WKU SOCIAL WORK

SWRK 540: Social Work Research Methods 3 credit hours Fall 2024-Sections 500 and 702		
Professor: **Dr. Jay Gabbard**	**Email: jay.gabbard@wku.edu**	**Office:** **AC 112C**
Phone: 270-745-8749	**Zoom Link: TBA**	**Office Hours: TBA**
Class Meeting Dates: **8/22, 9/19, 10/24** **In AC 107 and on WEB**	**Class Meeting Times:** **5:30-7:30pm CST** **Astrological Sign: Aquarius**	**Location:** **Academic Complex #113A &** **Zoom**

Prerequisite(s)/Co-requisite(s): N/A

Course Description:
Focuses on basic skills, knowledge, and values essential to critiquing and conducting social work research, with an emphasis on anti-racist and anti-oppressive evidence-based practice and research ethics.

Course Information:
This course provides an overview of social work research methods for graduate level practice. Topics include research paradigms and designs: qualitative and quantitative methods, and single-subject and group-comparison designs. Additional topics include problem identification and definition. Students will conduct a review of the literature, develop an understanding of the relationship of the problem to existing theory, construct hypotheses, and operationalize variables. Further, students will formulate appropriate research designs, and identify and/or construct appropriate measurement instruments. The goal of the course is to provide students with foundation-level graduate tools for using and conducting research related to social work. In keeping with the above goal, the course emphasizes the research-practice link.

Required Text(s):
Yegidis, B. L., Weinbach, R.W., & Myers, L. (2018). *Research methods for social workers* (8th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Recommended Text(s): N/A

Learning Outcomes:
Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

Knowledge
1. Explain the concept of evidence-based research in social work practice.

2. Discuss the role of ethics in social work research and major ethical events in contemporary research.
3. Summarize the similarities and differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Values
4. Discuss the connection between research methods and the *NASW Code of Ethics* and articulate the role of Anti-racism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ADEI).

Skills
5. Demonstrate the ability to conduct a targeted literature review by strategically analyzing the prevailing literature in an approved topical research area.
6. Create an infographic to illustrate the findings of this targeted literature review and use as a tool for advocacy.
7. Develop an actual research proposal that could (hypothetically) be submitted to the WKU IRB for approval.

Cognitive & Affective Processes
8. Synthesize the first three steps in the research process (identifying problem/questions, literature review, methodology) by writing an actual research proposal.

MSW Mission Statement:
The mission of the MSW program at WKU is to prepare students for advanced professional social work practice to meet the needs of increasingly diverse rural population in the community, in Kentucky, and in a global society.

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Definition of Generalist Practice and Required Core Competencies for MSW Education:
The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Commission on Accreditation (COA) and Commission on Educational Policy (COEP) developed the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards for Baccalaureate and Master's Social Work Programs. These standards form the basis for the WKU MSW Generalist Year and Advanced Generalist Curriculum. Here at WKU, our specialty is Advanced Generalist Practice in Rural Settings. Please review WKU MSW Generalist Competencies and Advanced Generalist Competencies to develop an understanding of the content that all WKU MSW students must master prior to graduation.

CSWE EPAS Core Competencies for MSW Education:
The Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) core competencies are taught in all Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited MSW programs. Core competencies addressed in this class are defined and included in **Appendix A.**

<u>Course Expectations:</u>
Please note the following general guidelines concerning shared responsibilities of the professor and students in this course:

1. Students are expected to actively participate in developing a positive learning environment with the desire to learn. Engagement is important to the overall spontaneous learning. Class participation and attendance are required

2. Students are expected to adhere to all policies contained within the [MSW Handbook](), the [Student Code of Conduct at WKU](), and be in compliance with the [NASW Code of Ethics]().

3. Plagiarism, cheating, and any other forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited. Any instances of such will result in a grade of "zero" for the assignment and/or course failure and/or expulsion from the program. Please refer to #2 above for the MSW Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, and the NASW Code of Ethics.

4. Students are expected to use APA 7th edition for writing, citing, and listing references. This is for all coursework including papers, pamphlets, and online assignments. Online assignments must include in-text references and full text references at the end of the assignment just as all other written documents in this course.

5. All assignments are expected to be turned in on time, late assignments will incur at 10% deduction per day late. After one-week, late assignments will no longer be accepted for credit but must be turned in to complete the course.

6. The [NASW Code of Ethics]() is a guiding framework and source for identifying professional performance. Students are expected to practice in an ethical manner while in the classroom or completing assignments pertaining to this course. Behaviors especially under consideration are those related to professional practice, mental illness, substance use, illegal activity, and/or classroom behavior. Concerns in any of these four circumstances will be documented in a Professional Concerns Form in accordance with the [MSW Handbook]() policies.

7. Privacy, confidentiality, and professional boundaries must be examined as professional social workers, especially in the age of technology. Students using social media sites are expected to use the highest privacy settings on their profiles. Students are not permitted to link to or view the social media profiles of clients or employees of the field placement agency. Any issue counter to this will be documented in a Professional Concerns Form in accordance with the [MSW Handbook]() policies.

8. Students are encouraged to utilize academic support services such as [The Writing Center]() and [The WKU Libraries]() to help you be successful in this course.

9. In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center. Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Student Accessibility Resource Center.

10. In compliance with the following WKU's Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation and Discrimination and Harassment Policy; discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. Please go to WKU's Title IX website for full information.

11. All class schedules and activities are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances. The instructor **reserves the right to make changes** to the syllabus as needed with reasonable notice and accommodations.

Inclusion Statement:
Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to ensuring all members of our campus community have access to equitable and inclusive learning, working, and living environments. At the heart of our mission, we seek to provide holistic education and employment experiences that prepare students, faculty, and staff to become effective scholars, contributors, and leaders in our diverse and evolving communities. Consistent with our campus purpose statement and creed, this classroom will be a respectful space, welcoming all sexes, races, ages, national origins, ethnicities, gender identities/labels/expressions, intellectual and physical abilities, sexual orientations, faith/non-faith perspectives, income levels and socio-economic classes, political ideologies, educational backgrounds, primary languages, family statuses, military experiences, cognitive styles, and communication styles. If at any time during this course you are excluded or feel a sense of alienation from the course content, please feel free to contact me privately without fear of reprisal.

Land Acknowledgement
The history of our community and land gives us the opportunity to recognize, respect, and appreciate our place within that history. Western Kentucky University (WKU) honors and acknowledges the Indigenous peoples' land on which this University was built. All land in the state of Kentucky was once Indigenous territory, which is why it is our duty to acknowledge that WKU exists on Native land. This particular region of Kentucky was home to both the Shawnee (Shawandasse Tula) and Cherokee East (□□□□□ Tsalaguwetiyi) tribes.

We also honor and acknowledge the former residents of Jonesville. According to the Jonesville History Project, "Jonesville was a predominantly African American community in Bowling Green, Kentucky, that was demolished in the 1960s to make way for the expansion of the WKU campus. This incident echoed a pattern across the country where the power of eminent domain was utilized to seize property from minority communities for large public works projects under the guise of urban revitalization."

<u>Statement on AI tools</u>. **AI tools are prohibited (e.g. like ChatGPT): Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are not permitted for any type of work in this class. If you choose to use these tools, your actions will be considered academically dishonest and a violation of the WKU Student Code of Conduct.**

<u>Description of Course Assignments:</u>

Discussion Board Exercises (15 percent of grade)

Discussion Board exercises (completed on Blackboard) are designed to assess course preparation such as reviewing course readings, video lectures, video clips, and other materials. Students complete 5 postings during the semester, and they are worth 10 points each. These exercises help students to learn and apply core components of the major concepts and theories covered in this course. Any included supplemental video clips relate to the major concepts and theories and are relatively short. A high level of quality and critical synthesis of information is expected on these exercises. See DB rubric on Blackboard for grading rationale.

Quizzes (20 percent of grade)

Quizzes (completed on Blackboard) are designed to assess course preparation such as reviewing course readings, video lectures, video clips, and other materials. These exercises help students to learn and apply core components of the major concepts and theories covered in this course. Students will complete a total of 5 quizzes throughout the semester, each independently due at the conclusion of the assigned week (See deadline for completion on Course Calendar and on Blackboard). Quizzes are worth 10 points each, covering salient content from that assigned week's topical content area and will consist of multiple choice and/or true/false items. Based on the seminal research of Brothen (2012), students will have exactly 10 minutes to complete and submit the 10 question quizzes after beginning.

Targeted Literature Review Paper (20 percent of grade)

This assignment requires students to select a topic germane to social work and then conduct a targeted review of the professional literature on the topic. Students are required to utilize databases that include peer-reviewed work such as EBSCO Host, Social Work Abstracts, the Web of Science, etc. and also consider professional materials and government documents if relevant in researching this paper. Students should reach out to staff at WKU Libraries for assistance as needed, and also apply knowledge gleaned from class when selecting appropriate resources for the paper. This process will result in a 10-page (minimum) paper that summarizes what is and what is not known in the literature related to this topic, including a critical tour of the literature, and positing a research question that could be explored in the proposal assignment. Specifically, what is the "gap" in the literature and where do we need to immediately focus our efforts as a profession?

There is a two-step approach to successfully completing this assignment:

1. Proposed topics will be submitted through Blackboard for Dr. Gabbard approval by DATE TBA.
2. The paper itself will be submitted through Blackboard and is due on DATE TBA.

More specific information on the Targeted Literature Review Paper will be posted on the course Blackboard site and discussed in the Chapter 1/Introduction video in the first week of class. Also, we will discuss the assignment during each class meeting prior to the due date.

Infographic Advocacy Exercise (10 percent of grade)

Developing and disseminating an infographic can be a "game changer" for getting your message out and creating support. An infographic is an electronic visual aid that contains digital images and text, developed strategically for a specific audience. Infographics are valuable, fun, and an essential tool in advocacy. Given the work of Jones, Sage, and Hitchcock (2019), you are going to develop an infographic that is based on the findings of your Targeted Literature Review. You will choose the stakeholders that you will (hypothetically) present this to, as the goal is to use this infographic to seek "buy-in" and illustrate why your research proposal matters. As an example, if the results of your Targeted Literature Review resulted in the need (e.g., your research proposal) for an intervention focusing on improved PTSD treatment for veterans, you might craft your infographic to engage administrators at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

This practical and valuable exercise will challenge you to critically appraise and synthesize the findings of your Targeted Literature Review, utilize the relevant feedback, and repackage it as an effective mechanism that will prepare you for future advocacy. This is a hyper-effective strategy that is used every day to disseminate information and gain the support of the community and stakeholders. Examples of infographics can be found on www.wku.edu/childwelfare under the "Research and Publications" tab. The Infographic and a recorded video presentation will be submitted through Blackboard and is due on DATE TBA.

You will be evaluated in three areas:

1. The quality of your infographic.

2. Your recorded and submitted video presentation.

3. The quality of your peer-engagement (e.g., viewing and responding to two of your peers' videos by DATE TBA.

See the Infographic Advocacy Exercise Rubric on Blackboard for grading rationale.

Research Proposal (30 percent of grade)

Once students have conducted a Targeted Literature Review and identified a research problem area to be explored in an actual research study, they will actively move forward in the research process by proposing (not carrying out) a study. This written proposal will include the following sections:

1.   An introduction to the topic/research problem

2.	A critical review of the literature (integrating feedback from the TLR paper)

3.	A statement of research questions and (if applicable) hypotheses to be explored and tested in the proposed study

4.	A methodology section

5.	A data analysis plan

6.	Potential limitations of study and the contribution the proposed study will make to the social work profession

More detailed information on the Research Proposal will be posted on the course Blackboard site and discussed in the Chapter 1/Introduction video in the first week of class. Also, we will discuss this assignment during each class meeting prior to the due date throughout the semester. See the Research Proposal Rubric on Blackboard for grading rationale. Due to the close proximity of when final semester grades are due, no late submissions will be accepted on the Research Proposal. The Research Proposal will be submitted through Blackboard and is due on DATE TBA. This assignment is used for assessment purposes for the MSW Program.

Professionalism (5 percent of grade)

The MSW Program Professionalism Rubric on Blackboard outlines 5 behaviors indicative of professionalism, including Engagement, Collegiality, Growth & Development, Communication, and Adherence to SWRK Values. There are two parts to this assignment:

1. The professor will assess and score each student's behaviors in the five salient areas of the MSW Program Professionalism Rubric and send them a copy to review. This will likely happen about week 14.
2. After reviewing their professor's feedback, the student will use the Professionalism – Student Form and complete the following tasks: 1. Enter the scores from the professor in the Faculty Rating section; 2. Score themselves in the Student Rating section; and 3. Identify one area that they feel they should improve upon.
   a. In this identified area- they will follow the directions at the bottom of the Student Form and complete a SMART objective and the related action steps. When finished, they will submit the Student Form to the professor through Blackboard. This is due on DATE TBA.

Additionally, below are two flagrant examples of misconduct that are unprofessional, related to writing, and truly speak to the integrity of the student. Neither of these will be tolerated, so they have been added to the syllabus explicitly as a warning. Do not "recycle" a previous paper of your own or the paper of a friend or college and submit it for credit. Do not "cut and paste" material from the internet or a peer-reviewed article (or elsewhere) and insert it into your work without providing appropriate credit. This is a learning experience. Put in the work that it takes and do it right. Please reach out to Dr. Gabbard for assistance as needed.
Evaluation and Grading

Course grading is based on the following criteria, using a weighted mean formula (total grade for each assignment is multiplied by its respective worth, and then points summed for score).

Assignment	Grade Percentage
Discussion Boards	15%
Quizzes	20%
TLR Paper	20%
Infographic Advocacy Exercise	10%
Research Proposal	30%
Professionalism	5%
Total	100%

Grading Scale:
>   90-100=A
>   80-89=B
>   70-79=C
>   60-69=D
>   0-59=F

Regular and Substantive Interaction (Online Courses Only)
The U.S. Department of Education requires that distance education courses must include regular and substantive interaction between students and faculty. For more information about Regular and Substantive Interaction at WKU, please visit the Regular and Substantive Interaction in Online and Distance Learning webpage.

In this course, regular and substantive interaction will take place in the following ways:
- Availability for synchronous sessions with faculty and students during office hours,
- Faculty participation in discussion boards,
- Weekly announcements,
- Setting assignment due dates that are spread throughout the term of the class, and
- Timely and detailed feedback on assignments provided within one week of submission.

Appendix A

2022 Competencies Addressed in Course	Course Assignments Assessing Behaviors	Course Learning Outcomes	Competency Dimension
Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior	Professionalism	2, 4, 6, 8	Knowledge, Values, Skills, Cognitive & Affective Processes
	DB 1: Ethical Issues in Research	2, 4	Knowledge, Values

	DB 5: Reflective Assessment	5, 8	Skills, Cognitive & Affective Processes
	TLR Paper	5	Skills
	Research Proposal	1, 7, 8	Knowledge, Skills, Cognitive & Affective Processes
Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice	QUIZ 1: Intro to Evidence Based Practice	1	Knowledge
	QUIZ 2: Identifying Potential Research Problems and Questions	1	Knowledge
	DB 2: Searching for Peer-Reviewed Literature	1	Knowledge
	QUIZ 3: Quantitative Research and Research Design	1	Knowledge
	DB 3: Qualitative Research	1	Knowledge
	QUIZ 4: Sampling Issues and Options	1	Knowledge
	DB 4: Measurement Concepts and Issues	1	Knowledge
	QUIZ 5: Data Collection Instruments	1	Knowledge
	TLR Paper	3, 5	Knowledge, Skills
	Infographic Advocacy Exercise	6	Skills

	Research Proposal	1, 7, 8	Knowledge, Skills, Cognitive & Affective Processes
Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	DB 5: Reflective Assessment	5, 8	Skills, Cognitive & Affective Processes

References

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