing. Reports and other contributions from reputable academic

and public institutes or consortia, and cultural artefacts and writings are also appropriate. All sources must be evaluated for their veracity and trustworthiness.

Generative AI queries can be used alongside the materials described above but may best be used in generic ways, such as providing a general overview of a topic, identifying specific issues or controversies associated with topics, providing ideas for creating an assignment outline, or for “brainstorming”. They should not be used for personal reflections or narratives. In any case, and as with other source material used, students are expected to evaluate the accuracy and veracity of AI sources and queries used. Information retrieved using generative AI and included in the text of an assignment – either directly or paraphrased – must be cited in the assignment, as you would cite information taken from journal articles or texts; and each in-text citation should be linked to a source identified in the reference list. The form for in-text citations and reference lists for AI are still evolving and for the purpose of this course, the following examples should be followed.

In-text citation example: For a single in-text citation indicate the AI source and year, for example, (Copilot, 2025). For multiple AI citations from the same AI source, use a superscript notation to differentiate each citation, for example, (Copilot¹, 2025).

Reference list example: Copilot¹. (2025). Retrieved May 24, 2025, from <https://copilot.microsoft.com/>; Query used: How do I cite use of Copilot with example?

All individual or group assignments submitted in this course should represent the personal work of students in the class and the student(s) should commit and be able to attest to full and exclusive authorship. The **use of AI-assisted editing of assignments** – beyond the basic spell-checking and grammar edits offered within common word processing programs such as WORD or Pages is discouraged. Students should include an appendix with a note indicating how they have used AI to edit assignments if they have used editing tools outside of those embedded in word processing programs.

Please consult with the instructor if you have any questions about the use of AI or the instructions offered above.

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 to pass the course. The University of Calgary [Graduate Grading System](#) and Faculty of Social Work Percentage Conversion will be used. This grading system overrides the grading system in D2L. Please see Grading Conventions for the course, in the preceding section, for additional information.

Grade	Grade Point	Description	Percentage Range
A+	4.0	Outstanding performance	95-100
A	4.0	Excellent performance	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. 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 of "C+" or lower are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward 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
CR		Completed Requirements. Carries no weight in calculating the grade point average. This will be noted in the calendar description as "Not Included in GPA" where applicable.	

COURSE EXPERIENCE FEEDBACK

At the close of each term, students can provide feedback on their academic learning experience in their courses, including their instructors, through university-wide online surveys. They will receive an email from [UCalgary Course Experience Surveys](#) with direct links to their current course surveys, or they can access within the D2L course shell. Students are welcome to discuss the process and content of the course at any time with the instructor. They are expected to provide comments that are consistent with the [University of Calgary Code of Conduct](#), the [Alberta College of Social Work Standards of Practice \(2023\)](#) and the [Canadian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics \(2024\)](#).

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](#). They 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 behaviours in class, including evaluations of teaching and learning, that are consistent with our professional values and ethics, as outlined in the [Canadian Association for Social Workers, Code of Ethics](#) (2024) and the [Alberta College of Social Work Standards of Practice](#) (2023).

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

Students are advised that any research with human participants – including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation – must have the approval of the [Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board](#) or the [Conjoint Health Research Ethics Board](#).

In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required. Some courses will include assignments that involve conducting research with human participants; in these cases, the instructor will have applied for and received ethics approval for the course 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 [Non-Academic 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
- Student Success
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk