

**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY – CENTRAL TEXAS SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT**

SWKK 3315, Seminar: Professional Writing for Social Workers  
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7:30 to 8:45 PM, Room 304 Warrior Hall

**Semester:** Fall 2021  
**Instructor's Name:** Claudia Rappaport, PhD, ACSW, MSSW  
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**E-Mail:** [rappaport@tamuct.edu](mailto:rappaport@tamuct.edu). **NOTE: PLEASE ONLY USE THIS ADDRESS TO EMAIL ME; DO NOT TRY TO EMAIL ME THROUGH THE CANVAS SYSTEM!** Emails are responded to as soon as possible, usually the same day (or the next day if sent very late at night). I do respond to emails at night if I am still up grading papers. However, on Saturdays I volunteer with hospice all day so cannot respond to emails until late in the evening.

**Office hours:** Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:30 to 2:00 PM  
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:30 to 6:00 PM  
These are times when I will be in my office and available to meet with students. If you would prefer to schedule a WebEx meeting with me, that can also be arranged. Call the Social Work office at 519-5406 to schedule an appointment. Walk-ins are also possible as long as I do not already have an appointment scheduled at that time.

**A note about the COVID-19 pandemic: For the most recent campus information about COVID-19, see the Texas A&M University-Central Texas Fall 2021 Return to Campus Plan (<https://www.tamuct.edu/covid19/>)**  
See the current protocols described later in this syllabus.

## **I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

*Catalog Description:* Social work electives are intensive studies of current trends and issues related to professional social work practice, social service delivery, and populations at risk.

*Prerequisites:* None. This course is designed for social work students who want to strengthen their writing skills as professional social workers, working on various aspects of writing that students need to improve most.

## **II. NATURE OF COURSE**

Social work is a field of practice that places heavy demands for professional-quality writing skills. On a regular basis, social workers are required to write client assessments, home studies, progress notes, correspondence and emails, diagnostic reports, intervention plans, court documents, community needs assessments, requests for grant or community funding, monthly and annual service reports, and many other types of documentation. It is essential that all social workers develop skills at expressing themselves effectively and accurately in writing so their passion for their profession can be undiminished and so their professional goals can be achieved. Written work that is poorly done and read by other people casts a negative impression on the social worker's competence and knowledge, which makes it more difficult for the social worker to achieve his/her professional

goals and achieve a reputable standing in the field. This course will work to improve each student's ability to write as a professional social worker.

This supports students' learning the model of **Generalist Social Work Practice**: Work with individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations in a variety of social work and host settings. Generalist practitioners view clients and client systems from a strengths perspective in order to recognize, support, and build upon the innate capabilities of all human beings. They use a professional problem-solving process to engage, assess, broker services, advocate, counsel, educate, and organize with and on behalf of clients and client systems. In addition, generalist practitioners engage in community and organizational development. Finally, generalist practitioners evaluate service outcomes in order to continually improve the provision and quality of services most appropriate to client needs. Generalist social work practice is guided by the NASW Code of Ethics and is committed to improving the well-being of individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations and furthering the goals of social justice. (From the website of the Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors, Inc.)

*Teaching Method:* The primary teaching approach in this course will be collaborative and active learning. Material in the course will be presented through interactive class discussions based on reading assignments, classroom exercises, videotapes, and written assignments.

*Grading:* As much as possible, Dr. Rappaport tries to return graded assignments the class after they were due. For longer assignments it may be the second class after they were due. Two times during the semester (after the mid-term exam and before the final exam) Dr. Rappaport will complete grade sheets to show each student where their course grade stands at that time. In the interim, grading can be seen in Gradebook on Canvas, though that will not also reflect the grades for attendance and for class participation, so your final grade will be different than what the Gradebook reflects.

### **III. Department Mission**

The mission of the BSW Program at Texas A&M University - Central Texas is to prepare high quality graduates for entry-level generalist social work practice and for advanced education. This education is delivered in a rigorous and student-centered learning environment that promotes professional behavior, values and ethics, human and community well-being, respect for human diversity, and a global perspective, and is guided by a person-in-environment framework, knowledge based on scientific inquiry, and social work competencies.

Until Fall 2014 the TAMUCT Social Work Department had accreditation through the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) as a branch campus of Tarleton State University. Now our Department has been awarded our own independent accreditation, effective February 2017.

### **IV. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND RELATED CSWE PRACTICE BEHAVIORS**

This course provides content that helps prepare you, the generalist social work student, to engage in the following CSWE competencies and related practice behaviors:

1. Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly. b. Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continued professional development. (2.1.1b)
2. Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice. a. Recognize and manage personal values in ways that allow professional values to guide practice. (2.1.2a) b. Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions. (2.1.2d)

3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments. b. Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. (2.1.3b)
4. Apply knowledge of human behavior in the social environment. b. Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment. (2.1.4b)

The objectives for this course that support the CSWE-related practice behaviors are:

1. Students will be able to describe the ways in which their ability to write professionally reflects on their identity as competent, professional social workers.
2. Students will utilize critical thinking to analyze their own writing skills as well as the writing skills of fellow students and the professor, and critical thinking will also be utilized as they improve their writing skills.
3. Students will employ skills in how to discuss elements of human behavior and the social environment in their writing about other people’s life situations. While watching videos about people’s lives and stresses, they will strengthen their ability to assess and understand individuals’ and families’ living situations.
4. Students will master the basics of composition, grammar, and punctuation and how to use them to maximize their ability to communicate effectively and professionally in writing. They will learn the most common types of writing errors and will master the ability to avoid those errors in their own writing.
5. Students will master strategies for strengthening the professional language used in their written work, including use of People First Language, remaining non-judgmental in language and tone, avoiding slang and colloquialisms, avoiding language that would be perceived as offensive or biased by any group of people, and writing clearly so that non-social workers can also understand what they write. This appropriate use of language will be consistent with their identification as professional social workers and will reflect the guiding principles and Code of Ethics of the social work profession.

The following table shows the relationships between: (a) the course objectives, (b) the CSWE-related practice behaviors, and (c) the assignments used to assess students’ ability to fulfill the objective related to the practice behavior.

<i>A. Objectives (by the completion of the course, it is expected that you will be able to ...)</i>	<i>B. CSWE-related practice behaviors (this is the practice behavior that the objective supports)</i>	<i>C. Course assignment (this is the assignments used to assess your ability to fulfill the objective related to the practice behavior)</i>
Students will be able to describe the ways in which their ability to write professionally reflects on their identity as competent, professional social workers.	2.1.1b	Essay #1 Class discussions
Students will utilize critical thinking to analyze their own writing skills as well as the writing skills of fellow students and the professor, and critical thinking will also be utilized as they improve their writing skills.	2.1.1b 2.1.3b	Essays Writing correction exercises Final exam Class discussions
Students will employ skills in how to discuss elements of human behavior and the social environment in their writing about other people’s life situations. While watching videos about people’s lives and stresses, they will strengthen their ability to assess and understand individuals’ and families’ living situations.	2.1.1b 2.1.3b 2.1.4b	Essays Writing correction exercises Final exam Class discussions
Students will master the basics of composition, grammar, and punctuation and how to use them to maximize their ability to communicate effectively and professionally in writing. They will learn the most common types of writing errors and will master the ability to avoid those errors in their own writing.	2.1.1b 2.1.3b	Essays Writing correction exercises Final exam Class discussions
Students will master strategies for strengthening the professional	2.1.1b	Essays

language used in their written work, including use of People First Language, remaining non-judgmental in language and tone, avoiding slang and colloquialisms, avoiding language that would be perceived as offensive or biased by any group of people, and writing clearly so that non-social workers can also understand what they write. This appropriate use of language will be consistent with their identification as professional social workers and will reflect the guiding principles and Code of Ethics of the social work profession.	2.1.2a 2.1.2d 2.1.3b 2.1.4b	Writing correction exercises Final exam Class discussions
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## V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. **REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS:** Lester, M.; and Beason, L. (2019). *The McGraw-Hill Education Handbook of English Grammar and Usage* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). McGraw-Hill. ISBN 978-1-260-12167-4

Kaufman, L., & Straus, J. (2021). *The Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation: An Easy-to-Use Guide with Clear Rules, Real-World Examples, and Reproducible Quizzes* (12<sup>th</sup> ed.). Jossey-Bass. ISBN 978-1-119-65302-8.

RECOMMENDED TEXT: American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). American Psychological Association.

### B. FINAL GRADES

A total of 10,000 points can be earned from the course assignments, as follows:

Course Assignment	Percentage of final grade	Total possible points
Writing Corrections Exercises (10 of them)	15%	1,500
Essay on Why Writing Skills are Important in Social Work	5%	500
“The Blind Side,” Essay #1	5%	500
“The Blind Side,” Essay #2	10%	1,000
“The Missing,” Essay #1	10%	1,000
“The Missing,” Essay #2	10%	1,000
“Normal” Essay	15%	1,500
Final Exam – Take home portion	5%	500
Final Exam – video essay portion	10%	1,000
Attendance	5%	500
Class Participation in discussions and board activities	10%	1,000
Totals	100%	10,000 (Total ÷ 100 = final grade)

Points and Corresponding Grades for individual assignments are based on the following:

A+: 100 points	A: 95 points	A-: 90 points	
B+: 88 points	B: 85 points	B-: 80 points	
C+: 78 points	C: 75 points	C-: 70 points	
D+: 68 points	D: 65 points	D-: 60 points	F – 59 points or less

**Example:** A test worth 15% of the grade, on which a student earned a B+, would give 1,320 points toward the final grade ( $88 \times 15 = 1,320$ ). Final Class Grades are based on the following:

- A: 90 to 100 (9,000 to 10,000 points)
- B: 89 to 80 (8,900 to 8,000 points)
- C: 79 to 70 (7,900 to 7,000 points)
- D: 69 to 60 (6,900 to 6,000 points)
- F: 59 or less (5,900 points or less)

### C. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

The following activities will be completed and graded during the semester.

#### 1. Writing Correction Exercises (15% of final grade)

There will be ten Writing Correction Exercises utilized to help students improve their writing skills as professional social workers. Each assignment will consist of several badly written sentences on social work topics, and students will need to rewrite the sentences to reflect more appropriate professional language and correct usage of composition, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. At the end of the course, the student's average grade on the ten assignments will constitute 15% of their final grade in the course. Each student is allowed to drop their one lowest grade on these exercises.

#### 2. Essay on Why Writing Skills are Important in Social Work (5% of final grade)

On the first day of class, students will write a short essay discussing why writing skills are important in the practice of professional social work. The grade on the final version of this essay will make up 5% of the student's final grade in the course.

#### 3. Two Essays on the video "The Blind Side" (5% and 10% of final grade respectively)

Students will write two different essays on the movie "The Blind Side." The first essay will be written after watching the first half of the movie, and the second essay will be written after the entire movie has been viewed. The grades on those two essays will make up a total of 15% of the student's final grade in the course.

#### 4. Two Essays on the movie "The Missing" (10% each, total of 20%)

Students will write a total of two essays on the movie "The Missing," the first essay being written after watching the first half of the movie, and the second essay will be written after the entire movie has been viewed. The grades on those two essays will make up a total of 20% of the student's final grade in the course.

#### 5. One Essay on the movie "Normal" (15% of final grade)

Students will write an essay on the movie "Normal" after the entire movie has been watched in class. The essay will be written at home and turned in the following class period. This will be similar to the in-class portion of the final exam.

**Note: Students need to base their essay only on the part of the movie that has been watched one time during class. Do not go and watch the rest of the movie on your own, and do not go back and watch the part that was shown in class additional times. I want you to write your essay on your immediate reaction to what you saw in the movie.**

Note: For each of the aforementioned essays, a process will be utilized during their completion. Following class discussion and/or the showing of part of a movie, the student will write the first draft of their essay and will turn it in. When Dr. Rappaport "grades" the initial drafts, she will tell students how many errors they have made on each line, but she will not correct the errors for them. Through a combination of individual work,

working with peers and with Dr. Rappaport in class, and class discussion, students will make corrections and improvements to their essays and will turn them in again. The final version of each essay will then be graded by Dr. Rappaport, and when they are returned, students will have the opportunity to ask questions about the reasons for any corrections Dr. Rappaport made. It is only the final versions of the essays that will actually be graded.

For each essay, 50% of the grade will be based on content (clarity of the thesis of the essay, how well the student is able to utilize self-reflection in responding to the topic of the essay, etc.) and 50% of the grade will be based on the number of errors in composition, punctuation, spelling, and grammar, based on the following:

0-3 errors = A+	4-6 errors = A
7-9 errors = A-	10-12 errors = B+
13-15 errors = B	17-18 errors = B-
19-21 errors = C+	22-24 errors = C
25-27 errors = C-	28-30 errors = D+
31-33 errors = D	34-36 errors = D-
37 errors or more = F	

**5. Final Exam (15% of final grade in two parts that are 5% and 10% each)**

One part of the final exam will be a take-home test that consists of having the student proof-read and correct badly written sentences, utilizing everything they have learned about writing from the course. These will be similar to the Writing Correction Exercises the students have been completing throughout the course. For the other part of the final exam, students will watch a video on the next to the last day of class. They will then write an essay responding to the video; they can write on any topic of their choice in response to the video. They will turn in the essay at the beginning of the final class.

In an emergency that keeps a student from being able to attend class on the day the final exam is given, the student is responsible for contacting the professor **in advance** to see what arrangements, if any, can be made to make up the test early. It cannot be taken later since the exam is being given at the end of the course.

**6. Class Participation (10% of grade)**

Dr. Rappaport has an interactive teaching style and expects every student to be an active participant in class. An old Chinese proverb says, “Tell me and I will forget—Show me and I may remember—But involve me and I will understand.” You will learn more from this class if you talk and participate. Ask questions, remembering that there is no such thing as a stupid question. Share your reactions to what is being discussed. Reflect on implications of what we are studying. If you are a student who has never before chosen to talk in classes, this will be a good opportunity for you to start developing a new life skill that will serve you well in the profession of social work. Being an active participant increases understanding of the material for your fellow students as well. This particular course involves a lot of very interactive coaching and assistance to help students improve their writing skills, so your participation in the process is essential to your learning to be a better writer.

Your class participation grade will be determined by whether you talked during class discussions **and by whether your contributions added to the quality of the class sessions**. Dr. Rappaport also reserves the right to call on students in class if they are not participating regularly in the discussions. Each day a student will earn between 0 and 3 participation points; the points will be totaled at the end of the semester, and grades will be determined based on the student’s total number of points compared to the points of all the other students in the class.

**While we cannot require that students wear a mask to class, each student who does wear a face covering will be given an extra participation point for that class session.**

**7. Class Attendance (5% of final grade)**

Students are expected to be present for every scheduled class session and to remain for the entire class. If you are unable to avoid missing a class, you must contact the professor within one week of the class period to explain the absence.

Any unexcused (or unexplained) absence will affect this portion of your grade. Illness is an excused absence. The professor will review other types of absences to determine how unavoidable they were; not being able to leave work is NOT an excused absence. If your work schedule will not permit you to attend this class on a predictable basis, you should not be enrolled in the class **NOTE: if you do not email the professor within one week of the absence to get it excused, this will NOT be changed later to an excused absence.**

**Students must be present when class begins and are expected to remain until class is dismissed; students are not allowed to arrive late or leave early. In addition, to be counted as present, you must demonstrate attentiveness and engagement in all the class activities. Any student found sleeping or doing work for another class will have their attendance for that day changed to “absent”.**

The following shows the degree to which unexcused absences will impact your attendance grade. (Note: There are fewer class periods in the summer term, so absences affect this portion of your grade to a larger extent.)

<i>Number of Unexcused Absences</i>	<i>Attendance Grade</i>
1	A-
2	B
3	B-
4	C
5	D
6 or more	F
Note: Coming to class late twice counts as an absence	

## VI. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CLASSROOMS

The following policies apply to all students enrolled in this course:

1. Students are not permitted to enter class more than ten (10) minutes late. Exceptions will be made with prior discussion and approval by the professor only.
2. After class has begun, students are expected to remain for the duration of the class. It is expected that all students will take care of personal affairs (i.e., get beverages, take care of phone calls, meet with students and other professors, use the restroom, etc.) before class begins and that they WILL NOT leave class after it has begun.
3. **AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH CLASS, ALL TELEPHONES MUST BE PUT AWAY FOR THE DURATION OF THE CLASS. THIS INCLUDES NOT PUTTING IT ON THE STUDENT’S DESK WHERE IT IS VISIBLE. IF DR. RAPPAPORT SEES A TELEPHONE ON A DESK OR SEES A STUDENT TRY TO ANSWER ONE, SHE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CONFISCATE IT FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE CLASS.**

**IN ADDITION, USE OF LAPTOP COMPUTERS IS PROHIBITED DURING CLASS EXCEPT FOR ACCESSING THE TEXTBOOK OR CLASS HANDOUTS. IF A STUDENT IS SEEN DOING A LOT OF TYPING, DR. RAPPAPORT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO SEE WHAT IS BEING WRITTEN, AND IF NECESSARY SHE WILL REMOVE THE STUDENT’S RIGHT TO USE THE LAPTOP DURING CLASS. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES CAN A STUDENT USE THIS CLASS PERIOD TO WORK ON ASSIGNMENTS FROM THIS OR ANY OTHER CLASS.**

**IN OTHER WORDS, STUDENTS NEED TO PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO EACH CLASS IN ITS ENTIRETY, INCLUDING ANY VIDEOTAPES BEING SHOWN, AND TO USE THEIR INTEGRITY AND RESPECTFULNESS IN HOW THEY BEHAVE DURING CLASS.**

3. Students are expected to display professional decorum at all times. This includes, but is not limited to, respecting classmates and the instructor. It is expected that students will not speak to/hold conversations with/pass notes to other students, use cell phones, or engage in other types of unprofessional behaviors after class has begun. Talking during class discussions out of turn or while other students are talking is disruptive to the learning environment, disrespectful to peers, and unprofessional in demeanor. Students are strongly encouraged to engage in discussion in a respectful and appropriate manner; hence, it is expected that students apply classroom etiquette and raise a hand if there is something you want to share or you want to answer a question. It is also expected that students will display patience in raising a hand and recognize that the professor may be trying to call on other students who have not yet participated.
4. To support the academic learning environment, students are asked to refrain from sharing personal information in class that will not support/add significantly to the class discussion. Sharing of personal stories and/or issues that are not directly related to the topic can distract class learning and limit knowledge-sharing by the professor and other students. The professor reserves the right to redirect/limit such conversations in class as needed.
5. Students are NOT permitted to work collaboratively (together) on *any* assignment in this class. All work turned in must be the student's own product. This includes take-home quizzes, papers, etc. Failure to adhere to this policy can result in a zero (0) on the assignment and referral to Student Affairs for academic integrity concerns.
6. **All assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the day they are due.** *Being absent from class on a day when an assignment is due does NOT grant a student an extension to the due date;* the student must still arrange to get that assignment turned in to the professor before class starts. Allowing students to turn in assignments late for a grade is not fair to other students who get their work done on time, disrupts the grading process for the professor, and sends a message that such behavior is professionally "okay," which it is not.
7. All papers submitted for grading **MUST** adhere to APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition standards unless otherwise stated by the professor. This means that all papers must, *minimally*, be: 1) typed, 2) double-spaced, 3) use one consistent font (I prefer Times New Roman since it is easiest to read), 4) use 12 point font, 5) include an APA style cover page, and 6) include in-text citations AND a reference page for ANY SOURCED INFORMATION (this includes information learned in current or previous classes, read online, learned during a personal communication, read in a textbook, etc.). Further, all typed papers submitted in class **MUST** be stapled. **IF A PAPER IS NOT WRITTEN IN APA FORMAT, DR. RAPPAPORT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO RETURN IT TO THE STUDENT WITH A GRADE OF ZERO. USING APA IS NOT**



**OPTIONAL! IF YOU DO NOT KNOW HOW TO USE APA, READ THROUGH THE INSTRUCTIONS LATER IN THIS SYLLABUS OR GO TO THE WRITING CENTER AND ASK FOR SOME TUTORING ON HOW TO USE IT.**

8. TAMUCT expects all students to maintain high standards of personal and scholarly conduct and to avoid any form of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (intentional or unintentional), copying another person's work (**INCLUDING THE TEXTBOOK OR OTHER COURSE MATERIALS**), turning in someone else's work as your own, downloading material from the internet and inserting it into a paper as if it were your own work, taking ideas from classes or readings and putting them in a paper without citations/references, cheating on an examination or other academic work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. Any idea, even paraphrased ideas, used or borrowed must be given credit by showing the source with an appropriate citation and reference. **Any student who violates class and/or university policies regarding Academic Honesty will be sanctioned.** More information on university policies can be found at [tamuct.edu/studentconduct](http://tamuct.edu/studentconduct).
9. Class discussions, oral presentations, and written materials must adhere to professional standards of expression and conform to the style described by the American Psychological Association (APA). This includes avoidance of the use of language that degrades women; people of color; people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender; and other diverse and at-risk populations. All students are expected to display the utmost respect for all people, regardless of differences.
10. *An assessment of each student's behavior as it relates to class policies and overall decorum required by the TAMUCT Social Work Department and the university is provided via the "Rubric for Assessing Professional Behaviors" that is given to students at the New Social Work Student Orientation. All social work majors receive a RAPB when they apply to the social work major and again when they apply for a field placement. Failure to obtain scores of 3 or 4 in any of the 15 professional behavior areas listed in the rubric will limit a student's ability to be admitted to the social work major or assigned to a field placement and/or can result in removal from a field placement. These behaviors, which align with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) core values and ethics, the TAMUCT Code of Conduct, and the Social Work Department class policies, are considered the expected professional behaviors of social work interns and future generalist social workers and, therefore, are held to the strictest code.*

## **VII. University Policies**

### **1. Warrior Shield:**

Warrior Shield is an emergency notification service that gives TAMUCT the ability to communicate health and safety emergency information quickly via email, text message, and social media. All students are automatically enrolled in it through their myCT email account. Connect at [portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Account/Login](http://portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Account/Login) to change where you receive your alerts or to opt out. By staying enrolled in Warrior Shield, university officials can quickly pass on safety-related information, regardless of your location.

## 2. **COVID-19 Protocols:**

- Students and employees must check for symptoms every day before coming on campus. Do NOT come to campus if you suspect that you have COVID-19 or another infectious illness.
- You must complete the COVID-19 Reporting Form if you believe you have been exposed to or have tested positive for COVID-19. Find this reporting form on the TAMUCT website: <https://redcap.tamhsc.edu/surveys/?s=N38DRD4EMK> If you do contract COVID-19 and must stay home, contact the professor to see about remaining current with the course while you have to remain at home. If ill, you can contact the office of Student Success, Equity and Inclusion to see about requesting accommodations to be able to succeed in the course.
- Free COVID-19 testing will be available on campus
- The university does not require face coverings (masks). However, it is strongly recommended according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for both vaccinated and unvaccinated people. We encourage students to wear a face covering, to continue social distancing when possible, to wash their hands often, to cough and sneeze into your arm/elbow junction, to disinfect your area that needs to be touched, and to monitor your health daily. The University also strongly encourages people to get vaccinated to prevent further spread of COVID-19.

## 3. **Technology Requirements:**

This course will use the TAMUCT Instructure Canvas learning management system to deliver handouts as supplemental reading assignments and all written assignments. We strongly recommend using the latest versions of Chrome or Firefox browsers, not Internet Explorer.

## 4. **Drop Policy**

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must contact the Records Office and ask for the necessary paperwork. Professors cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The records office will give a deadline for when the form must be completed, signed, and returned. After you return the signed form to the records office and wait 24 hours, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled. If you are still enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the records office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid penalties for absences. Should you miss the deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course if you stopped attending and doing the assignments.

## 5. **Academic Integrity**

Texas A&M University - Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. TAMUCT expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Academic integrity is defined as a commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. Academic misconduct is any act that improperly affects a true and honest evaluation of a student's academic performance and includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism and improper citation of sources, using another student's work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. All academic misconduct concerns will be reported to the university's Office of Student Conduct. Ignorance of the university's standards and expectations is never an excuse to act with a lack of integrity. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your professor before taking a course of action.

## 6. **For Pregnant and/or Parenting Students:**

TAMUCT supports students who are pregnant and/or parenting. In accordance with requirements of Title IX and related guidance from the US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the Dean of Student Affairs office can assist students in seeking appropriate accommodations. Students should seek assistance as early in the semester as possible. Visit Student Affairs ([tamuct.edu/student-affairs/index.html](http://tamuct.edu/student-affairs/index.html)) or contact the Title IX Coordinator. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and gender, including pregnancy, parenting, and all related conditions. Contact the Associate Dean in Student Affairs at 254-501-5908.

## 7. **Academic Accommodations**

At Texas A&M University – Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to an education that is barrier-free. The Dept. of Access and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the University's programs, services and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations, please contact the Department of Access and Inclusion at (254) 501-5831. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such. For more information, please visit our webpage: <http://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/access-inclusion>.

## 8. **Library Services**

The university library provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 250,000 ebooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 72,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at TAMUCT are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders. Research assistance from a librarian is also available 24 hours a day through our online chat service and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance and can take place on Skype or in person at the library. Assistance can cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments. The library facility on campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, visit the webpage: <http://tamuct.libguides.com/>

## 9. **Tutoring Services**

Tutoring is available to all TAMUCT student, both on-campus and online. On-campus subjects tutored include Accounting, Advanced Math, Biology, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Suite 111. If you have a question regarding tutor schedules, need to schedule a tutoring session, are interested in becoming a tutor, or any other question, contact Academic Support Programs at 254-519-5836, visit Student Success in 212F Warrior Hall, or email [studentsuccess@tamuct.edu](mailto:studentsuccess@tamuct.edu). Chat live with a tutor 24/7 for almost any subject on your computer through tutor.com, an online tutoring platform that enables TAMUCT students to log in and receive FREE online tutoring. This tool provides tutoring in over 40 subject areas, **but it no longer offers writing support as of 8/1/19**. To access tutor.com, go to the "My Courses" tab in Blackboard.

## 10. **University Writing Center**

Located in 416 Warrior Hall, the University Writing Center is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students from 10 AM to 5 PM Monday thru Thursday. Students can arrange a one-on-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor by visiting the UWC during normal operating hours (both half-hour and hour sessions are available). Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at

any stage of the writing process. While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. By providing a practice audience for students' ideas and writing, tutors highlight the ways in which they read and interpret students' texts, offering guidance and support throughout the various stages of the writing process. In addition, students can work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs the Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all the relevant style guides (such as APA). Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proof-reading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the University Writing Center is available for help. If you have any questions about it, contact Dr. Bruce Bowles, Jr., at [bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu](mailto:bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu).

#### **11. Sexual Violence**

Sexual violence is a serious safety, social justice, and public health issue. TAMUCT offers support for anyone struggling with these issues. University faculty are mandated reporters, so if someone discloses that they were sexually assaulted (or a victim of domestic or dating violence or stalking) while a student at TAMUCT, faculty members are required to inform the Title IX office. If you want to discuss any of these issues confidentially, you can do so through Student Counseling (254-501-5955), located on the second floor of Warrior Hall (207L). It is incumbent on all of us to find ways to create environments that tell predators that we do not agree with their behaviors and to tell survivors that we will support them. Your actions matter; do not be a bystander. Be an agent of change. For additional information visit the Title IX webpage at [www.tamuct.edu/departments/compliance/titleix.php](http://www.tamuct.edu/departments/compliance/titleix.php).

#### **12. Behavioral Intervention:**

TAMUCT cares about the safety, health, and well-being of its students, faculty, staff, and community. If you are aware of individuals for whom you have a concern, those who are exhibiting concerning behaviors, or individuals causing a significant disruption to our community, please make a referral to the Behavioral Intervention Team. Referring your concern shows you care. Complete the referral online ([cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout\\_id=2](http://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout_id=2)). Anonymous referrals are accepted. Please see the BIT website ([tamuct.edu/student-affairs/bit.html](http://tamuct.edu/student-affairs/bit.html)). If a person's behavior poses an imminent threat to you or another, contact 911 or TAMUCT police at 254-501-5800.

#### **13. Copyright Notice**

Students should assume that all course material is copyrighted by the respective author(s). Reproduction of course material is prohibited without consent by the author and/or course instructor. Violation of copyright is against the law and against TAMUCT's Code of Academic Honesty. All alleged violations will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.

### **VIII. The professor teaching this class**

Dr. Rappaport has had a life-long interest in writing, starting with writing short stories and novels during childhood and adolescence, helping produce a Creative Writing Newsletter for her senior class in high school in Tehran, Iran, and continuing on through writing her PhD dissertation on how medical social work developed as a profession. Being a professional social worker for 25 years involved countless hours of writing all the types of activities that will be discussed in this class, and she quickly learned the importance all that writing played in the strength of her professional reputation. When she supervised other social workers, she was often dismayed at the poor writing skills some of them had, and she often had to do extensive proof-reading and editing of those social workers' written work before it could be finalized. In August 2000 when she came here to teach full-time in the Social Work Department, she quickly discovered that many social work students also struggle with their writing skills and that the students feel as frustrated by this as do the professors. With this elective class, Dr. Rappaport is seeking additional ways to help students improve their ability to write professionally.

Dr. Rappaport takes teaching very seriously. She wants students to enjoy this class and to feel like they learned a great deal from it. She is committed to coming to class prepared, to openly and willingly doing everything she can to help students improve their writing, and to encouraging everyone to participate actively in the discussions and writing exercises. In return, she expects students to come to class prepared, having read the day's assignment and being ready to ask any questions they have about things they did not understand in the reading. Writing exercises that are to be completed at home must be done before class or the student will not benefit as much from the class session that day. Dr. Rappaport also expects students to approach this class with a spirit of adventure and cooperation, readily agreeing to participate in the various exercises and activities to see how much these can help improve their writing. She is committed to having all assignments graded by the next class period since that is particularly crucial in this class.

## IX. COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Description of Class Activities and Reading and Other Assignments Due
Tuesday 8/24/21	Review course syllabus Discussion of why writing skills are important in social work <b>Write an essay on “Why Good Writing is Important in a Social Worker.” Finish your essay at home, and turn it in at the beginning of class in one week.</b>
Thursday 8/26/21	Review the most common errors Dr. Rappaport has to correct in students’ papers (her “pet peeves”)
Tuesday 8/31/21	Review of APA format for writing papers (in all SWK classes). Bring your copy of the APA Manual to class. <b>Turn in your draft essay on “Why Good Writing is Important in a Social Worker.” You can ask questions about it in class before you turn it in and make any final corrections you want to make before it gets turned in.</b>
Thursday 9/2/21	The importance of correct spelling Lester and Beason, Appendix A – “Homophone Misspellings and Commonly Confused Words” Lester and Beason, Appendix B – “Commonly Misspelled Words” Lester and Beason, Appendix C – “Eggcorns: Incorect Wording that Seems Correct” Kaufman & Straus, pp. 85-154, Chapter 5 – “Confusing Words and Homonyms” Receive your “Why Good Writing is Important in a Social Worker” draft essay. Work on making corrections in class. The final version of the essay is due next class for grading.
Tuesday 9/7/21	Reading: Chapter 1, Lester & Beason, Parts of Speech Reading: Kaufman & Straus, pp. 1-4, 9-25 <b>Turn in the “Why Good Writing is Important in a Social Worker” essay for grading</b>
Thursday 9/9/21	Receive graded “Why Good Writing is Important” essay. Review the kinds of errors that students made on their essays. Watch first 1:04 of “The Blind Side.” Draft of essay #1 on a topic inspired by the movie is due next class.

Tuesday 9/14/21	<p>Reading: Lester &amp; Beason, Chapter 11, Commas Reading: Kaufman &amp; Straus, pp. 32-39</p> <p><b>Turn in “The Blind Side” Essay #1 initial draft</b></p> <p>Receive Writing Corrections Exercise #1, do it at home and turn it in next class</p>
Thursday 9/16/21	<p>Reading: Lester &amp; Beason, Chapter 2, Basic Phrases</p> <p>Receive “The Blind Side” Essay #1; work on corrections in class. Finish revising the essay at home, due next class.</p> <p><b>Turn in Writing Corrections Exercise #1</b></p> <p>Receive Writing Corrections Exercise #2, do it at home and turn it in next class</p>
Tuesday 9/21/21	<p>Reading: Lester &amp; Beason, Chapter 3, Sentences and Clauses Reading: Kaufman &amp; Straus, pp. 9-10.</p> <p><b>Turn in final version of “The Blind Side” Essay #1 for grading</b></p> <p>Receive graded Writing Corrections Exercise #1; review errors in class</p> <p><b>Turn in Writing Corrections Exercise #2 for grading</b></p>
Thursday 9/23/21	<p>Receive graded Writing Corrections Exercise #2, review errors in class</p> <p>Receive graded “The Blind Side” Essay #1; review errors in class</p> <p>Watch second 1:04 of “The Blind Side.” Essay #2 draft is due next class.</p>
Tuesday 9/28/21	<p>Reading: Lester &amp; Beason, Chapter 4, Verb Forms</p> <p><b>Turn in “The Blind Side” Essay #2 initial draft</b></p> <p>Receive Writing Corrections Exercise #3 in class; complete it at home, due next class</p>
Thursday 9/30/21	<p>Reading: Lester &amp; Beason, Chapter 5, Verbals</p> <p>Receive “The Blind Side” Essay #2 draft; work on corrections in class, then complete revising it at home; due next class</p> <p><b>Turn in Writing Corrections Exercise #3 for grading</b></p>
Tuesday 10/5/21	<p>Reading: Lester &amp; Beason, Chapter 6, Writing Complete Sentences</p> <p><b>Turn in “The Blind Side” Essay #2 draft for final grading</b></p> <p>Receive Writing Corrections Exercise #3 graded, review errors in class</p> <p>Receive Writing Corrections Exercise #4, do it at home, due next class</p>
Thursday 10/7/21	<p><b>Watch first half of “The Missing.”</b> Draft of essay #1 is due next class</p> <p>Receive graded “The Blind Side” Essay #2; discuss mistakes made</p> <p><b>Turn in Writing Corrections Exercise #4 for grading</b></p>
Tuesday 10/12/21	<p>Reading: Lester &amp; Beason, Chapter 7, Subject-Verb Agreement Reading: Kaufman &amp; Straus, pp. 4-8</p> <p><b>Turn in “The Missing” Essay #1 initial draft</b></p> <p>Receive graded Writing Corrections Exercise #4</p>

Thursday 10/14/21	Reading: Lester & Beason, Chapter 8, Pronoun Problems Receive “The Missing” Essay #1 draft, work on corrections in class, finish it at home, due next class Receive Writing Corrections Exercise #5, do it at home, due next class
Tuesday 10/19/21	Reading: Lester & Beason, Chapter 9, Verb Problems <b>Turn in “The Missing” Essay #1 for final grading</b> <b>Turn in Writing Corrections Exercise #5 for grading</b> Receive Writing Corrections Exercise #6, do it at home, due next class
Thursday 10/21/21	Receive graded Writing Corrections Exercise #5; review errors made Receive graded “The Missing” Essay #1; review errors made <b>Turn in Writing Corrections Exercise #6 for grading</b> Watch the second half of “The Missing.” Draft of essay #2 is due next class
Tuesday 10/26/21	Reading: Lester & Beason, Chapter 10, Modification <b>Turn in “The Missing” Essay #2 initial draft</b> Receive graded Writing Corrections Exercise #6; review errors made
Thursday 10/28/21	Reading: Lester & Beason, Chapter 12, Apostrophes Reading: Kaufman & Straus, pp. 50-56 Receive “The Missing” Essay #2 draft, work on corrections in class, finish at home and turn in next class Receive Writing Corrections Exercise #7, work on it at home, due next class
Tuesday 11/2/21	Reading: Lester & Beason, Chapter 13, semicolons and colons Reading: Kaufman & Straus, pp. 39-43 <b>Turn in “The Missing” Essay #2 for final grading</b> <b>Turn in Writing Corrections Exercise #7 for grading</b> Receive Writing Corrections Exercise #8 to work on at home, due next class
Thursday 11/4/21	Reading: Lester & Beason, Chapter 14, Quotation Marks Reading: Straus, pp. 43-49 Receive graded “The Missing” Essay #2, review errors in class Receive graded Writing Corrections Exercise #7, review errors in class <b>Turn in Writing Corrections Exercise #8 for grading</b> Receive Writing Corrections Exercise #9 to work on at home, due next class
Tuesday 11/9/21	<b>Turn in Writing Corrections Exercise #9 for grading</b> Watch the first half of “Normal” (total movie time 1:48)
Thursday 11/11/21	<b>NO CLASS TODAY – HONORING OUR VETERANS ON VETERANS DAY</b>
Tuesday 11/16/21	Receive graded Writing Corrections Exercise #9, discuss errors made Watch the remaining half of “Normal” (total movie time 1:48); turn in draft of essay on it next class

Thursday 11/18/21	Reading: Lester & Beason, Chapter 15, Dashes, Hyphens, and Other Punctuation Lester & Beason Chapter 16, Capitalization Reading: Kaufman & Straus, pp. 56-67 and 69-77 <b>Turn in “Normal” Essay initial draft</b> Receive Writing Corrections Exercise #10 to work on at home, due next class
Tuesday 11/23/21	Reading: Lester & Beason, Chapter 17, Parallelism Receive “Normal” Essay draft, work on corrections in class, finish it at home, due next class <b>Turn in Writing Corrections Exercise #10 for grading</b>
Thursday 11/25/21	NO CLASS TODAY – ENJOY YOUR THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
Tuesday 11/30/21	Reading: Lester & Beason, Chapter 18, Grammar Etiquette for Digital Communication Reading: Kaufman & Straus, pp. 79-83, Writing Numbers <b>Turn in “Normal” Essay for final grading</b> Receive graded Writing Corrections Exercise #10, review errors in class You will receive the Writing Corrections part of the final exam today, which will be due the next class
Thursday 12/2/21	Receive “Normal” Essay graded, review errors in class <b>Turn in the Writing Corrections part of the final exam</b> Start watching the final movie in class
Tuesday 12/7/21	Finish watching the final movie in class; your essay on a topic inspired by the movie is due next class Receive the graded Writing Corrections part of the final exam
Thursday 12/9/21	Review what you have learned and anything that is still confusing about writing <b>FINAL EXAM: Your essay on the final movie is due today</b>

## X. BIBLIOGRAPHY

*The following resources were used in developing handouts for this class and/or can be used by students to provide further information on the topics covered by the course:*

Aaron, Jane E. (2012). *The Little, Brown Essential Handbook, 8<sup>th</sup> edition*. Glenview: Pearson Education.

Alter, Catherine; and Carl Adkins (2006). “Assessing Student Writing Proficiency in Graduate Schools of Social Work.” *Journal of Social Work Education*, 42 (2) Spring/Summer, 337-354.

Casson, Leslie E. (2006). *A Writer’s Handbook: Developing Writing Skills for University Students*. Broadview Press.

Goldstein, H. (1993). “Writing to be Read: The Place of the Essay in Social Work Literature.” *Families in Society*, 74, 441-446.

Good, C. Edward (2002). *A Grammar Book for You and I ... OOPS, Me! All the Grammar You need to Succeed in Life*. Sterling, VA: Capital Books.



- Harris, Robert (2003). *When Good People Write Bad Sentences: 12 Steps to Better Writing Habits*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin.
- Harris, Robert (2002). *Using Sources Effectively: Strengthening Your Writing and Avoiding Plagiarism*. Los Angeles: Pyczak Publishing.
- Heppner, P. Paul; and Mary J. Heppner (2004). *Writing and Publishing Your Thesis, Dissertation, and Research: A Guide for Students in the Helping Professions*. Belmont: Brooks/Cole.
- Lederer, Richard; and John Shore (2005). *Comma Sense: A Fundamental Guide to Punctuation*. St. Martin's Press.
- O'Conner, Patricia T. (2003). *Woe is I: The Grammarphobe's Guide to Better English in Plain English*. New York: Riverhead Books.
- Oglensky, B. D. (2008). "Record Writing and Professional Socialization in Social Work." *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences*, 3 (6), 7-14.
- Parrish, Thomas (2002). *The Grouchy Grammarian*. Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons.
- Richardson, L. (1990). *Writing Strategies: Reaching Diverse Audiences*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Stilman, Anne (1997). *Grammatically Correct: The Writer's Essential Guide to Punctuation, Spelling, Style, Usage, and Grammar*. Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books.
- Szuchman, Lenore T.; and Barbara Thomlinson (2004). *Writing with Style: APA Style for Social Work, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. Belmont: Brooks/Cole.
- Troyka, Lynn Quitman; and Douglas Hesse (2010). *Quick Access Reference for Writers, 6<sup>th</sup> edition*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.
- Tullos, Margaret (2014). *Grammar Therapy for Social Workers: A Basic Guide to Standard English, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. M & W Publishing Company.
- Weisman, Daniel; and Joseph L. Zornado (2013). *Professional Writing for Social Work Practice*. New York: Springer Publishing.

## APA CHECKLIST

The following checklist is designed to serve as a guide for you when writing papers in the Social Work Department. Use of this guide will support your success when using APA and help to prevent plagiarism. All instructors in the Social Work Department will use this checklist as a guide when grading your papers for APA policy adherence, so it is advisable that you become familiar with and apply these rules to all papers.

### A. Entire document MUST HAVE

- Times New Roman Font (preferred by the professor)
- 12 font size
- 1 inch margins on all four sides
- Double spacing after periods at the end of a sentence (except in the "Reference" page)
- Double spacing *between lines* in paragraphs (remove double spacing between paragraphs)

- Numbers 1-9 spelled out (e.g. “one”, “five”, “seven”)
- Numbers 10 and above do not have to be written out (except at the beginning of a sentence)
- Introduction of acronyms (e.g. “Supplemental Security Income (SSI)”, “SSI” may be used alone thereafter)
- Paragraphs versus bullets (unless approved by professor)
- No use of “I” (unless approved by professor due to nature of the assignment)
- No contractions (won’t, can’t, don’t), lbs, %, \$ (percent signs may be used directly after numbers)
- Complete sentences, no sentence fragments
- Indented paragraphs (tab once from margin)
- Introduction, body and conclusion (unless otherwise noted by professor)
- Cover page, abstract page, reference page (unless otherwise advised by professor)

#### B. Cover Page

- Page # (always starts with “1” at the top right) – do NOT include any words or your name with the page number. It should be the number by itself.
- Title of work (in bold and followed by an extra space), your name, Department of Social Work and the name of the university, professor’s name, due date of assignment, all centered and not in bold. This should also be double spaced.
- Title should be no more than 12 words, first letters of words are capitalized except “and”, etc.

#### C. Abstract Page

- This is page 2 (upper right corner)
- The word “Abstract” is centered, not bold at the top of the paper
- The Abstract is only 4-5 sentences (max 150-250 words)
- There is no indentation at the beginning of this paragraph
- Must be double spaced

#### D. START OF YOUR BODY

- Continue page number on every page in upper right corner
- Write the title at the very top. This should be the same one used on the cover page above your name
- The title is centered and not in bold
- All paragraphs must be indented
- Paragraphs have a minimum of 5 sentences
- Using Level Headings where appropriate (refer to your professor on when to use; see APA manual for all levels of headings: 1-5)

#### E. Reference Page

- The word “Reference” (or “References” if more than one) is centered and not bold
- The references must be alphabetized (by last name of author of work as listed on the work. DO NOT reorganize the authors in alphabetical order from the source).
- If there is more than one citation with the same author and year, put them in alphabetical order by title and make them 2021a, 2021b, 2021c, etc., as needed.
- Double space references
- Remove extra space between references
- Only single spacing after punctuation
- Remember that personal communication in-text citations are not listed on the reference page
- Remove hyperlinks from websites (a line should not appear under websites in your reference page)
- If the reference is long and continues on the next line, then you must indent the second line (this is called a “hanging indent”)
- All references MUST have an in-text citation to match (except in personal communication; only in-text citations are used).

- If the reference has an edition, it goes in parentheses and is not italicized. For example, Turner, F. J. (2017). *Social work treatment: Interlocking theoretical approaches* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Oxford University Press.

Following are explicit examples that can serve as guides for you when writing your papers.

- Boston University School of Social Work:  
<http://www.bu.edu/ssw/files/2010/10/BUSSW-style-guide-6th-ed-April-13.pdf>
- Sample APA Paper Owl Purdue:  
[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/media/pdf/20090212013008\\_560.pdf](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/media/pdf/20090212013008_560.pdf)
- Son of Citation Machine Citing Support:  
<http://citationmachine.net/index2.php?reqstyleid=2&newstyle=2&stylebox=2>

## EXAMPLES OF APA ERRORS

- ❖ Missing comma after name and before year
  - Incorrect: (Dobson & Pewter 2013)
  - Correct: (Dobson & Pewter, 2013)
- ❖ Missing parenthesis
  - Incorrect: Many children in America are diagnosed with ADHD Dobson & Pewter, 2013.
  - Correct: Many children in America are diagnosed with ADHD (Dobson & Pewter, 2013).
- ❖ Using *and* instead of & in a citation
  - Incorrect (Dobson and Pewter, 2013)
  - Correct: (Dobson & Pewter, 2013)
- ❖ Using “pp.” instead of “p.” to denote page.
  - Incorrect: “Many children in America are diagnosed with ADHD” (Dobson & Pewter, 2013, pp. 5).
  - Correct: “Many children in America are diagnosed with ADHD” (Dobson & Pewter, 2013, p. 5).
- ❖ Missing punctuation at the end of sentences when citing.
  - Incorrect: Many children in America are diagnosed with ADHD. (Dobson & Pewter, 2013)
  - Correct: Many children in America are diagnosed with ADHD (Dobson & Pewter, 2013).

### Correct Citation Example:

*In-Text:* (Dobson & Pewter, 2013)

Reference Page: Dobson, J. H. & Pewter, W. P. (2013). Understanding writing for bachelor social work students. *Journal of American Health, 4*, 24-29.

- ❖ Using quotation marks without page number/paragraph information.
  - Incorrect: “Many children in America are diagnosed with ADHD” (Dobson & Pewter, 2013).
  - Correct: “Many children in America are diagnosed with ADHD” (Dobson & Pewter, 2013, p. 5).
- ❖ Example of how to cite a class handout: (Be sure to use the hanging indent on your paper)
  - Rappaport, C. (2021). *The muscular system*. [Class handout]. SOWK 3305: Biological Foundations of Social Work Practice. Social Work Department, Texas A&M University-Central Texas: Killeen, TX.

- ❖ Example of how to cite a movie: (Be sure to use the hanging indent on your paper)
  - Cassavetes, N. (Director). (2002). *John Q.* [Motion picture]. New Line Cinema; Burg/Koules Productions; Evolution Entertainment.
  - To obtain information for a movie citation, look up the movie on the internet and select the IMDb listing. Get the name of the director and the year at the beginning of the entry. Click on Full Cast and Crew, then on Company Credits to list the production companies (ignore the list of distributors, but be sure to list all of the production companies).

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### Checklist to avoid some common errors using APA in papers

Dr. Claudia Rappaport

\_\_\_\_\_ **The title on the front page is repeated on the first page of the text of the paper, and both titles are exactly the same wording.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Entire paper in Times New Roman 12 font. You can't change font in title, on the front page, etc., to be decorative**

\_\_\_\_\_ **The front page can ONLY contain the page number, the title of the paper, your name, Department of Social Work and the name of the university, professor's name, and due date of assignment. Nothing else!!**

\_\_\_\_\_ **No contractions (isn't) are used anywhere in the paper unless quoting someone.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **There is no extra line space between paragraphs (to achieve this, go to page layout, then go to spacing and make sure that the spacing is set to 0").**

\_\_\_\_\_ **All paraphrasing from another source has an in-text citation, and the format would be like this: (Rappaport, 2021). If exact words are used from the source, then you also use quote marks and the page number is included in the in-text citation (the format would be: Rappaport, 2021, p. 2). If you are using more than one Rappaport handout for citations, you will have to use Rappaport 2021a, Rappaport 2021b, etc., and the letters will be assigned based on the titles of the handouts being in alphabetical order on your reference page.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **When writing a paper about an interview of a person, you use personal communication citations within the text of the paper. After every paragraph in which you summarize information given in the interview, your in-text citation will appear like this: (C. Rappaport, personal communication, August 1, 2021). THERE IS NO REFERENCE PAGE ENTRY FOR PERSONAL COMMUNICATION CITATIONS.**

### USES OF COMMAS AND OTHER COMMON PUNCTUATION/GRAMMAR ERRORS

The following are some common uses of commas:

**Putting two sentences together, joined by *and*, *but*, or another linking word. Both parts have to have both a subject and a verb, or you don't need a comma.**

- Example: Martha went to the Laundromat, and she discovered that she forgot her money at home.
- Does NOT need a comma: Martha went to the Laundromat and discovered that she forgot her money at home.
- Note: Two sentences can also be joined together by a semicolon without a connecting word.

- Example: Martha went to the Laundromat; she discovered that she forgot her money at home.
- Example: I thought this was going to be complicated, but I was surprised; they listened and paid attention.
- **Note: Two sentences can also be joined together by a semicolon and a connecting word such as *however*, followed by a comma.**
- Example: Martha went to the Laundromat; however, she discovered that she forgot her money at home and had to make a return trip.

**Writing a list of objects, when no item of the list requires a comma within the item. If one item requires a comma, then the items have to be separated with semicolons instead of commas.**

- Example: Martha went to the store and bought apples, plums, oranges, and nectarines to make a fruit salad.
- Need to use semicolons instead: Martha went to the store and bought golden, delicious apples; purple, juicy plums; plump, navel oranges; and nectarines to make a fruit salad.

**Note: The above example with semicolons also illustrates another use of commas: When you are using more than one adjective to describe a noun (such as golden, delicious apples), the two adjectives need to be separated with a comma.**

**Separating the name of a city and the state in which it is located.**

- Example: I was born in San Antonio, Texas, in the year 1950.

**Separating parts of a date in a sentence.**

- Example: On August 1, 2010, my daughter was born.

**Separating a person's name and their relationship to another person, the name of a book and its author, etc.**

- Example: Her father, Burton Rappaport, was born in New York City in 1921.
- Example: Burton Rappaport, the father of Claudia Rappaport, was born in New York City in 1921.
- Example: Harper Lee's novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, is required reading in many schools.

**Separating a prepositional phrase at the beginning of a sentence from the remainder of the sentence.**

- Example: In case of a fire, you need to move quickly to the nearest exit.
  - **Note another grammar rule: Do not put the adverb in between *to* and *move* (i.e., do not say "you need to quickly move to the nearest exit"). Doing this is referred to as a split infinitive. Just remember Shakespeare: It is "To be or not to be," not "To be or to not be."**
- Example: From one social worker to another, you need to be on the lookout for signs of social work burnout.
- Example: During the depression of the 1930's, food was scarce and unemployment rates were high.

- Question: Why do you not need a comma after scarce?
- Example: If you are not ready to calm down, I want you to go to your bedroom and think about why your behavior has not been appropriate.
- Example: Because she got paid a lot less this week, she was not able to give the landlord her rent.
- **Note: If the prepositional phrase is in the middle of the sentence, it does not require commas.**
  - Example: The hot air in the classroom made it very difficult to study.
  - Example: She couldn't give the landlord her rent because she got paid a lot less this week.

**After using a single word to catch your attention at the beginning of a sentence; most commonly this will be done in conversation, not in formal writing.**

- Example: “Well,” she said, “I guess I need to go ahead and start fixing dinner.”
  - **Note another rule of grammar: Punctuation marks (commas, periods, exclamation points, question marks) always go INSIDE the quotation marks.**
- Example: Gosh, it is really hot today.
- Example: Hello, my name is Dr. Rappaport.
- Example: No, you can't have a cookie right now.
- Example: Yes, I heard what you said.
- Example: Unfortunately, one of the social work professors has decided to leave Tarleton.
- Example: However, you need to remember that I expect you to study hard for my tests.
- Example: John, did you have a question you wanted to ask?

**To add additional details to clarify a sentence; if you removed those additional details, you would still have a complete sentence.**

- Example: When I started college, something I had always dreamed of doing, I decided to major in social work.
- You could remove the phrase in the middle and still have a complete sentence: When I started college, I decided to major in social work. Why do you still need a comma there?

**When getting ready to quote a sentence – but only if you are really quoting the person's exact words, not paraphrasing.**

- Example: I wasn't saying, “How could you?” Rather, I wanted to know, “What were you thinking when you did that?”
- Example: Dr. Rappaport always said, “Be careful of using Spell Check as your only type of proof-reading on papers.”
- Example of NOT using quotation marks: Dr. Rappaport always told us to be careful of using Spell Check as our only type of proof-reading on papers.

**Before adding a phrase starting with *which* or *whose* to add more details to the sentence.**

- Example: A major strength of the agency is the fact that each social worker uses a different approach, which allows them to complement each other's skills.

- Example: He is a millionaire now, which only goes to show how much a person can accomplish if he really sets his mind to it.
- Example: The crowd, whose patience had worn thin, was threatening to tear down the sign and instigate a riot.
- Example: The building, whose architect had won a national award, was one of the most popular tourist attractions in the city.

**To separate out parenthetical words from the rest of the sentence.**

- Example: Expensive items, however, will not be included in the auction.
- Example: Expensive items, of course, will not be included in the auction.
- Example: Expensive items, unfortunately, will not be included in the auction.
- Example: Expensive items, therefore, will not be included in the auction.

**Before a word like *also* or *too* or *as well* at the end of a sentence.**

- Example: We should plan to have another fundraiser before the end of the month, also.
- Example: He's quite good looking, too.

**Do not use a comma if the additional words identify the subject word and are not additional information.**

- The company rewards employees who work hard. (Do not put a comma if what you mean is that the company **ONLY** rewards employees who work hard. If **ALL** employees work hard and get rewarded, then put a comma: The company rewards its employees, who all work hard.)

**You usually do NOT use a comma before "because."**

- Example: She was deeply ashamed because she was the only woman who failed the exam.

**You often do not need to use a comma after an introductory phrase that designates when something occurred.**

- Example: In five minutes we are leaving for school.

## **OTHER COMMON WRITING ERRORS**

**Capitalizing words that do not need capitals**

- Capital letters are used for proper nouns, people's names, names of cities and states, etc. They are often used when they are not needed. For example:
  - I am a student in the Social Work Department at Tarleton State University-Central Texas. It is correct to capitalize social work here because it is in the name of a Department.
  - I want to be a social worker. You do not capitalize it here because it is not a proper noun.
  - My biggest supporter is Mother. You need to capitalize mother here because you are using it as a person's name.
  - I live with my mother and my father. You do not capitalize them here because you are not using them as names.
  - I graduated from Alamo Heights High School. You capitalize high school here because it is the name of a specific high school.

- I graduated from high school. You do not capitalize it here because it is not a proper noun. **Also note that you need the word “from”. I graduated high school is slang without the word from.**

**Confusing different forms of words that sound the same.**

- **Where:** I asked him where he was born.
- **Were:** There were 25 questions on the test.
- **Wear:** I asked him what he was going to wear to the interview.
  
- **Their:** These parents really love their children.
- **There:** There are too many students in this class.
- **They’re:** This is the contraction for “they are.” **Note:** You usually do not use contractions in formal written work.

**Two different forms for possessives:**

- **This is my parent’s house.** Use the apostrophe before the s only if it is **ONE** parent’s house. **Both parents do not live in the house, or you only have one parent.**
- **This is my parents’ house.** Use the apostrophe after the s if it is **BOTH** parents’ house. **Both parents live in the house.**
- **Parents are very important people.** You do not use any apostrophe because you are simply making a noun plural. **Never use an apostrophe unless you are making a noun a possessive word (meaning it belongs to someone).**