UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

COURSE TITLE/SECTION: SOCW 8395 **(**15566**)** Pre-Dissertation Research

FACULTY:	**OFFICE HOURS**: GCSW #323
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I.   COURSE

A.   Catalog Description:
Pre-Dissertation Research Cr. 3 (3-0). Prerequisites: Doctoral standing in social work and successful completion of all coursework. Focuses on preparation for qualifying paper, development of the dissertation proposal or preparation for the dissertation proposal defense. Course may be repeated for credit.

B.   Purpose
This course provides opportunities to focus preparation for qualifying paper, the identification of a dissertation topic and methodology, and the dissertation proposal.

II.   COURSE OBJECTIVES
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

1. Prepare effectively for the qualifying paper
2. Master the process of dissertation research in doctoral education
3. Formulate and define an appropriate dissertation topic
4. Strengthen and refine research skills as needed in the dissertation process
5. Understand and complete the process of identifying an appropriate dissertation chairperson and committee
6. Develop skills needed in developing the dissertation proposal, as well as preparing for the dissertation proposal defense

III.   COURSE CONTENT
This course will include the following topical (content) areas:
1. Required elements of the qualifying paper and dissertation proposal
2. Research process, including library research
3. Development of research questions, hypotheses formulation and testing
4. Formulation of an appropriate dissertation topic

IV.   COURSE STRUCTURE
The format of this course is likened to a self-directed, independent study. Students must meet with the instructor individually at least three times a semester to discuss progress. Meetings can occur in person or by telephone, depending on student needs. The face-to-face method is the instructor's preference.

V. TEXTBOOKS AND READING MATERIALS
Recommended Books / Resources:
1. American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association,* (6th ed.). Washington, D.C.: Author.
2. Drake, B., & Jonson-Reid, M. (2008). *Social work research methods: From conceptualization to dissemination*. Boston: Pearson Education Inc. / Allyn & Bacon.
3. Kline, Rex B. (2009). *Becoming a behavioral science researcher: A Guide to producing research that matters*. New York: The Guilford Press.
4. Rudestam, K.E. & Newton, R.R. (2001). *Surviving your dissertation: A comprehensive guide to content and process* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
5. Szuchman, L.T. & Thomlison. B. (2008). *Writing with style: APA style for social work*. Belmont CA: Thompson/Brooks Cole. ISBN:0-495-09883-3.
6. University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work. (n.d.). *Doctoral student handbook*. (The handbook provided the semester/year the student was admitted to the PhD program.)

Journal Articles. Students will be expected to conduct individual literature searches and reviews according to their areas of research. The UH library has full text articles online through the electronic resources section. Students are encouraged to register for remote access to the HAM-TMC Medical Library at the M.D. Anderson Library Service Desk, which allows students to access other journal resources. Students are also encouraged to obtain software to manage their references (e.g., Endnotes©, Refworks©, etc.) and to seek training in the use of their preferred software. Lee Hilyer, Associate Librarian in the M. D. Anderson Library, is a great resource on the use of Endnotes© and other bibliographic software. He also maintains an Endnotes blog (lahilyer@uh.edu, 713-743-9714).

Online Resources:
- http://www.learnerassociates.net/dissthes/
- http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/dissertations/
- http://iis.berkeley.edu/content/dissertation-proposal-resources
- http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/dissbooks.html

VI. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. **Update Meetings with Instructor**
   [***Each student is responsible for contacting the instructor to schedule these meetings***]
   1. Meeting 1 – Week 3 (September 10th -12th)
   2. Meeting 2 – Week 9 (October 22nd – 24th)
   3. Meeting 3 – Week 15 (December 3rd – 5th)

B. **Written Assignments**
   1. **Semester Timeline, Reading List & Proposed Final Product – due Week 3**
      o Timeline: Develop a timeline for the entire semester that includes a plan for weekly tasks/activities associated with your pre-dissertation work
      o Reading List: Develop a reading list. For each entry, provide a brief statement regarding the purpose of the reading and explain how it is related your pre-dissertation work
      o Proposed Final Product: Provide a one page summary in which you propose your final product for this course. E.g. – IRB proposal, annotated outline of qualifying exam, annotated outline of dissertation proposal

2. **Annotated Bibliography – due Week 9**
   o Develop an annotated bibliography that informs the development of your final product. You may select the format; however, at least 20 references should be annotated. Below are a few online resources that may inform your approach and format.
     o http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/
     o http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/annotated-bibliographies/
     o http://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/skill28.htm

3. **Semester Progress Report and Final Product – due Week 15**
   o Submit a written report documenting progress (completed tasks, activities, barriers, etc.) in preparing for the qualifying examination and/or developing the dissertation proposal over the course of the semester.
   o **Submit the final product that was approved by the instructor during Meeting #1. A copy of the progress report and final product should also be provided to the chairperson of the student's qualifying paper / dissertation committee.**

VII. Evaluation and Grading

This course is graded S/U (satisfactory or unsatisfactory). A grade of S requires the completion of three meetings with the instructor AND the submission of all three written assignments*.*

VIII. University Policy on grades of I (Incomplete)

The grade of "I" (Incomplete) is a conditional and temporary grade given when students are either **(a)** passing a course or **(b)** still have a reasonable chance of passing in the judgment of the instructor but, for non-academic reasons beyond their control, have not completed a relatively small part of all requirements. ***Incomplete grades will only be granted when extenuating circumstances arise.*** Students are responsible for informing the instructor immediately of the reasons for not submitting an assignment on time. Students must contact the instructor of the course in which they wish to receive an "I" grade and to make arrangements to complete the course requirements. Students cannot to re-register for the same course in a subsequent semester in order to complete the incomplete requirements.

The grade of "I" must be changed by fulfillment of course requirements within one year of the date awarded or it will be changed automatically to an "F" (or to a "U" [Unsatisfactory] in S/U graded courses). The instructor may require a time period of less than one year to fulfill course requirements and the grade may be changed by the instructor at any time to reflect work completed in the course. The grade of "I" may not be changed to a grade of **W**.

IX. Policy on academic dishonesty and plagiarism

Students are expected to demonstrate and maintain a professional standard of writing in all courses, do one's own work, give credit for the ideas of others, and provide proper citation of source materials. Any student who plagiarizes any part of a paper or assignment or engages in any form of academic dishonesty will receive an "I" for the class with a recommendation that a grade of F be assigned, subsequent to a College hearing, in accordance with the University policy on academic dishonesty. Other actions may also be recommended and/or taken by the College to suspend or expel a student who engages in academic dishonesty.

All papers and written assignments must be fully and properly referenced using APA 6.0 style format (or as approved by the instructor), with credit given to the authors whose ideas you have used. If you are using direct quotes from a specific author (or authors), you <u>must</u> set the quote in quotation marks <u>or</u> use an indented quotation form. For all direct quotes, you must include the

page number(s) in your text or references. Any time that you use more than four or five consecutive words taken from another author, you must clearly indicate that this is a direct quotation. Please consult the most current APA manual for further information.

Academic dishonesty includes using any other person's work and representing it as your own. This includes (but is not limited to) using graded papers from students who have previously taken this course as the basis for your work. It also includes, but is not limited to submitting the same paper to more than one class. If you have any specific questions about plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please raise these questions in class or make an appointment to see instructor. This statement is consistent with the University Policy on Academic Dishonesty   that can be found in your UH Student Handbook.

X.   Americans with Disabilities Statement
Whenever possible, and in accordance with 504/ADA guidelines, the University of Houston will attempt to provide reasonable academic accommodations to students who request and require them. Please call 713-743-5400 for more assistance.

COURSE SCHEDULE, ACTIVITIES & ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1	August 27th	Review syllabus, schedule meetings with instructor & begin preparing assignment #1
Week 2	September 3rd	Continue and complete assignment #1
Week 3	September 10th	o Meeting #1 with Instructor (September 10th -12th) o Submit Semester Timeline, Reading List & Proposed Final Product
Week 4	September 17th	Activities and tasks related to development of annotated bibliography
Week 5	September 24th	"
Week 6	October 1st	"
Week 7	October 8th	"
Week 8	October 15th	"
Week 9	October 22nd	o Meeting #2 with Instructor (October 22nd – 24th) o Submit Annotated Bibliography
Week 10	October 29th	Activities and tasks related to development of final product & semester progress report
Week 11	November 5th	"
Week 12	November 12th	"
Week 13	November 19th	"
Week 14	November 26th	"
Week 15	December 3rd	o Meeting #3 with Instructor (December 3rd – 5th) o Submit final product and semester progress report