

## Social Work 386.01: Research Methods



LEWIS-CLARK STATE  
COLLEGE

### Instructor Information

Instructor: Marti Reese, MA, MSW, LCSW

Instructor email: [mlreese@lcsc.edu](mailto:mlreese@lcsc.edu) (BEST method of contact)

Campus Office: Expedition Hall Room 16

Office Hours: By appointment (If you would like to meet in person, appointments can be scheduled on Tuesdays)

Class Location: Sam Glenn Complex 127

### Course Description

This course introduces the theory and application of basic social scientific research techniques, including qualitative and quantitative methods, data collection, data analysis, statistical thinking, assessment and single-subject design. We will use the process of researching and writing a Literature Review throughout the semester as the context for developing a working understanding of these concepts and techniques. The use of research as one tool in the professional repertoire of skills available to the social work generalist is emphasized. The ethics of scientific inquiry is stressed throughout. This course is designed for social work students only.

### Purpose of the Course in the Curriculum

This is the first of three research courses. This course focuses on research and evaluation from the perspective of social work generalist practice. Much of our understanding about individuals, groups, families, communities, and organizations is obtained through the testing of theories about these entities. As social work practitioners, we need the knowledge and skills to evaluate existing research, use research method skills to think critically about problems and issues in society, and test our conclusions. Social work practitioners need to be able to analyze existing data and data they collect to determine relationships between and among these variables. Ethically, social work practitioners must be aware of best practices for policy and practice interventions. Understanding research methods is one avenue to this knowledge.

### Expected Learning Outcomes

As a result of the focus on competency-based education, the faculty has identified within the LCSC curriculum where the Social Work Core Competencies and Practice Behaviors are addressed. In class materials provided on Canvas, you can review the 9 competencies and 31 practice behaviors that are addressed in this course. While these competencies and practice behaviors are not measured in this course, the knowledge, skills, and values required to perform them are introduced and/or reinforced. We will review these from time-to-time and at the end of the course we will reflect on how our learning has reinforced them in a final assignment.

## Teaching Methods and Class Climate

The primary teaching approach in this class will be collaborative learning. Materials in the course will be presented through discussion, posted lectures, reading material, and media presentations. You will be required to participate in pairs and group work as directed—it is up to you to follow through and manage communication with your partner(s). Students will be responsible for all materials presented in class and all outside assignments. Assigned readings and topics for the day are outlined in the Calendar attached to this syllabus. Additional reading assignments may be announced. Be sure to check Modules and Announcements in Canvas for the most accurate assignment descriptions and deadlines.

Your classroom participation will consist of discussions and in-class activities and may include Discussion Board assignments on Canvas. These discussions and/or activities will generally be centered around assigned reading, lecture notes, and assignments we are working on in class. While we will not always be formal in our classroom, you are expected to behave in a manner consistent with a developing professional. Coming late to class and leaving early, cell phone or computer use unrelated to class, and other unprofessional behavior will be addressed by the teacher and may be subject to guidelines found in the BSW Handbook.

Students are evaluated on their personal and professional behavior or conduct as described in the [BSW Handbook](https://www.lcsc.edu/media/7425714/social-work-student-handbook.pdf) (https://www.lcsc.edu/media/7425714/social-work-student-handbook.pdf). Please refer to the Handbook for further clarification.

Because of our commitment to social and economic justice, we are open to hearing all views and, when discussing politically charged subjects, all perspectives will be considered with a focus on critical thinking. Students are expected to be respectful of the opinions of others and willing to practice civil discourse.

## Required Course Materials

Machi, L.A. & McEvoy, B.T., (2016). *The Literature Review: Six Steps to Success* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: A.P.A.

Best, J., (2008). *Stat-Spotting: A Field Guide to Identifying Dubious Data*. Berkley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Rampton, S., Stauber, J., (2002). *Trust Us We're Experts: How Industry Manipulates Science and Gambles with Your Future*. New York, NY: Tarcher/Putnam, Penguin Putnam, Inc.

**You will need access to a word processor, web browser (to use Canvas) and email to succeed in this course. Please be sure you have all equipment necessary for typing, printing, and emailing required assignments.**

**Canvas LMS:** Coursework will be collected through Canvas, so please become familiar with the Canvas features and its help desk. Discussions and attendance will also be managed through Canvas.

## General Course Policies and Accommodations

*The instructor reserves the right to waive one or more of the policies listed in this syllabus in rare but special circumstances.*

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Because this class meets only once per week, missing more than 2 of the weekly classes is considered excessive and will result in the reduction of your final grade by one letter grade (e.g., an A becomes a B). Coming to class late or leaving early may be considered an absence, depending on the circumstances. Exceptions will be rare and should be negotiated in advance whenever possible. Please discuss this with the instructor if you need clarification.

Participation in the class will result in participation points awarded each class period. These may be awarded after administering a pop quiz on the reading, group activities or discussions during class, or other in-class activities. If you do not attend class, you will not receive participation points unless you complete make-up work assigned by the instructor. It is your responsibility to ask for make-up work within 48 hours of your absence or you will simply receive a zero. Regardless, it is at the discretion of the teacher to determine if make-up work is warranted.

### Attending class via Zoom

This class is designed to be delivered to students in a seated classroom. However, in special circumstances we may be able to use Zoom to conduct class or to allow students who otherwise can't attend to participate. Zoom participants may be asked to complete an additional assignment based on the ability (or inability) to conduct activities similar to classroom work via Zoom. If you need to attend the class via Zoom due to special circumstances, you will need to notify the instructor as soon as possible.

(Some circumstances for which Zoom may be offered include: mandatory quarantining based on school or public policies; childcare issues arising from previously mentioned policies; inclement/dangerous weather and road conditions for instructors and/or students; other special circumstances may apply.)

**Zoom Etiquette:** Whenever possible, you should have your video on. You should mute your microphone unless you are speaking. Please use the chat feature only if your microphone isn't working. Wear appropriate clothing for the classroom.

**If you believe you will miss all or part of more than 2 classes this semester, it is your responsibility to look for alternatives such as fully online or hybrid courses to fit your needs. I am happy to talk to you and work with you on this if you anticipate any problems.**

*The instructor reserves the right to make exceptions to this policy in the case of extraordinary circumstances. Arrangements will be made on a case-by-case basis.*

### Announcements & Email

The Announcement feature on Canvas is a vital tool I will use for this class. I will frequently use it to provide feedback and updates for the class, so pay attention to both Announcements on Canvas and

any messages from me via your LCSC email. **You are responsible for any information provided in Announcements or through email** so I recommend that you check each one daily.

### Professional Writing Standards

One of the things you will be developing through your Social Work program is your writing skills. If you struggle with writing, it is your responsibility to seek out and utilize resources such as the writing lab and campus writing tutors. While you will receive some assistance with your writing in your social work classes, writing skills will not typically be the focus. All printed work submitted should be prepared in accordance with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.) unless otherwise noted in the assignment. Therefore, allow sufficient preparation time for proofreading, correction of errors, and peer review as needed.

Professionals are often judged based upon the quality of their written work. Carelessness in spelling and editing suggests that there will also be mistakes in the substance of the work. Therefore, written work, which has misspellings and other editing problems, will be graded down on this basis alone. All work must be completed in 12-point font, preferably Times New Roman or a similarly readable style.

### Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Students share with the faculty the responsibility for academic honesty and integrity. The College expects its students to do their own academic work. In addition, it expects active participation and equitable contributions of students involved in group assignments. Violation of the Student Code of Conduct, in whole or part, could result in an “F” grade for the course. Please review information available online about the [Student Code of Conduct](https://www.lcsc.edu/student-affairs/student-code-of-conduct) (https://www.lcsc.edu/student-affairs/student-code-of-conduct). For information related to plagiarism and cheating, pay special attention to the section on [Academic Dishonesty](https://www.lcsc.edu/student-affairs/student-code-of-conduct/prohibited-conduct) (https://www.lcsc.edu/student-affairs/student-code-of-conduct/prohibited-conduct).

In addition to action by the professor, all incidents may be reported to Student Affairs.

### Incompletes

Students are expected to complete all work according to the expectations outlined in the syllabus and on assignments. Incompletes are not granted automatically. A grade of “I” may be assigned only in rare cases of serious illness, accident, or other catastrophic occurrences beyond the student’s control and only if the student has completed at least 80% of all coursework. It is the responsibility of the students to request an incomplete grade from the instructor before the end of the term. Incomplete will be granted at the teacher’s discretion. All work must be completed by the deadline specified by the instructor; otherwise the grade will become an “F.”

### Shared Agency and Client Information

In the classroom and/or assignments, students and professors will occasionally discuss clients and agencies. In these discussions, it is expected that information about clients and agencies should be disguised or eliminated if clients could be identified and that this information is to be held in confidence within the bounds of the Code of Ethics.

## Disability Accommodations

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504/508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Lewis-Clark State College provides reasonable accommodations to eligible students who experience barriers in the educational setting due to learning, emotional/mental, physical, visual, or hearing disabilities. Instructors will provide accommodations to students only after having received a Letter of Accommodation from the Student Counseling Center: Disability Services. If a student would like to request accommodations, he or she must contact the Student Counseling Center: Disability Services so that a Letter of Accommodation may be sent to the instructor. Students requesting accommodations must contact the Student Counseling Center: Disability Services at the beginning of each semester, 208-792-2211.

If course adaptations or accommodations are needed because of a disability, if you need to make the instructor aware of emergency medical information, or if you will need special arrangements in case of building evacuation, please contact the instructor by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the semester.

## Assignment Policies, Descriptions, and Grading Scale

### Deadline for Submission of Assignments

Last minute emergencies often occur because students don't keep up on day-to-day tasks/homework. This is not grounds for flexibility on my part. Please keep up on class activities and talk to me early and often if you are struggling.

Assignments are due as scheduled by the instructor.

### Policy for Late Assignments

**Reflections and Discussion Boards** need to be completed each week BEFORE we meet as a class (or by the due date specified in Canvas). These are activities that prepare you for class discussion and activities.

- You can turn the assignments in late, but you will receive a 50% deduction as a penalty. Example: a Reflection worth 20 points will receive a maximum of 10 points no matter how good it is. If it isn't very good, it may receive less than 10 points.

**Participation Points** are awarded for your active participation in class. If you are not in class, you cannot receive participation points. If you contact me **in advance**, I may be able to provide make-up work. You will not be allowed make-up work for more than 2 classes.

**Quizzes** must be done by the deadline. You cannot make them up. No exceptions. (In addition, please remember that tests and quizzes should be your own work without collaboration.)

**Other Assignments:** Other than the specific assignments/activities mentioned above, and unless specified on the assignment description, I will accept late work as long as I haven't finished grading that assignment for your particular section of the class. As tempting as this might make it for you to

turn things in late, I recommend you plan on turning everything in on time. It is easy to fall behind and find yourself experiencing a snowball effect of missed assignments.

Any partner/group work requires that you coordinate schedules with others. I expect you to meet deadlines and work with your colleagues as professionals. If group work is assigned, that means it is a required component of the class, not something optional you can choose to do or not do. Please feel free to reach out to me if you are in a pair/group that is struggling with connecting and working together. In the case of group work, if you lack integrity regarding the submission of assignments, you are not just affecting your own grade, but also the grade of others in your class.

**Extensions:** You are welcome to talk to me about issues that you know of in advance and, when possible, I will accommodate your needs. This may include asking you to do assignments in advance rather than turning them in late. In most cases, you are better served to just **do the best you can and get an assignment in on time** than to ask for an extension.

### Rewriting Assignments

Rewrites are only allowed if it is part of the original assignment structure or if the instructor asks you to re-do an assignment you turned in on time but did not do correctly. This is entirely at the discretion of the instructor. Points awarded for rewrites and due dates are at the discretion of the instructor as well.

If you want assistance on writing assignments, please do not hesitate to meet with me or utilize other resources on campus such as the [LCSC Online Writing Lab](http://www.lcsc.edu/writing-center/distance-students/) (http://www.lcsc.edu/writing-center/distance-students/) or other available online writing labs such as the [Purdue OWL](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html) (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue\_owl.html).

### Assignment Changes

I will highlight any changes in assignments that occur ASAP, so be sure to **check your Announcements on Canvas daily**. Also, it is a good idea to review the official assignment description posted on Canvas (where you turn in the assignment). If you have any questions or notice any discrepancies, please be sure to let me know!

### Assignments

Assignment	Points Possible
<b>Participation Points (In-class activities)</b>	15 x 10 = 150
<b>Discussion Boards</b>	8 x 10 = 80
<b>Definitions Quizzes</b>	5 x 10 = 50
<b>Reflections</b>	9 x 20 = 180
<b>Library Appointments</b>	2 x 25 = 50
<b>Bibliography 1</b>	50
<b>Bibliography 2</b>	50
<b>Draft 1</b>	50
<b>Draft 2</b>	50
<b>Project Presentations</b>	50

<b>Literature Review (Final Draft)</b>	100
<b>Social Work Competency Review</b>	50
<b>Group Discussions</b>	3 x 30 = 90
<b>Total Possible Points</b>	1000

### Grading Scale

A	93-100%
A-	90-92.9%
B+	87-89.9%
B	83-86.9%
B-	80-82.9%
C+	77-79.9%
C	73-76.9%
C-	70-72.9%
D+	67-69.9%
D	60-66.9%
F	59.9% and below

### Tentative Class Schedule

You are responsible for the reading assigned; please be prepared to discuss the class material.

Chapter readings assigned are from the class texts as listed in this syllabus, unless otherwise noted. There will also be reading from the APA Manual and supplemental material provided in your modules.

Any changes made on the schedule will be posted via Announcements on Canvas. You are responsible for any information provided through email and/or Announcements.

Week/Date	Topic/Reading Due	Assignments
<b>IMPORTANT!</b>	<p><b>DUE DATES:</b> Pay special attention to due dates. Much of your work will be due just BEFORE class on TUESDAYS. Check Announcements in Canvas each week for any changes.</p> <p>Since we meet early in the week this semester it is important to remember, you will need to have the work from each module done <b>before class</b> (the exception being Week 1). Due dates will reflect this. Be sure to take note of the due dates so you don't fall behind or lose points.</p>	
<u>Week 1</u> Jan 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Syllabus &amp; Expectations</li> <li>* Access to Groups</li> <li>* Literature Review Process</li> <li>* Acquisition of Knowledge</li> <li>* Ethics in Research</li> <li>* Preview next week's lecture/reading</li> </ul> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Machi/McEvoy: Introduction: Researching and Producing a Literature Review</li> <li>• Supplemental Material</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection #1</li> </ul>

<p><u>Week 2</u> Jan 25</p>	<p>* Biases in research * Ethical use of statistics * Preview next week's lecture (Topics/Interests &amp; Scheduling a meeting with a Librarian)</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APA: Scholarly Writing and Publishing (pgs 3-11 in Manual)</li> <li>• Rampton &amp; Stauber: pgs 33-52; 152-163</li> <li>• Stat-Spotting pgs 3-11</li> <li>• From Forced to Voluntary Participation (article)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection #2</li> </ul>
<p><u>Week 3</u> Feb 1</p>	<p>* Identifying and interest * Writing a preliminary research topic * Library and sources</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Machi/McEvoy: Step 1: Select a Topic</li> <li>• Stat-Spotting pgs 17-26</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection #3</li> <li>• Discussion Board 1</li> <li>• Library Appointment #1</li> </ul>
<p><u>Week 4</u> Feb 8</p>	<p>* APA style papers: elements/format * Exploring the conversation * Theoretical frameworks * The thesis statement</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APA: Paper Elements and Format</li> <li>• APA: Reference List</li> <li>• APA: Reference Examples</li> <li>• Stat-Spotting pgs 27-40</li> <li>• Supplemental Material</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion Board 2</li> <li>• Definitions Quiz #1</li> <li>• Group Discussion #1</li> </ul>
<p><u>Week 5</u> Feb 15</p>	<p>* Organizing your research * Scanning sources * Basics of Argument * Evaluating Arguments</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Machi/McEvoy: Step 2: Develop the Tools of Argumentation &amp; Step 3: Search the Literature</li> <li>• Stat-Spotting pgs 41-48</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bibliography 1</li> <li>• Discussion Board 3</li> <li>• Library Appointment #2</li> </ul>
<p><u>Week 6</u> Feb 22</p>	<p>* Skimming sources * Exploratory writing * Revisiting the thesis * Outlines</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Machi/McEvoy: Step 3: Search the Literature (cont)</li> <li>• Stat-Spotting pgs 49-63</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection #4</li> <li>• Definitions Quiz #2</li> <li>• Discussion Board 4</li> </ul>
<p><u>Week 7</u></p>	<p>* Clarifying the topic</p>	



Mar 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Supporting the topic</li> <li>* Understanding data</li> <li>* Research methods and design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bibliography 2</li> <li>• Discussion Board 5</li> </ul>
<u>Week 8</u> Mar 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Scholarly Writing</li> <li>* Understanding data (cont)</li> <li>* Statistics &amp; Propaganda</li> <li>* Ethical Use of Data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection #5</li> <li>• Definitions Quiz #3</li> <li>• Discussion Board 6</li> </ul>
<u>Week 9</u> Mar 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Assembling and analyzing</li> <li>* Revisiting the thesis</li> <li>* Findings and conclusions</li> <li>* Reasoning patterns</li> <li>* Logic &amp; Logical Fallacies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection #6</li> <li>• Discussion Board 7</li> </ul>
<u>Week 10</u> Mar 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The Writing Process</li> <li>* Writing an outline</li> <li>* Writing a first draft</li> <li>* Mechanics of Style (APA)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection #7</li> <li>• Draft 1</li> <li>• Group Discussion #2</li> </ul>
March 28-Apr 1	Spring Break	
<u>Week 11</u> Apr 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Rhetorical Conventions &amp; Appeals</li> <li>* Writing to be understood</li> <li>* Future research ideas</li> <li>* Original research design</li> <li>* Observations about statistics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection #8</li> <li>• Discussion Board 8</li> <li>• Definitions Quiz #4</li> </ul> <p>NOTE: Be sure to bring a hard copy of Draft 2 to class next week.</p>
<u>Week 12</u> Apr 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Reviewing drafts</li> <li>* Presenting information to an audience</li> <li>* Publishing scholarly work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft 2: Bring hard copy of draft to class &amp; turn one in to Canvas</li> <li>• Reflection #9</li> <li>• Definitions Quiz #5</li> <li>• Group Discussion #3</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APA: Reference Examples</li> </ul>	
<u>Week 13</u> Apr 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Definitions of research terms (review)</li> <li>* Polishing presentations</li> </ul> Reading: TBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation Infographic due on Canvas</li> </ul>
<u>Week 14</u> Apr 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Class Presentations &amp; Discussion</li> </ul> Reading: TBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations in class</li> </ul>
<u>Week 15</u> May 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Class Presentations &amp; Discussion</li> <li>* Social Work Competencies</li> </ul> Reading: TBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations in class</li> <li>• Literature Review (final draft)</li> <li>• Social Work Competency Review Assignment</li> </ul>
<u>Week 16</u> May 9-13	Finals Week—No Final Exam	