



## **School of Social Work**

### **SWK 590: RESEARCH METHODS IN ADVANCE SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE Spring 2020 – MPLX Tuesdays 6:00 – 9:00 pm**

*According to State of Texas HB 2504, this course syllabus must be submitted for review prior to the course's scheduled start date. Therefore, the instructor has the right to modify this syllabus and course calendar at any time between submission for publication and the first day of class. Furthermore, the instructor has the right to modify the syllabus as any time during the course provided (1) such changes do not increase expectations or requirements beyond a reasonable equivalent and (2) students must be given ample notice of any changes*

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**Office Location** Henderson 308 (Commerce)  
**Office Hours** Monday, 1:00 – 5:00; Tues 2:15 – 4:30; Thur 2:15 – 3:30  
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## **Overview of Course**

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course provides students with information on advanced techniques of practice and program assessment. Both qualitative and quantitative research designs are taught. Evaluation research design, instrument selection and development and techniques of data analysis are addressed. Ethical and behavioral issues in evaluation research are presented. Prerequisite: SWK 531 or admission to the Advanced Standing Program.

**COURSE OBJECTIVE(S):**

This course prepares students with knowledge, skills and abilities to evaluate research studies, apply research findings to practice and evaluate their own practice interventions by employing research methods.

The course prepares students to plan interventions with measureable goals and outcomes, select appropriate measures and prepare to conduct appropriate analytical and statistical methods in the evaluation process.

**RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER COURSES:**

This course stresses the importance of evidence based theory and practice methods. Consequently, it supports the practice courses that emphasize the importance of demonstrating effectiveness in professional interventions. This course builds on research knowledge and skills learned in prior research methods courses taken in a student's BSW coursework or in the Foundation sequence. This course draws on materials from practice and HBSE to illustrate social work research principles and it develops a professional model that utilizes practice evaluation to formulate a continuous improvement cycle in professional practice. The course prepares students to develop an advanced generalist model that is ultimately autonomous and self-correcting.

**PROGRAM GOALS:**

1. Prepare MSW graduates for professional advanced generalist practice that reflects application and integration of critical thinking, theoretical frameworks, and differential interventions.
2. Enable MSW graduates to apply ethical reasoning to advance equality, justice, and social change.
3. Promote leadership and service that is relevant to individual contexts of practice and enhances well-being and quality of life.

**CORE COMPETENCIES**

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) requires a competency-based approach to identify and assess what students demonstrate in practice. In social work, this approach involves assessing students' ability to demonstrate the competencies identified in the educational policy. Students achieve programmatic goals listed above through demonstration of the following competencies for Advanced Generalist Practice (AGP).

Competency AGP 2.1.1 Exemplify professional social work behavior and standards

Competency AGP 2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to resolve dilemmas and  
create positive change

Competency AGP 2.1.3 Critically analyze practice solutions and  
Communicate judgments and reasoning through decision-  
making processes

Competency AGP 2.1.4 Demonstrate the ability to build strengths based on mutual  
engagement with diverse populations

Competency AGP 2.1.5 Demonstrate commitment to strategies that address  
discrimination, reduce disparities, and promote social and  
economic justice

**Competency AGP 2.1.6 Contribute to evidence-based best practice approaches to  
assess and improve effectiveness**

Competency AGP 2.1.7 Differentially apply theories and frameworks of HBSE

Competency AGP 2.1.8 Promote social policies to improve service delivery systems

Competency AGP 2.1.9 Use leadership skills to respond, influence, and shape  
changing contexts

**Competency AGP 2.1.10 Demonstrate autonomy in dynamic practice situations  
that involve:**

2.1.10.1 Relationship-building at all levels of systems

2.1.10.2 Evidence-based assessment tools and intervention approaches

2.1.10.3 Effective intervention with complex problems and prevention strategies

**2.1.10.4 Response to the feedback process from interventions**

Competency AGP 2.1.11: Develop leadership skills as advanced generalist practitioners  
to enhance organizations and communities

Competency AGP 2.1.12: Demonstrate innovative problem-solving in social and organizational systems

### **Practice Behaviors**

Each competency (outlined above) describes the knowledge, values, skills and cognitive and affective processes that comprise competency at the Advanced Generalist Practice (AGP) level. While content and activities of each course in the MSW curriculum covertly or overtly addresses each of the nine competencies, identified within each course is a set of specific practice behaviors representing observable components of one or more competencies. Content and assessment reflect the bolded competencies and the following practice behaviors:

AGP 1.6a Uses research and evaluation to assess intervention, efficacy and effectiveness

AGP 1.6b Develops and shares data to enhance best practices and professional knowledge

AGP1.6c Uses evidence-based research findings to improve practice

AGP 1.10j. Assesses, intervenes, and evaluates complex problems with all systems.

## **Course Structure**

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### **Texts and Associated Materials**

#### **Required Texts:**

Kyrsik, J.L. & Finn, J. (2013). *Research for Effective Social Work Practice*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York, NY: Routledge

*Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (2009). 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association

#### **Additional Readings Suggested:**

Patton, M. (2009). *Understanding Research Methods*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Pyrczak Publishing

Russell, A.C. (2016). *A Hands-On Manual for Social Work Research*. New York: Oxford Press

## Overview of Course Assignments

1. **Single System Design Project (100 points)** – Students will identify a problem area, implement an intervention, collect data and write up analysis on a classmate. This will include a 2-3 page review of relevant literature, written in APA format to support the chosen intervention.
  - a. Students are paired up and given time to explore an area for the SSD
  - b. Students must submit a statement of the problem, proposed intervention, chosen design and data collection method, and dates of implementation -
  - c. Students must collect data over a period of at least 4 weeks -
  - d. Final report due that includes outcomes and recommendations
2. **Formal Project Plan (100 points):** students will be given a topic and can choose to work in groups of no more than 3 or individually to develop a project plan that falls into the category of program/practice evaluation (group design – survey method) or community needs assessment and develop a formal plan to implement and carryout the investigation in a real-world setting. Students will implement and collect data that will be analyzed in SWK 595 and the final result will be a completed report suitable as an executive summary; report to stakeholders, and/or a research brief.
  - a. Students must turn in a working outline for the literature review (supporting evidence and sources)
  - b. Students must turn in a working draft of the proposed method
  - c. Students must turn in draft documents of informed consent and data collection tools – will be further refined and developed during an in class workshop, with mandatory attendance.
3. **Worksheets/Activities (100 points or 25% of total points):** Students will be given activities and/or worksheets throughout the semester to be completed for points. The possible points and number of worksheets will be determined as the semester progresses.

All students MUST complete the following Human Subjects Review Trainings AND submit certificates with Formal Project Plan:

### **A. Responsible conduct of Research for Social and Behavioral Sciences (link below)**

<http://www.tamuc.edu/research/compliance/training/ResponsibleConductInstructions.aspx>

**B. Protection of Human Subjects Training: Students conducting no more than minimal risk**

<http://www.tamuc.edu/research/compliance/training/protection-human-subjectstraining.aspx>

4. **Quizzes (100 points) & Final Exam (100 points)** – Periodic quizzes and a Comprehensive Final Exam will be given.

**Grading Scale**

90-100% of points = A

80-89% of points = B

70-79% of points = C

60-69% of points = D

Less than 60% of points = F

## Student Rights and Responsibilities

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"Civility in face-to-face classrooms, online courses and in labs, internships, practicum and all other academic settings necessitate respect for the opinions of others and is very important in all academic settings. It is likely you may not agree with everything that happens or discussed in the academic setting; however, courteous behavior and responses are expected. To create a civil and preserve learning environment that optimizes teaching and learning, all participants share a responsibility in creating a civil and non-disruptive forum" (Student Guide Book, p 35). To create an optimum learning environment, students have rights and responsibilities.

**Student Rights**

*As set forth in Texas A&M University System Policy 13.02*

The rights of students are to be respected. These rights include respect for personal feelings; freedom from indignity of any type, freedom from control by any person except as may be in accord with published rules of the system academic institutions, and conditions allowing them to make the best use of their time and talents toward the objectives, which brought them to the system academic institutions. No officer

[university faculty, employee] or student, regardless of position in rank, shall violate those rights, any custom, tradition or rule in conflict will be allowed to prevail.

Students are expected at all times to recognize constituted authority, to conform to the ordinary rules of good conduct, to be truthful, to respect the rights of others, to protect private and public property, and to make the best use of their time toward an education.

### Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

### **Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**

Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Gee Library - Room 132  
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5853  
Fax (903) 468-8148  
[StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)

## **Students Responsibilities**

### **Class Attendance and Participation Policy**

- Class participation has three components: (1) appropriate interactions with classmates; (2) active involvement in class activities and (3) attentiveness
- Students will attend class, reflecting responsibility, inherent in the development as a social work professional. Being on time and prepared when class begins and remaining present throughout the entire class meeting demonstrates emerging professional behavior expected in social work graduates. Roll is taken in each class to document students' attendance.
- Classroom exercises, discussions, role-plays, guest speakers and other in-class experimental exercises are essential for a student's professional learning and continued development of self-awareness. Tardiness (or early departure) of more than 15 minutes will count as one-half absence and two (2) times being late to class or two (2) early departures culminating into one absence.
- A student is absent if he/she arrives more than 30 minutes late to class, leaves 30 minutes early or does not come to class.
- The following penalties for absences (unexcused, or excused, according to university policy) will be administered

**Weekly (class  
meets  
1X week)**

Up to 2  
absences: No  
Penalty

3 absences: 1  
letter grade drop

4 absences: Class grade of "F"

***Bi-Weekly***

*Up to 3*

*4 absences: 1*

*5 absences: 1*

*6 absences*



<b>class meets 2X week)</b>	<b>absences: No Penalty</b>	<b>Letter grade drop</b>	<b>Letter grade drop</b>	<b>Class grade of "F"</b>
<b>Summer 10- week</b>	<b>Up t o 1 absence: No Penalty</b>	<b>2 Absences: 1 Letter grade drop</b>	<b>3 absences: Class grade of "F"</b>	

**Online, Blended and Web Enhanced Classes:** Just as students are required to attend face-to-face classes, students are required to log in and participate in online venues. To receive credit for attendance online via eCollege, students must log in and complete assignments as required in the course. Not logging onto eCollege (monitored by the instructor) and completing assignments online during the required time is the equivalent of an absence for each week this occurs.

**Final Evaluation and Grade Depends on both Classroom attendance and Participation**

Inadequate participation or lack of required time commitment in each class significantly affects students' grades. No matter the course venue, students must engage in a comparable amount of time. Expectations of both Face-to-Face classes and those with Online components include time spent reading and studying course material.

### **Student Conduct**

Students preparing to become professional social workers must adhere to the *University Code of Conduct, Department Code of Conduct and National Association of Social Workers' (NASW) Code of Ethics*.

**University Code of Conduct** located in the *Student Guide Book* at

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campuslife/documents/studentGuidebook.pdf> (pp 34- 66). On

the University Website under Campus Life Documents

To become aware of University policies related to student academic and behavioral expectations for students refer to the Guidebook.

### **Department Code of Conduct**

*"Faculty have the authority to request students who exhibit inappropriate behavior to leave the class/lab/internship practicum or to block access to online courses and may*

*refer offenses to the [Academic and Professional Issues Committee (API)] or to the Department Head. More serious offences by be referred to the University Police Department and/or the Judicial Affairs Office for disciplinary action" (Student Guidebook p 35)*

Social Work students conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner. Closely linked with professional recognition is the social worker's compliance with the profession's ethical standards. It is imperative for professional social workers to be competent and ethical in practice if the profession is to maintain the public trust. It is essential that each social work student gain a thorough understanding of the ethical principles that guide practice and actively demonstrate in behavior, both in and out of the classroom. Student conduct is to reflect the tenets of *NASW Code of Ethics* (located at <https://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp> ) on the NASW website: <https://www.socialworkers.org>

Approved statement for inclusion in university publications (i.e. Syllabi, Faculty Handbook, Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog, Student Guidebook ...)

#### Campus Concealed Carry

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to (<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>) and/or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

## **Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty**

There is an expectation of maintaining high standards of integrity and honesty by all Social Work Graduate students at Texas A&M University-Commerce. Faculty and staff are expected to uphold and support student integrity and honesty by maintaining conditions that encourage and enforce academic honesty. Conduct that violates generally accepted standards of academic honesty is academic dishonesty.

The School of Social Work follows University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty (available at <http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf> ) Students are expected to read and understand the University's Academic Dishonesty Policy

The Office of the Provost documents and maintains a record of all incidents of academic dishonesty. Multiple incidents of academic dishonesty will result in a student's dismissal from the program and from the University.

A student who fails to meet the professional expectation of the field for which he/she is preparing may be suspended from further study in that program by the department administering the program (Graduate School Catalog p 36)

## **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

### **Browser support**

D2L is committed to performing key application testing when new browser versions are released. New and updated functionality is also tested against the latest version of supported browsers. However, due to the frequency of some browser releases, D2L cannot guarantee that each browser version will perform as expected. If you encounter any issues with any of the browser versions listed in the tables below, contact D2L Support, who will determine the best course of action for resolution. Reported issues

are prioritized by supported browsers and then maintenance browsers.

Supported browsers are the latest or most recent browser versions that are tested against new versions of D2L products. Customers can report problems and receive support for issues. For an optimal experience, D2L recommends using supported browsers with D2L products.

Maintenance browsers are older browser versions that are not tested extensively against new versions of D2L products. Customers can still report problems and receive support for critical issues; however, D2L does not guarantee all issues will be addressed. A maintenance browser becomes officially unsupported after one year.

Note the following:

- Ensure that your browser has JavaScript and Cookies enabled.
- For desktop systems, you must have Adobe Flash Player 10.1 or greater.
- The Brightspace Support features are now optimized for production environments when using the Google Chrome browser, Apple Safari browser, Microsoft Edge browser, Microsoft Internet Explorer browser, and Mozilla Firefox browsers.

### Desktop Support

Browser	Supported Browser Version(s)	Maintenance Browser Version(s)
Microsoft® Edge	Latest	N/A
Microsoft® Internet Explorer®	N/A	11
Mozilla® Firefox®	Latest, ESR	N/A

Google® Chrome™	Latest	N/A
Apple® Safari®	Latest	N/A

### Tablet and Mobile Support

Device	Operating System	Browser	Supported Browser Version(s)
Android™	Android 4.4+	Chrome	Latest
Apple	iOS®	Safari, Chrome	<p>The current major version of iOS (the latest minor or <b>point</b> release of that major version) and the previous major version of iOS (the latest minor or <b>point</b> release of that major version). For example, as of June 7, 2017, D2L supports iOS 10.3.2 and iOS 9.3.5, but not iOS 10.2.1, 9.0.2, or any other version.</p> <p>Chrome: Latest version for the iOS browser.</p>
Windows	Windows 10	Edge, Chrome, Firefox	Latest of all browsers, and Firefox ESR.

- You will need regular access to a computer with a broadband Internet connection.  
The minimum computer requirements are:

- 512 MB of RAM, 1 GB or more preferred
  - Broadband connection required courses are heavily video intensive
  - Video display capable of high-color 16-bit display 1024 x 768 or higher resolution
- **For YouSeeU Sync Meeting sessions 8 Mbps is required.** Additional system requirements found here: <https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>
  - You must have a:
    - Sound card, which is usually integrated into your desktop or laptop computer
    - Speakers or headphones.
    - \*For courses utilizing video-conferencing tools and/or an online proctoring solution, a webcam and microphone are required.
  - Both versions of Java (32 bit and 64 bit) must be installed and up to date on your machine. At a minimum Java 7, update 51, is required to support the learning management system. The most current version of Java can be downloaded at: [JAVA web site http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp](http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp)
  - Current anti-virus software must be installed and kept up to date.

Running the browser check will ensure your internet browser is supported.

Pop-ups are allowed.

JavaScript is enabled.

Cookies are enabled.

- You will need some additional free software (plug-ins) for enhanced web browsing. Ensure that you download the free versions of the following software:
  - [Adobe Reader https://get.adobe.com/reader/](https://get.adobe.com/reader/)

- [Adobe Flash Player](https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/) (version 17 or later) <https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/>
  - [Adobe Shockwave Player](https://get.adobe.com/shockwave/) <https://get.adobe.com/shockwave/>
  - [Apple Quick Time](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/) <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>
- At a minimum, you must have Microsoft Office 2013, 2010, 2007 or Open Office. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software. Copying and pasting, along with attaching/uploading documents for assignment submission, will also be required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you can check with the bookstore to see if they have any student copies.

## **ACCESS AND NAVIGATION**

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).

**Note:** Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

## **COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**

**Brightspace Support**

**Need Help?**

**Student Support**

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

### **Technical Support**

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778 or click on the **Live Chat** or click on the words “[click here](#)” to submit an issue via email.



### **System Maintenance**

D2L runs monthly updates during the last week of the month, usually on Wednesday. The system should remain up during this time unless otherwise specified in an announcement. You may experience minimal impacts to performance and/or look and feel of the environment.