SWK 531: Research Methods for Practice
COURSE SYLLABUS:
SPRING 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Rebecca G. Judd, PH.D. LMSW-IPR
Office Location:
Office Hours: Virtual Office Hours Monday 7 a.m. – 10 a.m. & Wednesday Noon – 2 p.m.
University Email Address: Rebecca.Judd@etamu.edu
Preferred Form of Communication**: email**
Communication Response Time: Within 2 business days

Mental Health and Well-Being

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to TELUS Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available for guidance and support whenever needed.

QR Code for TELUS

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required

Grinnell, R.M. Jr. (2026) Foundations of Research Methods for Social Workers: A Critical Thinking Approach. Pairbond Publications LLC.

Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (2019) 7th ed.

Software Required

Optional Texts and/or Materials

<mark>All MSW</mark> students need to purchase the following set of study materials to prepare for the <mark>Graduate Comprehensive Exam</mark> (this is not for the foundation assessment test) that they will take in their final semester. You must pass the exam to receive your degree. It is never too early to begin studying for the exam.

Comprehensive Study Guide (Masters, Clinical, Adv. Generalist) Version 9.0. Social Work Examination Services.
www.https://swes.net/studymaterials/comprehensive-study-guide-lmsw/

Course Description

The scientific method in social work practice is presented. The methods of empirical research for knowledge building, the role of research in theory construction, research designs and data analysis, and methods of practice and program evaluation are introduced. Students learn to apply qualitative and quantitative research methods to the problems of social work practice.

Prerequisites students must have been admitted to the MSW Program and be in good standing.

Relationship to Other Courses:

Student Learning Outcomes (Should be measurable; observable; use action verbs)

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. Listed below are the competencies and associated knowledge, skills, values and/or cognitive and affective processes that comprise the expected outcomes for this course.

	Activity/Assessment	Dimension
Competency 4: Engage in Practice Informed Research and Research Informed Practice		
Use practical experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research	Literature Review Article Analysis: Quantitative Study Qualitative Study Single System Design	Knowledge, skills, cognitive affective processes
Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings	Ethical Reaction Paper	Values Cognitive Affective Processes

Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery	Literature Review	Knowledge, skills and cognitive/affective processes
Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities		
Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes	Knowledge Tests #1; #2 and #3	Knowledge, skills Individuals, Families Groups, Organizations and Communities
Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes	Ethics Reaction Paper Article Analysis: Quantitative Study Qualitative Study Single System Design	Knowledge, skills, values and cognitive affective processes Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities
Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes	Article Analysis: Quantitative Single System Design	Knowledge, skills and cognitive and affective processes Individual, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities
Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo and macro levels *a*	Article Analysis: Quantitative Qualitative Single System Design	Knowledge, skills and cognitive and effective processes Individual, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

In this class you will utilize the Learning Management Systems (LMS) D2L for instructional and learning opportunities, submitting your assignments, participating in online synchronous and asynchronous discussions, accessing resources, and completing quizzes/tests. Additionally, knowledge and skills in using Microsoft Word PowerPoint and Outlook Email, if you have any issues with using the various systems or

software, it is your responsibility to contact support services and to notify the instructor of the problem.

Instructional Methods

This course will be delivered via synchronous and asynchronous sessions via D2L and will consist of live class sessions, pre-recorded lectures, group engagement activities, various assignments with some including experiential learning and practical application of the content areas. In addition, small lectures, discussion activities and workshops may be utilized to provide instruction during this course.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

As a student in this course, you are responsible to engage in active learning and reaching out to the instructor if there are problems or challenges that is interfering in optimal learning. Communication is key when engaged in a fully online, virtual environment.

Expectations for success include:

1. Always demonstrate professional behavior, including demonstrating respect for instructor and peers; being open to feedback and guidance throughout this class and in the program.
2. Adhered to the School of Social Work and University student code of conduct, along with NASW Code of Ethics.
3. Begin reading the assigned text and supplemental readings as soon as possible, with a focus on completing all readings prior to engagement with instructor or peers.
4. Prepare to engage in live class sessions, discussions, and other activities so you can be a contributor as well as receiver of knowledge and skills.
5. Actively participate in engagement activities which will include live virtual class sessions, online discussions, and interactive learning opportunities -as this if vital for learning and success in both this course and the program.
6. Work ahead when possible, completing assignments ahead of due date so you are prepared to submit on the due date.
7. Sign into the D2L course multiple times during the week to access updated announcements or posted resources.
8. Check your university email daily. This is the official method of communication by the university, department, and instructor.

9. Be open and focused on the "process" and not the "product" as earning this degree requires time, effort, work and ultimately growth in knowledge, skills, abilities along with personal and professional attributes.

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:
A = 90%-100% of total points
B = 80%-89%
C = 70%-79%
D = 60%-69%
F = 59% or Below

Assessment Weights:
Worksheets = 15% of final grade
Exams = 35 % of final grade
Core Assignments = 50% of final grade

Assessments
NOTE: The use of AI tools are encouraged (except for when completing the Ethics Reaction Paper) and required for the final assignment, BUT indication of AI tools being used and not being documented in papers following APA requirements, which includes placing a reference on the reference page and a link to the chat will result in a "0" for the assignment as this will be considered plagiarized or unoriginal.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Weekly Unit Worksheets *provided throughout the semester.*
Students will complete worksheets that introduce them to research terms, concepts, and the basics of descriptive and inferential statistics (10 pts each)

Ethics Reaction Paper (core assignment)
Each *student will watch the movie: The Pregnancy Project, which will be scheduled in class and write a reaction paper using an outline provided by the instructor (50 pts)* ***NOTE: There is no make up for this assignment and no re-do option. IT MUST be completed within the timeframe specified in the course schedule so as to not compromise the integrity of the assignment. Grading Rubric*** *Appendix A*

Dissecting Desing in Social Work Research (core assignment)
E*ach student will complete two analyses of a quantitative, qualitative, or single-system design empirical study. Must use a different design for each analysis. Instructions and grading rubric can be located (2 article analysis 25 pts each = 50 pts)* ***in*** *Appendix B*

Using AI for Research Analysis in Social Work (core assignment)
Students will explore how AI tools can enhance their ability to analyze published social work research.

*They will engage in AI-Assisted literature review, critical analysis and synthesis of findings to inform evidence-based practice. This assignment is designed to help students engage critically with AI technology while refining their research skills. (100 pts) Grading Rubric **Appendix C***

<mark>**EXAMS**</mark>
<mark>Exam #1</mark> *will cover the concepts and information presented in weeks 1-5 (50 pts)*
<mark>Exam #2</mark> *will cover the concepts and information presented in weeks 6 -10 (50 pts)*
<mark>Exam #3</mark> *will cover the concepts and information presented in weeks 11–13 (50 pts)*

Due Date Policy

Expectations for assignments is that they are submitted on due date indicated on syllabus in in D2L. Each assignment is built on content that precedes it and it is important to stay on track and follow the schedule. If you are unable to submit your assignment on time, please notify me to obtain an alternative date. *Please know that if you do not submit your assignments by the scheduled due date, you will not receive feedback or a grade on schedule with students who do submit on due date.* **You will not receive an opportunity to redo an assignment to gain additional points if assignments are not submitted by due dates.**

Technology Requirements

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:
https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements

LMS Browser Support:
https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool
https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

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.

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

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. Other support options can be found here:

https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport

Interaction with Instructor Statement

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your instructor via email. Instructor will respond to email queries within two business days

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the Student Guidebook.
http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the Attendance webpage and Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01.
http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx

http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03
Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf

http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

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
Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 Fax
(903) 468-8148
Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

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 the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:
http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&MCommerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903886-5868 or 9-1-1.

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit
www.tamuc.edu/counsel

School of Social Work and Council on Social Work Education Specific Policies

Course Engagement

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.
To earn a level of competency within a specific course, students must demonstrate both mastery of content and active engagement.

Mastery of content areas is evidenced by successful completion of course assignments such as written papers, group project deliverables, tests/quizzes and other tangible products designed by instructors to evaluate knowledge and skills.

Additionally, the Social Work Profession is built upon human interactions and building human relationships – which is defined as engagement. Engagement is defined as meaningful involvement in interactions with instructor, peers, outside stakeholders as appropriate (such as contacting a social worker to interview for a required assignment). Within the classroom setting, whether virtual or F2F, students must actively participate in 80% of engagement activities as outlined by individual instructors. These activities

may include, but are not limited to participation in live, synchronous virtual classes, attending a Face-to-Face course when appropriate, interacting with peers in posted discussions and collaborating in group interactive projects.

Students must meet standards for content mastery on tangible assignments and meet the threshold of active engagement of the time set during a semester by the instructor.

Instructors are experts in each course content area and set the standards for students to meet for successful completion of the course.

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.*

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

University Code of Conduct *located in the Student Guidebook at*

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

Appendix A

Instructions and Grading Rubric for Assignments
SWK 531

GRADING RUBRIC: ETHICS REACTION PAPER

The Pregnancy Project Ethical Review

In social work research and social work practice we often the line between participant/client autonomy and implementing what "we as professionals" believe is "best". As practitioners and researchers, we must always check our values and be sure, we are respecting clients/participants. This movie provides an excellent example of a valuable study wrought with ethical dilemmas for a social work practitioner/researcher.

<u>Assignment</u>
<u>Pop some popcorn, fix some snacks, grab a notepad and settle in to watch an interesting and thought-provoking social study:</u>

The Pregnancy Project

Watch the movie through the "eyes of a social work researcher". This means do NOT get caught up in the "topic" of stereotypes and prejudices of teen pregnancy, while an important topic, this assignment is about the "research project". The same approach could be implemented for a variety of social problems: racial profiling, drug addiction etc, for purposes of this assignment the "topic" is only important in relation to the *Focus on the methods, implementation and outcomes related to the research.*

Write a two-page reaction paper that addresses the three overriding ethical principles outlined in the Belmont Report using the outline below:
- Identify the participants in this experiment?
- Provide you thoughts regarding the experiment and how it met and/or violated the following ethical principles. (Do not write in 1ˢᵗ person – write as if you are explaining the criteria in the context of the movie to an audience).

1. Respect for Persons	People should be treated as autonomous individuals, capable of making informed decisions when provided the information to do so. This principle also recognizes that, due to some circumstances such as age or disability, some persons have diminished autonomy and therefore require additional protection in research. The extent of his protection should depend on the risk of harm and the likelihood of	

benefit.

2. *Beneficence*   The principle of beneficence is reflected in two general rules: (1) do no harm and (2) maximize benefits while minimizing risks. Researchers need to weigh the potential risks and the benefits of the research, including the benefits extended directly to participants. Participants should not be asked to subject themselves to potential harm when they are unlikely to receive any direct benefit from their participation.

3. *Justice*   It is unfair to expect one group to take most of the risk when a different group will likely realize the benefit. For instance, in the Tuskegee Study, the burden of the research fell to poor, rural, African families, whereas the disease knew no boundaries, including geography, color or income. In this study, one group assumed all the risk, whereas the entire society would benefit from any knowledge about the disease that emerged from the study.

- *Ethical Dilemma*: Is Gaby and her instructor(s) justified in subjecting the participants to the psychological and emotional discomfort incurred? Did the outcome justify the means?

Always include a cover sheet that has your name and assignment identified for each of your assignments.

Grading Rubric Pregnancy Project Ethical Review	
Identified Participants correctly (3 pts)	
Identified 3 ethical principles-giving examples (30 pts)	
Addressed ethical dilemma (7.5 pts)	
Writing quality: Grammar/spelling/sentence structure (7.5 pts)	
Adhered to page limit (2 pts)	
Total points awarded	

POLICY ON USING AI for Pregnancy Project Ethical Review

Use of AI for this assignment is HIGHLY discouraged. IF you choose to utilize AI, you must complete the following AI Companion Reflection and follow all guidelines set for by APA for documentation of AI use found at the following link:

REFERENCE: How to CITE AI generate communications per APA guidelines.
https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/resources/publishing-policies?tab=4
Here you can find policies and links to examples developed by APA for citing information generated using AI.

Appendix B
Instructions and Grading Rubrics for Dissection Design in Social Work Research

Students will select a peer-reviewed article that uses either a quantitative, qualitative or single-system design. They will then create a structured analysis that breaks down the study's methodology, evaluates its rigor, and reflects on its relevance to social work practice. **Students will complete two article review assignments with each one being a different system design.

Instructions

1. Article Selection

•   Choose a peer-reviewed research article published within the last 10 years. ** (Students will complete two of these assignments and each article must use a different research design)

•   The article must clearly use one of the following designs:

•   Quantitative (e.g., experimental, survey-based)

•   Qualitative (e.g., ethnography, grounded theory)

•   Single-system design (e.g., AB, ABA, multiple baseline)

2. Research Method Breakdown

Create a structured analysis that includes:

•   Research Question(s): What is the study trying to find out?

•   Design Type: Identify and define the research design used.

•   Sampling: Who participated? How were they selected?

•   Data Collection Methods: What tools or techniques were used?

•   Data Analysis: How was the data interpreted?

•   Findings: What were the key results?

•   Limitations: What are the study's weaknesses or gaps?

3. Critical Reflection

•   How does this design support or limit the study's goals?

•   What ethical considerations are relevant?

•   How could this research inform social work practice or policy

**Students MUST Submit a PDF of the chosen article with key sections highlighted (research question(s); methodology description; sampling details and findings)

AI Use Policy for Research Analysis Assignment

Use of AI Tools for Assignment Review

Students are encouraged to use AI tools (such as Microsoft Copilot, ChatGPT, or other platforms) to review their research analysis before submission. This may include asking for feedback on clarity, structure, or alignment with the selected research article. However:

- AI tools may **not be used to write the analysis** or complete the assignment on your behalf.
- Any AI-generated feedback or grading must be clearly identified and used for **revision and learning**, not as a substitute for your own evaluation and cited correctly per APA guidelines.
- Students must complete the **AI Companion Reflection** (see below) to demonstrate ethical and thoughtful use of AI.

This policy is designed to help students develop responsible AI literacy and enhance their analytical skills through guided support. AI Companion Reflection (Required if AI was used)

If you used an AI tool to review your research analysis, please respond to the following in 1–2 paragraphs:

1. How did you use the AI tool? (e.g., What questions did you ask? What kind of feedback did you receive?)

2. What did the AI get right, and what did it miss? (Did it help clarify your thinking? Were there any inaccuracies or oversights?)

3. How did the AI feedback influence your final submission? (Did you revise anything? Did it deepen your understanding of the research design?)

Your reflection will not be graded for correctness, but for thoughtfulness and transparency. The goal is to help you engage critically with AI as a tool—not a shortcut.

APPENDIX C

Using AI for Research Analysis in Social Work
(Contemporary Literature Review)

Objective: Students will explore how AI tools can enhance their ability to analyze published social work research. They will engage in AI-Assisted literature review, critical analysis and synthesis of findings to inform evidence-based practice. This assignment is designed to help students engage critically with AI technology while refining their research skills.

AI Use Policy & Reflection. This policy is designed to support responsible AI literacy and help students enhance their analytical skills through guided support and prevent compromising integrity of the assignment.

- AI tools **may not be used to write the analysis** or complete the assignment on your behalf.
- Any AI-generated feedback or grading must be clearly identified and used for **revision and learning**, not as a substitute for your own written work.
- Students must complete the **AI Companion Reflection** to demonstrate ethical and thoughtful engagement.

Instructions:

1. **Select a Research Topic**
   - Choose a social work-related topic of interest (e.g., child welfare, mental health interventions, homelessness, substance abuse, or policy advocacy). _You must receive approval of your topic from the instructor no later than the due date posted in the course syllabus_.
2. **Gather Published Research**
   - Identify at least **five peer-reviewed journal articles** related to the selected topic. Use academic databases through the University Library.
3. **Use AI for Literature Review Assistance**
   - Utilize an AI tool (such as Microsoft Copilot or other AI-powered research assistants) to summarize key points from each article.
   - Compare AI-generated summaries with your own understanding to assess accuracy and depth.
4. **Analyze Themes and Trends**

- o Use AI to identify common themes, patterns, and gaps across the selected articles.
- o Critically assess whether AI highlights meaningful connections between research findings.

5. **Evaluate Bias and Limitations**
   - o Assess how AI interprets the studies—does it overlook certain perspectives or biases present in social work research and practice?
   - o Reflect on how [your] human analysis complements AI-driven insights.

6. **Application to Social Work Practice**
   - o Discuss how AI-assisted research analysis could be integrated into real-world social work practice.
   - o Identify ethical considerations when relying on AI for decision-making.

7. **Write an APA formatted Report (1500-2000 words). Include a cover page and reference page (not included in the 1500-2000 words)**
   - o Summarize the research findings and AI-assisted insights.
   - o Discuss the advantages and limitations of using AI in analyzing social work research.
   - o Provide recommendations for responsible AI integration in social work practice.

Evaluation Criteria

- Depth of research analysis (30%)
- Effective use of AI tools (15%)
- Critical reflection on AI limitations (20%)
- Application to social work practice (20%)
- Clarity and organization of the report (10%)
- AI companion Reflection (5%)

AI Companion Reflection (Required) *Students who do not submit this component of the paper will receive a "0" for the assignment.*

1. **How did you use the AI tool?**

   (What questions did you ask? What kind of feedback did you receive?)

2. **What did the AI get right, and what did it miss?**

   (Did it help clarify your thinking? Were there any inaccuracies or oversights?)

3. **How did the AI feedback influence your final submission?**

   (Did you revise anything? Did it deepen your understanding of the research design?)

Your reflection will be evaluated for thoughtfulness and transparency, not correctness. The goal is to help you engage critically with AI as a tool—not a shortcut.

REFERENCE: How to CITE AI generate communications per APA guidelines.
https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/resources/publishing-policies?tab=4
Here you can find policies and links to examples developed by APA for citing information generated using AI.

Appendix B Cours Schedule

Unit I: The Context of Social Work Research			
Week	Scheduled Class Meetings	Topic/Content	Assignments/Activities
1 01/29 -02/01		Introduction, Overview of Syllabus and Course Expectations **Topic**: The Context of Social Work Research	**Read** Chapter 1, 5 and 6 in Text **Worksheet #1** **Scavenger Hunt**
Join URL:			
Students begin this course learning how to navigate inside of the Learning Management System and are introduced to the context of social work research – the roles social workers have related to research (consumer, collaborator and disseminator of information). This sets the foundation for understanding the research process presented throughout this course.			
2 02/02 -02/08		**Topic**: Research Ethics & Cultural Competency	**Read** Chapter 1, 5 and 6 in Text **Assignment**

This week we continue with the content in chapters 1, 5 and 6. You will also need to read the Belmont Report and get an understanding of key components and how these are used a guidelines and legal aspects of carrying out research with human subjects.

We look at sources we use to gain knowledge (Some of these sources are reliable and provide us with factual and true information, while some of these sources are "comfortable" and may not be the best resource for gaining our knowledge, but taken all together the sources we use inform our thoughts, actions and results. This is where we begin are "self-awareness" as we assimilate into and grow throughout our professional lives as social workers.

UNIT II: Approaches to Knowledge Development

3 02/09 -02/15		**Topic**: Approaches to Knowledge Development • The Positivist Approach • The Interpretative Approach • Mixed-Methods Research	***Review*** Chapter 1 ***Read*** Chapter 3, Chapter 7, Chapter 8, Chapter 9 and Chapter 10 ***Worksheet #2***

This week we begin getting into the details of generating evidence through research methods across different systems levels. In social work practice we use "evidence based" data to inform our practice interventions and in turn we evaluate our practice interventions to further strengthen our "evidenced based" perspective. This week looks at the positivist approach, the qualitative research approach and

the mixed-methods approach and which methods are best used with individuals, groups, or larger systems such as communities and organizations

We begin this course looking at the context of research in social work practice, the ethical and cultural considerations, peeking into our self-awareness and how we gain knowledge and now we are learning about the overarching methods we use to generate evidence to inform our practice so we do not rely on other methods of gaining knowledge which may or may not result in positive outcomes for clients.

After this week, we will begin learning the actual steps involved in setting up and carrying out a research project - BUT always looking through a lens that incorporates what we learned in the first two weeks of class.

4 02/16-02/22		**Topic**: Formulating Research Questions	***Read*** Chapter 2 ***Article Analysis***: ***Worksheet #3***

This week we look into the beginning process of forming our research questions that will then inform our decisions about how to generate evidence to answer said questions. Developing evidence through research begins informally with us wondering about different aspects of client characteristics, practice interventions or a mired of other factors leads us into the formal process of developing a research project or implementing a practice evaluation.

5 02/23 – 03/01	⬇	**Topic**: Writing Literature Reviews	***Read*** Chapter 4 ***Worksheet #4***

UGH! the literature review - few love it and most dread or procrastinate when having one assigned.

Clarification: A "true" review of literature is a foundation for conducting research. While the title of "literature review" may be used in other courses, most often these are conceptual papers with existing literature used to support suppositions, but are not "true" reviews of literature. ALSO when conducting a "true" review of literature for a research proposal, this is an extensive process and will include a

carefully guided search with parameters to obtain extensive existing literature. The paper you will be completing for this course gives you an introduction into how to conceptualize, develop and write a literature review.

Bookmark this week and topics as you will need to return to this information when you being writing your literature review to be turned in at end of the semester.

Unit III: Component of The Research Process			
6 03/02 03/08		**Topic**: Measuring Variables and Measurement Instruments	*Read* Chapter 11 and 12 in Text *Exam #1 Instructions to be Provided* *Worksheet #5*

Once you have formulated a research question or developed a hypothesis, it is time to establish what you will measure and how you will measure it. This is done through the first steps in the process - especially in developing the literature review. You do not develop your variables or measurements without exploring what has already been measured, how variables have been defined, what instruments have been used and the strengths and weaknesses of each research study. Too often students try and develop this section in a vacuum - based on what they think they know through knowledge gained in the less formal ways of knowing (authority, tradition, experience etc). BUT when generating evidence, we need to be objective and systematic in the variables we investigate.

7 03/09 -03/15		**Topic**: Sampling & Research Designs	**Read** Chapters 13, 14 and 15 in Text **Article Analysis:** **Worksheet #6**

The process continues...

Once you have formulated a question or hypothesis, reviewed existing research in the literature on the topic, identified variables and ways to measure, you have to consider who your participants will be and how you will gain access to said participants (sampling) and at the same time consider your method for investigating the topic (research designs- single system designs for single units (individuals, families, organizations etc); group research designs (used for both practice evaluations, organizational assessments or community evaluations and descriptive research, such as survey research which is a one-group design).

NOTE: developing and conducting a research study is not necessarily a linear process, but iterative - you will go back and forth in these steps as you refine each area.

Sampling methods vary based on probability vs non-probability and research designs include both qualitative and quantitative methods. ALL sampling methods and ALL research designs will fall into these areas.

Unit IV: Data Collection Methods

8 03/16 – 03/22		**Topic:** Selecting a Data Collection Method	**Read** Chapters 16 - 17 **Worksheet #7**

Now in the process... you would have decided on your topic area, research question(s) or hypothesis, research approach (quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods), your variables and how you will measure these (quantitative) or investigate experiences (qualitative), who you will get information from and how you will access these participants (sample) and the actual research design (single system design, group design, survey design, qualitative interviewing etc), now you will need to determine HOW you will collect your data.

This area can be mixed with the data collection instruments when deciding. Such as if you decide to conduct a survey method (research design) you will need to create a questionnaire to gather your data. If you are doing a group research design with a pretest and posttest, you will need to have a testing instrument to gather you data. BUT how will you actually collect the data:

Will you send the questionnaire for your survey through an electronic link? Will participants complete it when they come into the agency for services (thus a paper/pencil questionnaire)? To collect your qualitive data, will you conduce phone interviews, face to face interviews, analyze postings on a social media site?

The data collection tools and methods are closely intertwined and you would most likely decide on both at the same time.

Unit V: Analyzing Results			
9 03/23 – 03/29	.	**Topic:** Analyzing Results	*Read: Chapter 19* *Worksheet #8*

This week and next week we will look at what we do with the data we have collected in a research project and ways to analyze - either quantitatively (statistics) or qualitatively (grounded theory,

ethnography, etc). This is where you begin to formulate your interpretation of the data and generate "evidence" to inform social work practice at some level.

10 03/30 -04/05		**Topic**: Analyzing Results	**Read: Chapter 18 & 19** **Exam #2** *Instructions will be provided*
Learning continued from week #9			
Unit VI: Writing Proposals and Reports			
11 04/06 -04/12		**Topic:** Writing Proposals and Reports	**Read Chapter 20** **Worksheet #9**
Whether you are writing a research proposal to gain permission and support for conducting a research investigation or you are writing the report following you investigation, you need all the information from the preceding sections in this course. Thus we are ending the content here. A research proposal is written in future tense and includes all the why, what, and how of your idea, while a research report is written in past tense (you have already conducted and collected data) and includes all the why, what, and how, along with data explanations and interpretations.			
12 04/13 -04/19		**Topic:** Writing Proposals and Reports continued	**Worksheet # 10**
13 04/20 -04/26			**Read Chapter 21**
COURSE REVIEW			
14		Wrap up and Review	**Exam #3** *Instructions will be provided*

04/27 – 05/03			
Join URL: https://tamuc.zoom.us/j/98762326537			
15 04/05 -05/08			**Using AI Research in Social Work Assignment**