COURSE SYLLABUS

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to social work in the rural context. Issues related to social work practice, rural communities, rural behavior and social welfare policy are presented.

II. COURSE OVERVIEW

The purpose of the course is to provide the student with generalist practice knowledge in rurality. The course builds upon the liberal arts base and provides the professional generalist practice in content related to rural communities, rural lifestyles, and rural social work. Within this context the course addresses rural individuals and families, groups, organizations and communities, and social work practice related to these systems. Introduction to rurality also covers content related to social research, social work values and ethics, cultural and ethnic diversity, and social and economic justice related to rural populations and communities.

All graduate level social work courses build upon the liberal arts base. This content includes sociology, psychology, political science, economics, human biology, cultural and ethnic diversity, and social research. The Introduction to Rurality provides the professional generalist practice content in rurality. This content is a significant part of the MSW program at SFASU. Since rural content is discussed in each profession generalist practice course, it is required that students take Introduction to Rurality in their first semester in the program. The generalist practice content in rurality provides the basis for generalist and specialized practice in preparation for Advanced Generalist Practice in rural communities and with people with rural lifestyles.

III. COURSE CONTACT HOURS AND STUDY HOURS

*The 3-course credit hour is determined per CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (E PAS).*

IV. TEXTS AND MATERIALS


V. CURRICULUM DESCRIPTION

The MSW program of SFASU features the generalist practice and a single specialization: Advanced Generalist Practice in a Rural Context. Both are defined below.

It is important to note here that the BSW program and the MSW program have developed a shared definition of generalist practice, given below.

**Generalist practice** is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice.

Briefly, generalist social work practice:

- Is multi-level to include individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.
- Is multi-theory, allowing for the free selection of theories as appropriate.
- Utilizes problem identification and solving focus that follows a problem-solving framework.
- Addresses the complexity of individual, family, group, organizational and community system interactions.
- Requires and integration of awareness, competence, and professional response to issues of values, ethics, diversity, culture, social justice and populations-at-risk.

**Advanced generalist practice** builds on the generalist practice, incorporating the elements listed above, but characterized by a greater depth, breadth, and autonomy as demonstrated through specialized knowledge across problem areas, populations-at-risk and practice settings, with a greater selection of diverse interactions across practice levels.

Briefly, advanced generalist practice requires:

- The ability to engage and differentially assess complex problems with systems of all sizes, with a variety of advanced assessment skills.
- Specialized evidence-based interventions with systems of all sizes.
- Differential evaluation techniques with systems of all sizes.
- Strategies to advocate for clients and constituencies influenced by rural lifestyles.
- Readiness for leadership in a variety of areas including: program development, coordination and administration; clinical and organizational supervision; policy creation, reform and implementation; leadership in research development and utilization, particularly in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary practice settings; professional development.

The specialized practice for the MSW program is advanced generalist practice for rural contexts. Theories that describe and predict rural ecological systems and rural strengths, including the incredibly rich interactions, simple and complex, formal and informal, wholesome and debilitating are emphasized. On this basis, the curriculum of the MSW Program emphasizes the ecological systems approach, the strengths perspective, and the social capital and social exchange theories.

Rural context refers to social work practice with people with rural lifestyles and systems of all sizes within and outside of rural communities. There is no single accepted definition of rural. In fact, just as generalist practice in social work draws on multiple theories, generalist practice in rural contexts recognizes the many definitions currently in use and their advantages and disadvantages for research, practice, and advocacy. The School of Social Work at SFA utilizes several of these definitions within the United States and globally including:

The United States Census Bureau (urbanized areas, urban clusters, and rural populations); Office of Management and Budget (metropolitan, micropolitan, and non-core), Economic Research Service (rural urban continuum codes); and the United Nations that defines urban and rural according to the census definition for each nation, but suggests a definition of rural areas as having a population of less than 2,000 for international comparisons.

VI. PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES (CSWE COMPETENCIES)

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
4. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
5. Engage in Policy Practice
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

VII. OBJECTIVES / STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (CSWE BEHAVIORS)

Upon successful completion of course students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the ability to apply the value base of the profession and its ethical standards with individuals, families, and groups, organizations, and communities in a rural lifestyle perspective context. (Competency 1)

2. Develop the skills to use various frameworks of ethical decision-making with multiple systems. (Competency 1)

3. Demonstrate the ability to use their understanding of how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior when working with clients from a rural lifestyle perspective. (Competency 1)

4. Demonstrate the ability to work with interprofessional teams, and inter-organizational. (Competencies 1 & 8)

5. Collaboration from a rural lifestyle perspective. (Competencies 1 & 8)

6. Demonstrate the understanding of how to use technology to engage in effective social work practice in rural communities. (Competency 1)

7. Demonstrate the skills in the appropriate use of diversity and difference in practice situations with individuals, families and groups. (Competency 2)

8. Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies. (Competency 2)

9. Demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge related to theories of human need and social justice to promote social and economic justice and human rights. (Competency 3)

10. Demonstrate the ability to use quantitative and qualitative research methods to evaluate their practice. (Competence 4 & 9)

11. Demonstrate the ability to engage in policy practice to effect change at the micro, mezzo and macro levels in rural and urban communities. (Competency 5)

12. Demonstrate the use of theories of human behavior and the social environment to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies. (Competency 6)

13. Demonstrate the ability to use empathy, reflection and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies. (Competence 6)
14. Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate and apply knowledge of human behavior in assessment with diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, and groups. (Competency 7)

15. Demonstrate the ability to implement evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals from a rural lifestyle perspective. (Competency 8)

16. Understand the importance of life-long learning and the commitment to continue to update skills to be an effective practitioner (Competency 1).

17. Understand the dimensions of diversity as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability, and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spiritually, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. (Competency 2)

VIII. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

This course will utilize several methods of instruction, including lectures, class discussion, exercises, guest lecturers, audio/visual media, and the use of technology, including assignments and testing using SFASU’s online program D2L/Brightspace. In order to complete some of the class assignments, students will need to use the Internet and D2L/Brightspace.

In order to be successful in this class, it is important that students attend regularly (including online), read the assigned material, and come to class prepared to discuss what they have read. Students are expected to be active learners, to not expect that each reading will be summarized in class, and to ask for clarification when they have questions.

While quizzes and assignments are available online and do not required on-site participation, they require participation in discussions, chats, assignments and assessments. The final exam, however, may be face to face during finals week. In addition, materials, links to web sites, and other information may be added, or questions answered to all students. Please plan to work in the site and check email at least every 3 days, or more frequently when quizzes and assignments are due. Please also ask all questions in emails within the course.

IX. COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS

This course will utilize D2L/Brightspace to support the delivery of course content - go to Client Portal Home (sfasu.edu) to access the Help Desk.

X. COURSE CALENDAR

Week 1 Course Introduction: Getting Started (1/18-1/22)
   Introduction to web-based learning, exploring websites
   Online education: Overview of D2L/Brightspace and Online Testing
   Take First Qualifying Quiz.

Week 2 Introduction to Rurality (1/23-1/29)
Overview of rural indicators and social work practice
Rural perspectives and social work practice
Grand Challenge for Social Work

Readings
Scales, Streeter & Cooper, Chapters. 1-2
Rural Health Information Hub: Retrieved from
https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/

Mini Assignment 1 is Due

Week 3 Rural Definitions (1/30-2/5)
US Census
Office of Management and Budget
Economic Research Service
Isserman definitions

Readings
Miller, K. (2010).
Rural-Urban Continuum Codes: Retrieved from
https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/rural-urban-continuum-codes/documentation.aspx#.U76gtg4g0o
Rural Classifications: Retrieved from https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/rural-economy-population/rural-classifications/what-is-rural.aspx#.U7sASZSwJRo

Week 4 Rural Definitions Cont’d (2/6-2/12)
Rural Definition Review
  Variations in definitions
  Census block vs. County
  Websites that help
  Federal resources
  Rural vs. Frontier

Readings
Federal Office of Rural Health Policy: Retrieved from
https://www.hrsa.gov/ruralhealth/
Am I Rural? Tool: Retrieved from https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/am-i-rural
Persistent Poverty Dynamics: Retrieved from
Rural America: Retrieved from
Rural Children: Retrieved from
Whitley (2013).

Take Second Qualifying Quiz and Introduction is due

Week 5 Rural Theories (2/13-2/19)
Theories related to rural issues
Social capital: Interconnectedness
Empowerment
Systems perspective
Relationship between theories and definitions of rurality

Readings
Scales, Streeter & Cooper, Chapters. 5, 16, 18
Carbajal, Parsons, Pillai, Sahelin, & Sharma (2011).
Belanger (2005).

Week 6 Rural Social Work Practice (2/20-2/26)
Social work practice in rural communities
Fields of practice and their considerations
Special circumstances impacting rural communities
Managing relationships—Social capital in practice
Engagement in rural communities
Assessment in rural communities
Intervention in rural communities
Evaluation in rural communities
Termination in rural communities

Readings
Reamer (2013)
Scales, Streeter & Cooper, Chapters. 3-4, 19-21

Week 7 Diversity and Difference in Practice (2/27-3/4)
Intersectionality
Interrelationships/intercultural
Social work profession
NASW/IFSW codes of ethics
Social and economic justice and environmental justice
Social inequality
Human rights
Readings
Daley, Chapter 3
Scales, Streeter & Cooper, Ch. 2
Katiuzhinzky & Okech (2014).

Week 8 Diversity (3/5-3/11)
Gender
Sexual Orientation (LGBTQ)
Gender and Gender Identity Expression
Marital Status and Class
Readings
Scales, Streeter & Cooper, Ch. 8

Week 9 SPRING BREAK

Week 10 Diversity (3/19-3/25)
Age
Disability and ability
Veterans
Readings
Scales, Streeter & Cooper, Ch. 10, 15
Rural Veterans at a Glance: Retrieved from
Morano, Ch. 13, pp. 209-218

Week 11 Diversity (3/26-4/1) (Easter break)
Religion/spirituality
Tribal sovereignty status
Political ideology
Readings
Scales, Streeter & Cooper, Ch. 13
Religion Landscape Study: Retrieved from
http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/

Week 12 Diversity (4/2-4/8)
Race/Ethnic group
Linguistic diversity
Immigration status
Readings

Lit Review and Interviews Due

Week 13 Diversity (4/9-4/15)
Global perspectives on diversity: Grand Challenges for Social Work
Human trafficking
Displaced populations
Readings
Scales, Streeter & Cooper, Ch. 16

Week 14 Diversity (4/16-4/22)
Rural cultural competence and awareness
Rural populations at-risk
Rural child welfare
Readings
Daley, Chapters 4-5
Scales, Streeter & Cooper, Ch. 4, 6-7, 9, 17
Mini-Assignment 2: Journals Due

Week 15 Presentations (4/23-4/29)
Critical Reflection Video Presentation due
Readings
Readings and Websites

Week 16 (4/30-5/6) Final Paper Due
Class: post comments and questions on classmates’ presentations
Student Evaluation of Course; Feedback
Final Exam (5/6-5/10)

XI. COURSE REQUIREMENTS
A. Class Attendance and Participation: In order for the class to discuss the readings, it is
essential for you to read assigned material before coming to class, to attend class regularly, and to participate in class discussion. Attending class means logging in regularly and participating in class discussions. You are responsible for all material covered in class and assigned in the syllabus, whether or not you have attended class.

B. Cell Phones/Pagers/Electronic Devices: Because such devices are disruptive to the classroom environment, I ask that you refrain from using them during class. I also ask that you either place such devices on silent mode or turn them off during class. Repeated interruptions may result in a deduction of points from the final average.

C. Readings: The course outline provides a list of required readings for each week. Since lectures and class discussions are designed to answer questions about the material and expand upon the basic concepts, you are expected to complete the assigned readings prior to class. Furthermore, you are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the information, as evidenced by active participation in class discussion. For example, you should present well-formulated questions and comments that demonstrate prior preparation.

D. Exams: There will be a final exam. The exam is comprehensive, covering material from the beginning of the semester. Students are required to take the exam at the scheduled time. Makeup exams will be scheduled according to university policy with a university-approved excuse.

E. Quizzes/Exercises: Students are required to participate in the quizzes, exercises and discussions at the scheduled time. Makeup quizzes/exercises will be scheduled according to university policy with a university-approved excuse.

F. Assignments/Presentations: See Assignments for a listing of all assignments for this course. All assignments must be submitted by the specified due date. No late assignments are accepted.

XII. GRADING POLICY

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Qualifying Quizzes</td>
<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mini-Assignments 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Assignment</td>
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<td>1. Introduction: Selected Topic and Selected County</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Literature Review on Selected Topic and Interviews</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>3. Final Paper</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>Class Video Presentation</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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XIII. GRADING SCALE

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<th>313-357</th>
<th>358-402</th>
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*Not applicable as credit toward graduate degree

XIV. ATTENDANCE POLICY
Per Class Attendance Policy SFA 6.7 students are expected to attend all classes, laboratories, and other class-related activities on a regular and punctual basis. Attendance policies will be stated in the course syllabus. For those classes where attendance is a factor in the course grade, an accurate record of attendance will be maintained. Absences At the discretion of the instructor, students may be excused from attendance for reasons such as health, family emergencies, or student participation in approved university-sponsored events. When possible, students should notify their instructors in advance about absences. Students are responsible for providing documentation in a timely manner to the instructor for each absence. The instructor determines whether such documentation is satisfactory. Students missing classes, other than for university-sponsored trips, should contact the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR) and request that an absence notification be sent to the instructor(s). The notification is not an excuse, and is not evaluated by OSRR. The notification is only provided as a courtesy to the student and the student's instructor(s). If participating in university-sponsored events, announcements in mySFA may constitute official notification. Faculty members sponsoring activities that require their students to be absent from other classes must submit to the provost and vice president for academic affairs an explanation of the absence, including the date, time, and an alphabetical listing of all attending students. If approved by the provost and vice president for academic affairs, this information will be posted on mySFA. Whether absences are excused or unexcused by the instructor, a student is still responsible for all course content and assignments. Students with accepted excuses may be permitted to make up work for absences equaling no more than 15% of the scheduled course meeting time for the term, depending on the nature of the missed work. The timeline for completing make-up work will be determined by the instructor. https://www.sfasu.edu/docs/policies/6.7.pdf

XV. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other electronic/online resources should be discussed with the instructor.

The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.

Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.
Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

*Note: The following is specific to School of Social Work*

Social work students are required to uphold the School of Social Work Academic and Professional Integrity Code they agreed to when they first enrolled in the program. The BSW/MSW/DSW Student Handbook and Academic and Professional Integrity Code outline acceptable student behavior. Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, visits to agencies, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate or inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

**XVI. Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (SFA Policy 5.5)**

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the coursework because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course to compute the grade point average. For additional information, go to [https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades-5.5.pdf](https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades-5.5.pdf).

**XVII. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

To obtain disability-related accommodations, alternate formats, and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services promptly may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

**XVIII. Student Wellness and Well-Being**
SFA values students’ overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help, SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

**On-campus Resources:**

**The Dean of Students Office** (Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby)

[www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents](http://www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents)

936.468.7249

dos@sfasu.edu

**SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic** Human Services, Room 202

[www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp)

936.468.1041

**The Health and Wellness Hub** “The Hub”

Location: corner of E. College and Raguet St.

To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person – mind, body and spirit. Services include:

- Health Services
- Counseling Services
- Student Outreach and Support
- Food Pantry
- Wellness Coaching
- Alcohol and Other Drug Education

[www.sfasu.edu/thehub](http://www.sfasu.edu/thehub)

936.468.4008

thehub@sfasu.edu

**Crisis Resources:**

- Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343
- National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 9-8-8
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
- johCrisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741
ASSIGNMENTS

Mini-Assignment 1

Write a 2 page paper reflecting your current perceptions of rural lifestyles and social justice? What do you know about rural lifestyles and rurality? What have been your experiences thus far with rural areas? You will use this information to refer back to when you complete your critical reflection video paper presentation. This assignment will be submitted to dropbox and is worth 20 points.

Mini-Assignment 2

You are required to keep a weekly journal throughout the semester (12 entries, weeks 3-14) to be submitted at the end of the semester. Prompts will be provided in D2L. This will also aid in the development or your critical reflection video paper presentation. This assignment will be submitted to dropbox and is worth 50 points.

Critical Reflection Video Paper Presentation

Upload video presentation to D2L/Brightspace board discussion— Presentation Discussion thread. Based on what you have learned in this course, what is your perception of rural lifestyles and social justice? Video record your PowerPoint presentation to reflect on your previous and current understanding related to rural lifestyles, oppression, social and economic justice, ethics, your beliefs and values, and obstacles to overcoming differences amongst your values and norms compared to other persons, families, groups, or communities. The video presentation should be presented professionally, as if it were being presented at a conference. This assignment is worth 30 points.

Major Assignment

This assignment is intended to help you begin demonstrating on how to conduct research, and to be sure that you understand how to access the library, peer reviewed studies, other relevant materials, and to be sure that the people you have chosen to interview are appropriate for the assignment. In addition, this assignment is to determine how well you understand the practice of rural social work with rural people in all system sizes and issues of social and economic justice based on your chosen issue and the county you selected.

Each part of the assignment must be completely in APA format, for example, title page, body text, and reference page.

1. Assignment 1
   
   **Introduction.** Please read the assignment requirements thoroughly, and then choose a topic for your paper. In the introduction section, discuss the issue rural communities face, the topic you selected and why you chose it. Make sure you provide citations to support your argument.

   Pick a rural county that you wish to use for this paper. State how you know this county is considered rural, that is, discuss the different definitions and which one you chose to determine your county is rural, specify the rural definition criteria, and discuss how your county meets that definition. Be specific. In addition, include statistics about the issue in your county. For example, how many elderly people are there? What is the number and percent of people in poverty in the county? Who is it who is poor? If in health, how many hospitals are there? Is the population medically underserved? What is the demographic data for the county, etc.?
2. Assignment 2

**Literature Review.** Continuing with the topic you have chosen for your paper, conduct a literature review on this topic (5-7 pages). Make sure you use peer-reviewed studies, at least 10 articles, and quality government or agency reports that relate to your topic and write a literature review, use at least 20 references or more in total. Ask the SFA librarian for assistance if you need help considering what is quality and useful for a professional paper. You WILL be graded on your choice of articles, so please do use the campus resources for assistance. PLEASE NOTE: The articles do not all have to be directly related to the particular county you chose. Backtrack to find articles about the issue in rural areas, or the issue in another rural area, etc. You cannot choose articles more than 15 years old, unless there is a clear relationship to your topic and your explanation is appropriate.

Your literature review is a synthesizes of the findings from the articles and relationship to your topic. Discuss how these findings informs you about the situation/challenge/condition in the community you have chosen. In other words, if you were trying to improve conditions for the elderly (if you chose rural elderly), what do the findings from these studies tell you that might help you as you chose interventions? Make connections between study findings, compare and contrast differences (read on how to conduct a literature review to complete this section successfully, and do not submit an annotated bibliography as it will result in a zero grade).

**Interviews.** Provide the names or positions of 3 persons (key informants) you interviewed about the issue in the county you chose in order to clarify the issue in that county, how it is addressed (if at all), suggestions, extent of problems, etc. While you don’t need to provide the names of the informants (if they would rather be anonymous), provide the positions or employment, experience, etc. that explains why they would have a credible opinion about this issue. Use the questions below to help you guide the interview with each informant. You can always add more questions or have follow up questions. You must include the audio recordings of the interviews as an attachment (upload it with your paper), or provide a transcript of their responses verbatim, which means you have to record and transcribe the content and thematically categorize their responses; use a table (APA style) to report these themes. Then, discuss each theme you reported. Finally, discuss your findings from the interviews and literature review, that is, provide a summary of your findings (2-3 pages).

Below are suggested questions to ask (please add at least four more questions):

1. How serious is ______ currently?
2. How has it changed since you have been here (if so, how)?
3. How is _____ different from a major city, e.g. Dallas/Fort Worth?
4. What programs or services are there to address _____ in this county?
5. What suggestions do you have in how to improve _____?
6. How can social workers help in improving _____?

3. Assignment 3: Final Paper

**Course Integration.** Provide a one-page description that ties what you learned from the course readings (the text, the required readings, and other peer reviewed articles) that apply to the issue in the county you have chosen and based on the interviews you conducted. Again, this is your thinking. I will not grade you on your opinions, but I will grade you on your ability to apply course material to the challenges in this community. Please be careful to correctly cite and include on the reference list the materials you are referencing!! (For example, look at Owl
Planning. Now, based on your newly acquired knowledge of rural definitions, rural challenges, and rural solutions, how do you think this issue should be addressed in rural communities?

Conclusion. Provide a conclusion to your paper.

Note on Final Paper—Assignment 3. Write your paper professionally (quality of the overall paper). Check your spelling and grammar and make necessary corrections, especially improvement suggestions made in previous assignments. Do not copy from your resources, except when you are citing statistics, as you do not have to paraphrase statistics. If you must quote from an article, please be sure that you put the copied text in quotes (See APA manual); not putting it in quotes is plagiarism (i.e., saying that those words are your own); also make sure to include the page number associated with the quote. To be sure you are not plagiarizing, you might try reading the article and then putting the article face down next to you, and then writing what you think the article said about the subject in your own words. Then you can look at the article again to see if you were correct and correct anything you need to. Use spelling and grammar check. There is no excuse whatsoever for using the “copy and paste” method for writing a paper. Even if you put it in quotes, you are not writing your own thoughts. I will discount all copied and pasted materials and not count it toward the assignment. In serious cases, (extensive copying and pasting, not crediting authors, etc.) your paper will receive a zero. If you are unsure how to do this, look at other peer reviewed articles and see how they write/reference/cite. The SFA librarian is also an excellent resource.

The final paper should be about 10-15 pages long, excluding the reference page. Submit your paper in D2L/Brightspace, in the assignment dropbox by the deadline. The paper must be professionally written, using the current APA style manual and the outline below must be followed:

1. Introduction
   a. Topic Selected
   b. County Selected
2. Literature Review
3. Interviews
   a. Key Informants
   b. Thematic Analysis
   c. Finding Discussion
4. Literature Integration
5. Planning
6. Conclusion
7. References
8. Appendix: Interview Questions
BIBLIOGRAPHY


**Websites:**

Rural Health Information Hub: Retrieved from [https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/](https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/)

Rural-Urban Continuum Codes: Retrieved from [https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/rural-urban-continuum-codes/documentation.aspx#.U76gtyg4g0o](https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/rural-urban-continuum-codes/documentation.aspx#.U76gtyg4g0o)

Rural Classifications: Retrieved from [https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/rural-economy-population/rural-classifications/what-is-rural.aspx#.U7sASZSwJRo](https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/rural-economy-population/rural-classifications/what-is-rural.aspx#.U7sASZSwJRo)


Am I Rural? Tool: Retrieved from https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/am-i-rural


