Social Work Research Methods & Analysis

5450

SP 26

Syllabus

About the Instructor

Contact information:

Name: Renata Sledge, PhD, LCSW
Email address: rsledge@umsl.edu
Calendar Link: Book time with Sledge, Renata

Office hours are an important way I can support you throughout this course. Even if you don't have specific questions, needs, and concerns, I would love to meet up with you at least once during this semester. You can make an appointment with me *anytime* by clicking on the link above. This is a great time to ask questions about homework, course content, strategies for success in the course, and much more. Make sure to prepare by bringing some questions with you.

Welcome

I believe that everything is connected. We are all connected to each other. Our mind, body, and spirit are connected. The things we think and feel are connected to the choices we make. The stories from our past and present are connected to how we see our future. All these connections affect the choices we make, the things we do, how we experience the world, and how we learn. Through these connections, we will explore your understanding of social work and find the most meaningful path towards achieving your goals. I bring my understanding of our inter-relatedness to focus on partnering people and families impacted by chronic illness in improving quality of life, promoting positive family adjustment, and encouraging self-management of chronic illness. Through research defined by interdisciplinary collaboration, I have published and presented on areas ranging from music therapy in cancer care to medical decision-making, ethics, and the role of relationships in well-being. I graduated with a PhD from the Medical Family Therapy Program, in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at Saint Louis University School of Medicine and my MSW from Indiana University. In addition I serve as a Board Member for The Breakfast Club STL and a member of the Advisory Council for the Missouri Kidney Program. I have a freshman in high school, two dogs, and a husband. Podcasts are my love language and reading is my joy.

Teaching Philosophy *(sets expectations for students)*

My teaching philosophy guides everything I do. I believe that you come in with knowledge, I teach you technical things, and then you pull it all together! Have you seen the Great British Baking Show on Netflix? It was a great way to see my philosophy in action. And is super relaxing!

Responding to Students

I aim to respond to student emails within 24-48 hours during the week and 48 hours on the weekend.

About this Course

Course Description:

Prerequisites: Admission to the MSW Program. This course requires students to think critically about social work practice and analyze its evidence base. It provides students with the knowledge base and skills for using the

scientific method ethically to advance social work practice, knowledge, and theory. It focuses on understanding a variety of methods for critical analysis and synthesis of academic literature. Students learn the importance of critically assessing quantitative and qualitative research methods and how to apply an ethical decision-making model to resolve ethical dilemmas including the use of research results to inform practice.

Goals of the Course:

Assignment/Reading	Competencies	Practice Behavior	Dimensions	Due Date
In-Class Participation and Ethics Presentation	Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior	PB3: Uses person-in-environment, strengths perspectives, and/or other social work frameworks to guide therapeutic relationships	Cognitive Practice	Ongoing Feb. 17
Final Project	Competency 4: Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice	PB2: Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and	Cognitive Practice	May 11 (with due dates throughout the semester)

Required texts and other course materials:

- Ruben, A & Babbie, E. (2023). Empowerment series: Essential research methods for social work (10th ed). Cengage.

- *SUPPLEMENTAL (NOT REQUIRED but STRONGLY encouraged)*
  - American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000

How to Succeed in This Course

Attendance
The most important part of the helping relationship is your presence! Class attendance and participation is essential for success. When you are absent, it is your responsibility to clarify missed assignments with classmates or with me prior to the next class. If you expect to miss class to participate in a university-sanctioned activity, be sure to email me and

Electronic Devices
Laptop: Feel free to bring your laptop to class each week. We may or may not use it in class that day. If you use your laptop to take notes, please do not distract other students.
Cell Phones: Cell phones are discouraged from use during class; however, I recognize that they may be needed for times of

let me know early in the semester so that we can discuss your responsibilities and make plans to fulfill the requirements of the classes you will miss. Please make an appointment to discuss with me any requests for exceptions to these policies. If you expect to miss a class or have a deadline conflict with class work due to a religious observance, let me know early in the semester so that we can discuss your responsibilities and plan so that you meet course obligations and requirements.

Academic Misconduct
We want our learning environment to be honest and fair. The assessments in our course provide you with an opportunity to showcase what you know and learn from what you may not yet have mastered. When you submit work with your name on it, this is a written statement that credit for the work belongs to you alone. If the work was a product of collaboration (such as a group project), each student is expected to clearly acknowledge in writing all persons who contributed to its completion.

Emotional Safety and Security
Any information shared by the class is confidential, must remain in the class. Please show your respect, patience, and support to your colleagues. Any discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated. This course involves topics and/or media that may be emotionally disturbing, graphic, or otherwise sensitive in nature including potential discussions of abuse and family trauma. I will try to provide specific warnings before each instance. Be gentle with yourself and communicate with me.

emergency. If you do need to use your cell phone, please do not distract other students and step outside for phone calls.
Recording: You may not record the lectures without permission of the instructor and your classmates.

Accommodations
Your academic success is important to me. We all learn differently and bring different strengths and needs to the class. If there are aspects of the course that prevent you from learning or make you feel excluded, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we'll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Please communicate with me and contact Disability Advocacy Services if you need accommodations (314-516-6554).

Basic Needs Security
Your physical, mental and emotional health is important and can affect performance in this class. UMSL provides students with case management and other support and services to address unmet basic needs and other challenges they may be facing outside of the university that impacts their ability to succeed academically. These challenges may include things like food insecurity, housing instability, lack of childcare, counseling needs, and financial emergencies.

- Location: 144 Millennium Student Center
- LINK to request assistance or help
- Website: https://www.umsl.edu/studentadvocacy/

UMSL

Come Prepared!
Come prepared to class having read the readings and with questions to ask. Be ready to engage in small group and class-wide discussions. Your contribution will help you and your classmates do well in this course. Don't forget, we all belong to each other!

Managing your Time
Manage your time appropriately this semester. You know about every assignment that will be assigned in this class and you should allocate your time accordingly. I recommend you have a time and task management system. Personally, I use Google Calendar and a planner to manage my time and tasks. If you need any help, feel free to reach out to me. I love discussing time management!

Saving and OneDrive
Save your work frequently! I recommend saving all your documents into your campus OneDrive. It integrates with Microsoft office products and allows you to autosave documents. ***Computer problems will not be accepted as an excuse for late assignments.***

Supplemental Resources
See Canvas for a complete list of additional resources including writing aids, campus resources, and a list of references for class discussion.

Email
Emails will be sent through Canvas. Check your email and Canvas regularly for updates. I recommend having your school email linked to your cell phone, so you get notifications of emails in case of last-minute changes. I will make every effort to respond to emails within 48 hours except on weekends and holidays. I expect you will extend the same courtesy and respond to emails in a timely manner to me and your classmates.

Canvas
Canvas will be used for administrative purposes including announcements, housing course documents (e.g., notes, assignments, readings), and recording grades. Note that all your grades will be kept on Canvas so you will have easy access to them. It is your responsibility to keep up with your grades. If you have a question or concern, please contact me immediately, not at the end of the semester.

Personal Success!!!
Please utilize me as a resource to help you succeed, both in class and outside class. I want you to achieve your learning goals *and* enjoy this class, do well at UMSL, and still have a life with your friends, family, and hobbies. If one or more of those things are not happening, please come see me so we can work together to figure out a plan to improve your situation.

Instructional Technology: *The following tools will support the instructional strategies for this course: Web searches, PowerPoint and other web and computer-aided instruction.*

If you are new to or unfamiliar with Canvas, consult the Canvas Online Overview course site where you can learn about and practice with tools that will be used in this course. Follow this link to temporarily leave our course and learn more about Canvas: https://umsystem.instructure.com/courses/83642. You'll learn about technologies and learning strategies to help you be successful in this course. If you've already completed the orientation, you do not have to retake it but you can refer to it at any time.

Course Plan for the Unexpected

Please stay informed about university policies, instructions and resources as they relate to campus closures https://www.umsl.edu/safety/police/closures.html. It is important to me that you stay on track toward your degree completion. This section presents our course continuity plans for how we will handle situations to avoid disruption to your learning.

If there is a severe weather event that closes campus, we will meet virtually (On Zoom). I will message you by 1:00 PM the day of the class meeting

UMSL

Assessment/Grading

Grade Composition:

- *See below for a detailed description of each assignment*
  - *Participation 140 Points*

Week	Date	Assignment/Activity	Total Points
Week 5	Feb 17	Ethics Presentation Due	100
Week 6	Feb 24	Practice Problem Statement Due	25
Week 7	Mar 3	Social Problem Statement Due	25
Week 8	Mar 10	Annotated Bibliography Due	30
Week 11	Mar 31	Quantitative Article Analysis Due	25
Week 13	Apr 14	Background & Significance Paper Due	50
Week 14	Apr 21	Qualitative Article Analysis Due	25
Finals	May 5-11	Research Designs (Meeting with Executive Director)	100

- *I aim to return grades and feedback on completed work within two weeks.*
- *I recognize that you live complicated lives that may require missing class. If you miss 4 or more classes, you will receive 0 participation points.*

Grading Scale:

The UMSL Grading System is based on a four-point scale. The grade value for each letter grade is as follows:

A = 4.0	B- = 2.7	EX = Excused
A- = 3.7	C+ = 2.3	DL = Delayed
B+ = 3.3	C = 2. 0	FN = Failure/Non
B = 3.0	C- = 1.7	Participation

Grading Criteria and Rubrics:

In-class Participation (140 Points)

In-class participation will be measured based on in-class activities. Participation points will be entered in Canvas week 16. If you miss more than 3 classes, you will receive 0 participation points for the semester.

ETHIC Assignment

1. **Read and Summarize**:
   - Read the Congress Article.
   - Summarize the article, the ETHIC framework, and its potential application in research.
   - *(Note: Google AI, ChatGPT, & Microsoft Copilot do not know what the ETHIC framework is.)*
2. **Analyze an Ethically Ambiguous Study**:
   - Choose one of the five ethically ambiguous studies from the chapter.

- Find at least one other scholarly source to help you understand the study.
- Describe the ethical concerns considering the time when the study was conducted.
- Discuss ADEI considerations, noting the differences between the historical context and today.
- *(Note: Google AI, ChatGPT, & Microsoft Copilot do not know what ADEI stands for.)*

3. **Identify Ethical Conflicts**:
   - Using the NASW Code of Ethics, identify at least two points in the studies that conflict with ethical practices as described in the Code of Ethics.
4. **Propose an Alternative**:
   - Suggest an alternative research process.
5. **Evaluate Using ETHIC Framework**:
   - Use the ETHIC framework to evaluate your ***proposed alternative***.
6. **Disrupt Privilege and Oppression**:
   - Explain how your proposed alternative disrupts privilege and oppression.

Practice Problem Portfolio

Practice Problem Statement:

Identify a practice problem that is of interest to you. If you are working in the field or doing a practicum, pick a practice problem related to your site and concentration. If you are not currently working in the field, revisit your application and what is motivating your decision to pursue an MSW.

In one or two paragraphs describe your practice problem. Include at least 2 scholarly resources and 2 non-scholarly resources to help describe the problem.

Write one paragraph of things you are curious about after this reading and writing this summary.

Name 3-5 search words or phrases you will use to search the library or google scholar for additional scholarly resources.

Practice Problem Identification Assignment Grading Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (5 points)	Good (4 points)	Fair (3 points)	Poor (0-2 points)
Description of Practice Problem	Clear, concise, and thorough description of the practice problem in one or two paragraphs. Includes at least 2	Adequate description of the practice problem with minor gaps. Includes 2	Basic description of the practice problem, lacks depth. Includes fewer than 2	Incomplete or unclear description of the practice problem. Includes fewer than 2

	scholarly resources and 2 non-scholarly resources that are well-integrated and relevant.	scholarly resources and 2 non-scholarly resources, generally relevant.	scholarly resources and/or 2 non-scholarly resources, some relevance.	scholarly resources and/or 2 non-scholarly resources, minimal relevance.
Curiosities and Questions	Insightful and reflective paragraph detailing curiosities and questions that arise from the reading and summary. Shows deep engagement with the topic.	Adequate paragraph detailing curiosities and questions, shows engagement with the topic.	Basic paragraph with limited curiosities and questions, shows minimal engagement.	Incomplete or unclear paragraph, lacks reflection and engagement.
Search Words/Phrases	Identifies 3-5 highly relevant search words or phrases for additional scholarly resources. Shows understanding of effective search strategies.	Identifies 3-5 relevant search words or phrases, generally effective.	Identifies fewer than 3 search words or phrases, some relevance.	Identifies fewer than 3 search words or phrases, minimal relevance.

Total: 25 points

Social Problem Statement:

Identify a social problem that impacts your practice problem. Think person-in-environment theory or general systems theory. You might visit the Grand Challenges for Social Work website. You might revisit content from your diversity class. You might review your Human Behavior and Social Environment lessons.

In one or two paragraphs, describe your social problem. Use 2 scholarly resources and 2 non-scholarly resources to help.

In one paragraph, describe the relationship between your social problem and your practice problem.

Write one paragraph of things you are curious about after reading and writing this summary.

Name 3-5 search words or phrases you will use to search the library or google scholar for additional scholarly resources.

Social Problem Identification Assignment Grading Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (5 points)	Good (4 points)	Fair (3 points)	Poor (0-2 points)
Description of Social Problem	Clear, concise, and thorough description of the social problem in one or two paragraphs. Includes at least 2 scholarly resources and 2 non-scholarly resources that are well-integrated and relevant.	Adequate description of the social problem with minor gaps. Includes 2 scholarly resources and 2 non-scholarly resources, generally relevant.	Basic description of the social problem, lacks depth. Includes fewer than 2 scholarly resources and/or 2 non-scholarly resources, some relevance.	Incomplete or unclear description of the social problem. Includes fewer than 2 scholarly resources and/or 2 non-scholarly resources, minimal relevance.
Relationship Between Social Problem and Practice Problem	Insightful and clear paragraph describing the relationship between the social problem and the practice problem. Shows deep understanding of the connection.	Adequate paragraph describing the relationship, shows understanding of the connection.	Basic paragraph with limited description of the relationship, shows minimal understanding.	Incomplete or unclear paragraph, lacks description and understanding of the relationship.
Curiosities and Questions	Insightful and reflective paragraph detailing curiosities and questions that arise from the reading and summary. Shows deep engagement with the topic.	Adequate paragraph detailing curiosities and questions, shows engagement with the topic.	Basic paragraph with limited curiosities and questions, shows minimal engagement.	Incomplete or unclear paragraph, lacks reflection and engagement.
Search Words/Phrases	Identifies 3-5 highly relevant search words or phrases for additional scholarly resources. Shows understanding of effective search strategies.	Identifies 3-5 relevant search words or phrases, generally effective.	Identifies fewer than 3 search words or phrases, some relevance.	Identifies fewer than 3 search words or phrases, minimal relevance.

Total: 25 points

Annotated Bibliography:

Complete an annotated bibliography that includes 10 scholarly articles that help you understand the background and significance of your practice and social problem. At least 3 articles must be quantitative (experiment or pre-experimental) and 3 articles must be qualitative. I recommend you look for at least 1 systematic review or meta-synthesis. Your biography can include one grey or white paper.

Choose one Qualitative and one Quantitative article you will use for Part 5 & 6. I recommend that as we move through the semester, you complete the worksheet for the article using the information learned.

Annotated Bibliography Assignment Grading Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (9-10 points)	Good (7-8 points)	Fair (5-6 points)	Poor (0-4 points)
Selection of Articles	Includes 10 scholarly articles that are highly relevant to the practice and social problem. At least 3 articles are quantitative and 3 are qualitative.	Includes 10 scholarly articles that are generally relevant. Meets the requirement for quantitative and qualitative articles.	Includes fewer than 10 articles or some articles are not relevant. Partially meets the requirement for quantitative and qualitative articles.	Includes fewer than 10 articles, many of which are not relevant. Does not meet the requirement for quantitative and qualitative articles.
Annotations	Annotations are thorough, well-written, and provide a clear summary, evaluation, and relevance of each article to the practice and social problem.	Annotations are adequate, generally well-written, and provide a summary, evaluation, and relevance of each article.	Annotations are basic, with limited detail and clarity. Some annotations may lack evaluation or relevance.	Annotations are incomplete, unclear, or poorly written. Many annotations lack evaluation or relevance.
Quality of Sources	All sources are high-quality, peer-reviewed, and credible.	Most sources are high-quality, peer-reviewed, and credible.	Some sources are not peer-reviewed or lack credibility.	Many sources are not peer-reviewed or lack credibility.

Total: 30 points

Quantitative Article Analysis:

Analyze a quantitative research article (***experimental or pre-experimental***) from your annotated bibliography using the following framework. Turn in your "worksheet" and the original article.

Worksheet

Element	Description	Answer
Purpose & Significance	Was the need for the study established? Was data cited about prevalence or extent of the problem?	
Background/Literature Review & Theoretical Framework	Were all variables contemplated in the hypotheses? Did the discussion suggest a connection between the dependent and independent variable? Or, was a theory provided to explain the problem?	
Research question/Hypothesis	Were there research questions? What kind? Are the questions clear and they suggest that if answered will explain the problem?	
Independent/dependent variables	Are the IV & DV variables defined? If a descriptive study, are there any variables? Are the variables relevant to the problem?	
Sample	Were recruitment methods sound? Is the sample adequate in terms of size & characteristic; for example, subjects who are relevant to the problem are recruited?	
Human Subjects issue/ethics	Was the study reviewed by an IRB? Were there any protections to subjects?	
Research Design	Identify the research design. Is it appropriate to answer the question? What level of research does the design represent? For example-does this show causation?	

Measures used to assess	Are the measures appropriate? Do the measures assess the variables appropriately?	
Procedures	Are the procedures sound? Do they seem to bias the study? Is enough information provided so the study can be replicated?	
Results sections/Analyses	Does the article provide sufficient results to determine if the hypotheses were supported or not? Describe the statistical tests used, why those were the right tests, and what they mean.	
Discussion/Implications to practice	Are interpretations to the results offered in the discussion section? Do the interpretations seem sound and supported by the data/results?	
Limitations	Are limitations identified? Did the authors leave any limitations out? Are next steps offered?	
Threats to internal/external validity	What are the issues of external validity related to the sample? What are the problems of internal validity related to the measures? What are the issues of internal validity related to procedures?	
Disrupting privilege and oppression	What are the values that you think are represented in the research study. For example, what assumptions do you think the researcher is making about the topic of study? About the people in their sample? How do you think that these values are represented in the way in which the authors discuss the study's findings? What positions of privilege and	

	subordination do you think are held by the researchers? By the participants?	
Learner conclusion	Make an overall evaluation of the article. Decide if knowledge offered in the article should be "rejected", "adopted with reservations", or "adopted as presented" and point to your assessment in the sections above to support your decision.	

Total: 25 points

Qualitative Article Analysis:

Analyze a qualitative research article from your annotated bibliography using the COREQ guidelines. Turn in the original article with the worksheet.
Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative studies (COREQ): 32-item checklist
Developed from:

Tong A, Sainsbury P, Craig J. Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): a 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups. International Journal for Quality in Health Care. 2007. Volume 19, Number 6: pp. 349 – 357

Worksheet

Item No	Guide Questions/Description	Answer (Provide Page Number)
Domain 1: Research team and reflexivity		
Personal Characteristics		
1. Interviewer/ facilitator	Which author/s conducted the interview or focus group?	
2. Credentials	What were the researcher's credentials? E.g., PhD, MD	
3. Occupation	What was their occupation at the time of the study?	
4. Gender	Was the researcher male or female?	
5. Experience and training	What experience or training did the researcher have?	
Relationship with participants		

Item No	Guide Questions/Description	Answer (Provide Page Number)
6. Relationship established	Was a relationship established prior to study commencement?	
7. Participant knowledge of the interviewer	What did the participants know about the researcher? e.g. personal goals, reasons for doing the research?	
8. Interviewer characteristics	What characteristics were reported about the interviewer/facilitator? e.g. Bias, assumptions, reasons and interests in the research topic	
Domain 2: study design		
Theoretical framework		
9. Methodological orientation and Theory	What methodological orientation was stated to underpin the study? e.g. grounded theory, discourse analysis, ethnography, phenomenology, content analysis	
Participant selection		
10. Sampling	How were participants selected? e.g., purposive, convenience, consecutive, snowball	
11. Method of approach	How were participants approached? e.g., face-to-face, telephone, mail, email	
12. Sample size	How many participants were in the study?	
13. Non-participation Setting	How many people refused to participate or dropped out? Reasons?	
14. Setting of data collection	Where was the data collected? e.g., home, clinic, workplace	
15. Presence of nonparticipants	Was anyone else present besides the participants and researchers?	
16. Description of sample	What are the important characteristics of the sample? e.g. demographic data, date	
Data collection		
17. Interview guide	Were questions, prompts, and guides provided by the authors? Was it pilot tested?	
18. Repeat interviews	Were repeat interviews carried out? If yes, how many?	

Item No	Guide Questions/Description	Answer (Provide Page Number)
19. Audio/visual recording	Did the research use audio or visual recording to collect the data?	
20. Field notes	Were field notes made during and/or after the interview or focus group?	
21. Duration	What was the duration of the interviews or focus group?	
22. Data saturation	Was data saturation discussed?	
23. Transcripts returned	Were transcripts returned to participants for comment and/or correction?	
Domain 3: analysis and findings		
Data analysis		
24. Number of data coders	How many data coders coded the data?	
25. Description of the coding tree	Did the authors provide a description of the coding tree?	
26. Derivation of themes	Were themes identified in advance or derived from the data?	
27. Software	What software, if applicable, was used to manage the data?	
28. Participant checking	Did participants provide feedback on the findings?	
Reporting		
29. Quotations presented	Were participant quotations presented to illustrate the themes/findings? Was each quotation identified? e.g., participant number	
30. Data and findings consistent	Was there consistency between the data presented and the findings?	-
31. Clarity of major themes	Were major themes clearly presented in the findings?	
32. Clarity of minor themes	Is there a description of diverse cases or a discussion of minor themes?	
Conclusions		

Item No	Guide Questions/Description	Answer (Provide Page Number)
Disrupting Privilege and Oppressions	What are the values that you think are represented in the research study. For example, what assumptions do you think the researcher is making about the topic of study? About the people in their sample? How do you think that these values are represented in the way in which the authors discuss the study's findings? What positions of privilege and subordination do you think are held by the researchers? By the participants?	
Learner conclusion	Make an overall evaluation of the article. Decide if knowledge offered in the article should be "rejected", "adopted with reservations", or "adopted as presented" and point to your assessment in the sections above to support your decision.	

Total: 25 points

Background & Significance Paper:

Write a paper that explains the background and significance of your practice problem. After reading your paper, I should have a firm understanding of both the practice problem and the social problem. I should understand the scope, impact, causes, and current approaches to address the problems. I should understand how the social problem impacts the practice problem (and vice versa). You will be graded on your writing quality, formatting (APA), and the depth of the content.

Paper Grading Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (9-10 points)	Good (7-8 points)	Fair (5-6 points)	Poor (0-4 points)
Understanding of Practice Problem	Provides a comprehensive and clear explanation of the practice problem, including its background and significance.	Provides a clear explanation of the practice problem with minor gaps in detail.	Provides a basic explanation of the practice problem, lacking depth and detail.	Provides an incomplete or unclear explanation of the practice problem.

Understanding of Social Problem	Provides a thorough and clear explanation of the social problem, including its scope, impact, causes, and current approaches to address it.	Provides a clear explanation of the social problem with minor gaps in detail.	Provides a basic explanation of the social problem, lacking depth and detail.	Provides an incomplete or unclear explanation of the social problem.
Connection Between Practice and Social Problems	Clearly explains how the social problem impacts the practice problem and vice versa, demonstrating a deep understanding of their interrelationship.	Adequately explains the connection between the social and practice problems, with minor gaps in detail.	Provides a basic explanation of the connection, lacking depth and detail.	Provides an incomplete or unclear explanation of the connection.
Writing Quality	Writing is clear, concise, and free of grammatical errors. Demonstrates excellent organization and flow.	Writing is generally clear, with minor grammatical errors. Demonstrates good organization and flow.	Writing is basic, with several grammatical errors. Demonstrates some organization but lacks flow.	Writing is unclear, with many grammatical errors. Lacks organization and flow.
Formatting (APA)	Consistently follows APA formatting guidelines with no errors.	Generally follows APA formatting guidelines with minor errors.	Partially follows APA formatting guidelines with several errors.	Does not follow APA formatting guidelines or has many errors.
Depth of Content	Provides in-depth analysis and comprehensive coverage of the practice and social problems. Uses a variety of high-quality sources to support arguments.	Provides adequate analysis and coverage of the practice and social problems. Uses a variety of sources to support arguments.	Provides basic analysis and limited coverage of the practice and social problems. Uses some sources to support arguments.	Provides superficial analysis and minimal coverage of the practice and social problems. Uses few or no sources to support arguments.

Total: 50 points

Research Design Consultation with Executive Director:

For your final assignment, you will present your **Background & Significance** paper as if you are a staff member proposing a research project at your organization. I will role-play the **Executive Director** who must decide whether to approve your proposed research direction. You will submit the notes you bring to the meeting but will be graded solely on your presentation and engagement with the material during discussion.

This assignment assesses your ability to:

- Clearly communicate a practice problem
- Distinguish the practice problem from the broader social problem
- Formulate and justify a research question
- Demonstrate understanding of potential research designs
- Show awareness of ethics, rigor, internal validity, and ADEI issues
- Think critically in real time

Oral Case Presentation (5 minutes)

In a **5-minute briefing**, you will present to the Executive Director (me):

- The practice problem facing the agency
- The social problem that shapes and reinforces it
- One clear **research question** the agency needs answered
- Whether you recommend a **quantitative**, **qualitative**, or **mixed-methods** approach
- A brief rationale for why this approach is appropriate
- One ADEI or ethical concern that must be handled carefully
- No slides. Notes allowed. Scripts are not.

This models professional communication used in real agencies and grant development.

Executive Director Q&A (15 minutes)

Following your briefing, I will ask questions to assess your understanding of research design (including sampling, measurement, data collection) and ethics. Below are questions you can use to prepare:

Research Design

- Why this design?
- Why not other possible designs?
- What would be gained or lost if we changed the design?

Internal Validity / Rigor

- What threats to validity affect your design?
- How would you ensure rigor?
- If qualitative: How will you ensure credibility, dependability, and confirmability?

Sampling & Feasibility

- Who should be included in the study and why?
- How will you recruit them?

- What barriers might affect participation?

Data Collection

- What measures, interviews, or data sources are appropriate?
- How will you ensure they capture what matters?
- What biases might shape your data collection?

Ethics

- What is the biggest risk to participants?
- How will you protect confidentiality?
- Are there power or vulnerability issues?

ADEI & Anti-Oppressive Research

- How does oppression shape the practice problem?
- How will your study avoid replicating harm?
- How will you account for context and identity?

Application to Agency Mission

- Why should the agency invest in this research?
- What decisions could this research inform?
- How might findings change services or policy?

Research Design Outline Grading Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (9–10)	Good (7–8)	Fair (5–6)	Poor (0–4)
Clarity of Practice Problem & Social Problem	Clearly and succinctly explains the practice and social problems; strong distinction and deep understanding.	Clear explanation with minor gaps; distinction mostly clear.	Basic explanation with limited depth or unclear distinction.	Unclear, incomplete, or inaccurate explanation; no distinction.

Research Question	Clear, specific, answerable, and strongly aligned with agency needs.	Clear and relevant with minor issues.	Present but vague or weakly aligned.	Unclear, missing, or unrelated.
Recommended Research Approach	Well-justified recommendation demonstrating strong understanding.	Reasonable recommendation with minor gaps.	Limited justification or partial misunderstanding.	Unclear, unjustified, or inappropriate.
Rationale & Understanding of Alternative Designs	Thorough rationale with clear explanation of alternatives.	Good rationale with minor gaps.	Surface-level rationale; minimal alternative discussion.	Little to no rationale; no alternatives addressed.
Internal Validity / Rigor	Clearly identifies threats and strong strategies to address them.	Identifies threats with minor gaps.	Mentions threats but lacks depth or accuracy.	No relevant threats identified; poor understanding.
Sampling & Feasibility	Clear sampling plan, rationale, recruitment, and barriers.	Clear plan with minor gaps.	Plan lacks detail or feasibility.	Unclear or inappropriate sampling plan.
Data Collection & Measurement	Appropriate measures and strong understanding of bias.	Appropriate with minor gaps.	Basic description lacking clarity or accuracy.	Unclear or inappropriate data collection.
Ethics & Participant Protection	Thoughtfully identifies risks, protections, and vulnerabilities.	Identifies risks with minor gaps.	Limited discussion of ethics.	Incomplete or inaccurate discussion.

ADEI & Anti-Oppressive Considerations	Clear explanation of oppression, potential harms, and strategies to avoid harm.	Addresses ADEI with minor gaps.	Superficial or inaccurate discussion.	No meaningful ADEI discussion.
Application to Agency Mission / Persuasiveness	Compelling connection to mission; clear and professional presentation.	Clear connection with minor gaps.	Weak connection or unclear presentation.	Little connection; ineffective communication.

Total: 100 points

Feedback and Grading Timeline:

I work to post grades within one week of the due date. I make most of my comments within the body of your submission. I recommend that you carefully review the comments to continue the learning.

Course Schedule (subject to modification)

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment/Activity
Week 1	Jan 20	Course Overview / Introduction to Research & EBP	Chapters 1–3	
Week 2	Jan 27	Methods of Inquiry (Including types of articles)	Chapter 4; Altman (2008)	
Week 3	Feb 3	Ethics & Politics of Research and Culturally Competent Research	Chapter 5; Congress (2000); Chapter 6; Evans & Kohli (1997)	
Week 4	Feb 10	Problem Formulation	Chapters 7–8	
Week 5	Feb 17	Ethics Presentation Due		
Week 6	Feb 24	Conceptualization & Measurement	Chapter 9 (+ Ch. 10 suggested)	Practice Problem Statement Due
Week 7	Mar 3	Designs for Evaluating Research & Practice	Chapters 11–12	Social Problem Statement Due

Week 8	Mar 10	Sampling	Chapter 14	Annotated Bibliography Due
Week 9	Mar 17	Survey Research	Chapter 15	
Week 10	Mar 24	NO CLASS-SPRING BREAK Drink your water, Take your meds, Call your people, Go for a walk, Laugh		
Week 11	Mar 31	Secondary Analysis & Quantitative Analysis	Chapters 16 & 21	Quantitative Article Analysis Due
Week 12	Apr 7	Quantitative Data Analysis	Chapter 22	
Week 13	Apr 14	Qualitative Research	Chapters 18 & 19	Background & Significance Paper Due
Week 14	Apr 21	Qualitative Data Analysis	Chapter 20	Qualitative Article Analysis Due
Week 15	Apr 28	Qualitative Data Analysis	Chapter 20	Read Family Meal Interviews
Week 16	May 5	Research Design Sessions		
Finals		Research Design Sessions		

Course Policies

Participation (expectations)

- Any information shared by the class is confidential, must remain in the class.
- Please show your respect, patience, and support to your peers. Any discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated.
- Unless otherwise noted assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the assigned due date. ***Late assignments are not accepted***. ***You must ask for an extension on an assignment 24 hours before the due date.*** In the event that late assignments are accepted, the instructor may elect to impose a substantial grade penalty.
    - Students are expected to regularly **back up their electronic work** (flash drive, CD, external hard drive etc.). Computer issues are not sufficient grounds for an extension. In addition, students are expected to securely store all returned graded materials. It is your responsibility to keep graded assignments in the event there is any discrepancy in your grade. Without your records, grade correction/changes cannot be considered.
- Be active participants in class sessions. This implies that you will be present, on time, stay for the entire class period, and participate in discussion and answer questions. Each student should be responsible for being fully involved in any in/after class activity.
- **Assigned Readings:** Students are expected to read the assigned textbook and other readings *before* class. Lectures will only cover selected topics related to the assigned readings.

- ***Cell phones and laptops need to be turned on mute or turned off during class.*** If you must answer your phone during the class, please mute your microphone and turn off your video.
- **Be aware of your surroundings.** Make your best effort to participate in class in an environment that respects the privacy of the class participants. Remember, a distraction for you is a distraction for the rest of the class.
- Spend a weekly average of **2-3 hours of study time for each hour of class time**. This may include reading, watching videos or recorded lectures, listening to podcasts to prepare for class activities and completing reading quizzes.
- Please speak with me before recording any class activity. It is a violation of University of Missouri policy to distribute such recordings without my authorization and the permission of others who are recorded.

Attendance Policies

- Attendance will be collected within the first 15 minutes of class and then again at a later point in class. If you leave class early, it will not count as full attendance.
- Class attendance and participation is essential for success. When you are absent, it is your responsibility to clarify missed assignments with me prior to the next class.
- If you expect to miss class to participate in a university-sanctioned activity, be sure to communicate with me early in the semester so that we can discuss your responsibilities and make plans to fulfill the requirements of the classes you will miss.
- Please make an appointment to discuss with me any requests for exceptions to these policies.
- If you expect to miss a class or have a deadline conflict with class work due to a religious observance, let me know early in the semester so that we can discuss your responsibilities and plan so that you meet course obligations and requirements.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism

We want our learning environment to be honest and fair. The assessments in our course provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate what you know and learn where you can still improve. When you submit work with your name on it, this is a written statement that credit for the work belongs to you alone. If the work was a product of collaboration (such as a group project), each student is expected to clearly acknowledge in writing all persons who contributed to its completion.

Each assignment and exam in our course will include clear guidelines about the rules around each assessment including what materials are appropriate to use. It is always required that the work you submit is your own, uses proper citation, avoids collusion or falsification. The Writing Center can also advise on citing to avoid plagiarism.

If you have a question about an assignment, do not hesitate to contact me for clarification. You are responsible for being attentive to and observant of University policies about academic honesty as stated in the University's Campus Policies and Code of Student Conduct found in the UMSL Bulletin.

- **Plagiarism, collusion, cheating, and falsification** may be terms that are new to you and so I want to be completely clear here as to what I mean by these terms.

- **Plagiarism**: representing the ideas or work of another as your own, intentionally or unwittingly, without proper, clear, explicit acknowledgement.
- **Facilitation/Collusion:** supporting malpractice by another student, for example, allowing your work to be copied.
- **Duplication of Work:** presenting the same work for a different assessment.
- **Cheating:** using, possessing or distributing any unauthorized sources of information (such as previous or existing exams for this course) and providing or receiving unauthorized assistance on any form of academic work or engaging in any behavior specifically prohibited by the faculty member (e.g., uploading or using test or online homework questions on study sites such as Chegg.com, using AI tools such as ChatGPT to write without alteration discussion posts or assignments, copying someone else's answers on tests and quizzes, copying/pasting exam or online homework questions from this semester for your peers or publicly in online forums, stealing another student's work, and unauthorized entry or use of material in a computer file).
- **Falsification:** any untruth, either verbal or written, in one's academic work including presenting fabricated/made up data or presenting someone else's work as your own. Unless the instructor explicitly states otherwise, it is dishonest to collaborate with others when completing any assignment or test, performing laboratory experiments, writing and/or documenting computer programs, writing papers or reports and completing problem sets.

- Academic dishonesty is a serious offense that may lead to **probation, suspension, or dismissal from the University**. All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Division of Student Affairs who will hold an initial conduct meeting and then determine possible administrative sanctions such as a warning, probation, or dismissal from the university.
- In all cases of academic dishonesty, the instructor shall make an academic judgment about the student's grade on that work and in that course, which shall not be considered a sanction for prohibited conduct under this rule. The instructor shall, consistent with other policies, report the alleged academic dishonesty to the Primary Administrative Officer.
- *You must use APA format for all writing in social work*

Use of Generative AI (ChatGPT, Claude, etc.)

You may use generative AI tools to support *idea generation, outlining, or editing,* but you may not submit AI-generated text as if it were entirely your own work.

If you use AI in any way, you must:

1. **Describe how you used it** in a short paragraph at the end of your paper under the heading "AI Use Statement."
2. **Include the prompts** you used and **identify any sections** where AI text was used and then revised by you.
3. Take full responsibility for **accuracy, APA style, and originality** of the final paper.
4. Failure to disclose AI use will be treated as an academic integrity issue.

Title IX & Equity

- **Mandatory Reporting:** Under Title IX, all UMSL faculty, staff, and administrators (with limited exception) are obligated to report any incidents of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, sexual assault, or gender discrimination to the Student Affairs office and/or other University officials. This ensures that all parties are protected from further abuse and that victim(s) are supported by trained counselors and professionals. Note: There are several offices at UMSL (e.g., Counseling Services, Health Services, Community Psychological Service, Center for Trauma Recovery, and Student Social Services) whose staff are exempt from Title IX mandated reporting, when the information is learned during confidential communication.
- This course involves topics and/or media that may be emotionally disturbing, graphic, or otherwise sensitive in nature including conversations about family, stories of violence, and grief and loss. I will try to provide specific warnings before each instance. I believe these topics (or materials) are important to prepare social workers to serve the community. If you believe this may be a barrier to your learning environment, please contact me to discuss.

Student Resources

Student Advocacy & Care

Provides students with case management and other support and services to address unmet basic needs and other challenges they may be facing outside of the university that impacts their ability to succeed academically. These challenges may include things like food insecurity, housing instability, lack of childcare, counseling needs, and financial emergencies.

- Location: 144 Millennium Student Center
- LINK to request assistance or help
- Website: https://www.umsl.edu/studentadvocacy/

Access, Disability and Communication

Your academic success is important to me. We all learn differently and bring different strengths and needs to the class. If there are aspects of the course that prevent you from learning or make you feel excluded, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we'll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

If you have a documented disability that may have an impact upon your work in this class, please contact Disability Access Services (DAS) immediately. Students must provide documentation of their disability to the office of Disability Access Services in order to receive official University services and accommodations. The staff is available to answer questions regarding accommodations or assist you in your pursuit of accommodations. Information about your disability is confidential. Once DAS reviews your medical documentation, they will provide you with the information and steps to inform me about the accommodations to which you are entitled. Your accommodations will begin as soon as we discuss your approved accommodations.

- Location: 131 Millennium Student Center (MSC)
- Phone: (314) 516-6554
- Email: das@umsl.edu
- Website: http://www.umsl.edu/services/disability/

UMSL Global
If you have difficulty communicating in English with the instructor of this course, contact UMSL Global.

- Location: 403 Express Scripts Hall (ESH)
- Phone: (314) 516-5753
- Email: global@umsl.edu
- Website: umsl.edu/global/isss

Student Enrichment and Achievement
SEA provides comprehensive success coaching services to targeted populations (i.e., new First Time College & Transfer, current UMSL students with less than a 2.500 GPA).

- Location: 107 Lucas Hall
- Phone: (314) 516-5300
- Email: umslsea@umsl.edu
- Website: https://www.umsl.edu/services/sea/

TRIO Student Support Services
TRIO provides a holistic support model through Success Coaching for targeted populations (i.e., transfer students who are first-generation college students, have a documented disability, or have demonstrated economic need).

- Location: 180 Millennium Student Center (MSC)
- Phone: (314) 516-4332
- Email: umsltrio@umsl.edu
- Website: https://www.umsl.edu/outreach-and-support/trio/

University Student Support (USS)
USS provides comprehensive success coaching services to targeted student populations (i.e., new First Time College & Transfer, current UMSL students with at least a 2.500 GPA).

- Location: 225 Millennium Student Center (MSC)
- Phone: (314) 516-6807
- Email: uss@umsl.edu
- Website: https://www.umsl.edu/outreach-and-support/uss/

Technical Support
UMSL and UM-System provide students with a variety of technology support on campus and virtually. The information listed below connects you with the most commonly sought supports.

Academic technologies (Canvas, VoiceThread, Honorlock, Zoom, etc.)

- Location: virtual and via website chat
- Phone: (855) 675-0755
- Email: teachingtools@umsystem.edu
- Website: https://tinyurl.com/UMissouriOnline

Login and network issues (SSOID, email, campus wifi, password changes, etc.)

- Location: 190 Millennium Student Center (MSC)
- Phone: (314) 516-6034
- Email: helpdesk@umsl.edu
- Website: http://www.umsl.edu/technology/tsc

Electronic textbooks (AutoAccess, Cengage, McGrawHill Connect, etc.)

- Location: Millennium Student Center (MSC) Bookstore 2nd floor
- Phone: (314) 516-5763
- Email: autoaccess@umsystem.edu
- Website: https://missouri.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0eXnXJy1QpRUc7j

Academic Support

University Tutoring Center (UTC)

The University Tutoring Center (UTC) is here to transform your learning with one-on-one support. UTC offers many options for tutoring, and all of them are free for UMSL students:

- Walk-in Tutoring: On-the-spot, in-person assistance. No appointment required.
- Triton Online Tutoring: Live virtual assistance over Zoom. No appointment required.
- Paired Peer Tutoring: We'll match you with a tutor to work together all semester long.
- NetTutor: Another online, flexible tutoring option.
    - Location: 225 Millennium Student Center (MSC)
    - Phone: (314) 516-6807
    - Email: tutoring@umsl.edu
    - Website: https://www.umsl.edu/tutoring/

The Online Writing Center (OWC)

At the OWC Canvas site, students can send their papers to our tutors, who will read them and send them back with suggestions. Students can also access Turnitin, which identifies quoted material in their essays. Location: 103 Social Sciences and Business Building (SSB)

- Website: https://www.umsl.edu/divisions/artscience/english/writing-center/index.html
- Visit the OWC course site on Canvas to submit drafts online. To find the OWC course, click on Courses All Courses. Then click to join this course
- The OWC usually responds within 48 hours. Please allow ample time.

Math Academic Center (Math Lab)

The Math Academic Center offers free individual assistance on a walk-in basis to students needing help with any mathematics from basic math through calculus or any course involving mathematical skills.

- Location: 103 Social Sciences and Business Building (SSB)
- Website: https://www.umsl.edu/mpas/resources/math-center.html

A final note: this syllabus will be subject to change at the instructor's discretion

Revised February 2026