



**Master of Science
in Dementia and Aging Studies**

**Handbook for Graduate Studies
2020-2021**

MSDA Graduate Coordinator: Dr. Kyong Hee Chee

Director of Graduate Programs in Sociology: Dr. David Dietrich

Sociology Department Chair: Dr. Toni Watt

Graduate Programs Administrator: Lindy Warner

I. INTRODUCTION

The mission of M.S. in Dementia and Aging Studies is to educate from a global, interdisciplinary, and human rights perspective, in order to create compassion and understanding for persons with dementia and for elders. We will accomplish this mission by preparing students for dementia and aging-related careers in teaching, advocacy, research, and leadership, so as to empower caregivers and foster autonomy for persons with dementia and for elders.

The standards set forth in this Handbook represent the requirements for the completion of the Master of Science with a Major in Dementia and Aging Studies (MSDA). New graduate students are expected to familiarize themselves with the standards for the degree they have chosen and be prepared to meet each requirement as they progress through the program. Policies in the handbook can change. Students should read the most recent version of the handbook and the Graduate Catalog of Texas State University.

This interdisciplinary, on-line master's degree provides knowledge about dementia, including issues related to the care of dementia patients, and other topics related to aging and the life course. It is housed in the Department of Sociology, and (depending on the track selected by the student) includes courses from Communication Disorders, Health Administration, Social Work, Sociology, and Philosophy. The program has three tracks (Dementia and Long-Term Care; Practitioner; and Research) each offering different pathways for students upon graduation. The **Dementia and Long-Term Care Track** provides a social model of care approach to students who want to work in extended living environments when they graduate. The **Practitioner track** offers an in-depth education involving coursework from several departments and allows students to work in any facility or organization whose concern is the health and well-being of the individuals affected by dementia. The **Research track** offers master's- level research courses, as well as core coursework, to prepare students for conducting research and/or applying to doctoral programs in Gerontology, Sociology, Dementia Studies, or related fields.

II. ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM

Applicants should refer to the Graduate College webpages (<http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/>) for information on application requirements.

III. DEGREE OUTLINE

Upon acceptance to the program, a degree outline/audit will be prepared by the Graduate College. The degree outline indicates the hours of required graduate courses in the degree and elective graduate courses.

IV. GRADUATE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The MSDA offers three different tracks, depending on students' career goals. The three tracks share 9 hours of core courses that emphasize the social model of care. Students can change tracks once admitted. However, the sooner the student changes the better. Contact the MSDA Graduate Coordinator in sociology for permission to change tracks after being admitted.

THREE MSDA TRACKS

1) **The Long-Term Care Track** is designed for students who also want cutting-edge knowledge about dementia and a master's degree. A student in this track may be interested in certification as a nursing home administrator. The LTC track requires a minimum of 36 hours of graduate coursework. This track is not available to out-of-state or international students because of the required internship in Texas. The internship may be completed anywhere in Texas. For requirements, see <http://mycatalog.txstate.edu/graduate/liberal-arts/sociology/dementia-aging-studies-dementiaandlongtermcare-ms/#requirementstext>.

Students in the long-term care track must contact Professor Todd Mackenzie during their first semester of the program about the LTCA internship. Contact Professor Mackenzie, tm25@txstate.edu, about the application process and timeline. In order to begin the internship, students must have completed two of the LTCA courses before signing up. Then, they must complete the other three LTCA courses. Out-of-state and international students are not permitted to take LTCA 5681.

Refer to the website of the School of Health Administration (<https://www.health.txstate.edu/ha/>). Long term care is a rapidly growing field with increasing demand for licensed administrators. All questions regarding licensure and State exam requirements should be directed to the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) at 512-438-2015 or www.dads.state.tx.us. DADS requires people who want to apply for a LTC license complete a 1,000 hour administrator-in-training (AIT) internship with a DADS-approved preceptor in a licensed nursing home with a minimum of 60 beds before you take the licensing exam. The School of Health Administration supervises the internship. It typically takes students 2-3 semesters to fulfill the 1,000 hours required by DADS.

If a student is currently enrolled in the LTCA certificate program in Health Professions and wants to apply to the MSDA, he or she can do so. However, the student should drop the certificate program once he or she is accepted into the MSDA.

2) **The Practitioner Track** contains a curricular offering for students whose interests are in careers related to dementia and aging, but prefer a wider variety of elective courses related to dementia and aging issues, rather than long-term care. A student in this track may be interested in roles such as health educator, patient advocate, or direct care.

For requirements, see <http://mycatalog.txstate.edu/graduate/liberal-arts/sociology/dementia-aging-studies-practitioner-ms/#requirementstext>.

3) **The Research Track** focuses on research skills and is the track for students who want to pursue an academic doctorate in gerontology or aging, or conduct research for an agency or organization. For requirements, see <http://mycatalog.txstate.edu/graduate/liberal-arts/sociology/dementia-aging-studies-research-ms/#requirementstext>.

Research Track: Thesis

A. EXPECTATIONS

Expectations for completed theses are higher than expectations in other graduate classes. When completing theses, students will receive suggestions, recommendations, and criticism about their writing and ideas. They will continue to submit revisions until those revisions meet the standards of the Department and the Graduate College. Committee chairs may require a week or more to read and make suggestions on each draft. Drafts submitted to the chair must be proofread carefully; students should not submit rough drafts to the chair, nor should students expect more than one complete edit from the thesis chair. Use of the American Sociological Association Style Guide (current edition) for citation and reference format is required by the Department of Sociology. Students cannot defend their thesis until it meets Department and the Graduate College requirements and standards, and the committee approves the report.

Theses require that students interact with many groups in order to achieve their goals and objectives. Students are expected to be professional, civil, and mature in their interactions with faculty, staff, and students, and, when applicable, respondents. Successful completion of the thesis is the student's responsibility. Students must identify and meet all deadlines and administrative work (e.g., signatures needed) related to the project and the defense. Refer to information on the MSDA Canvas site and the Graduate College website.

Students in the research track must complete and defend their thesis in their final semester. Students have the option of an in-person thesis defense, or an online defense. Students opting for an online defense have two options: They may choose a synchronous Skype, video conference, or conference call with their committee members, or they may record a presentation of their thesis findings, which shall be followed by questions from the committee. The student will have one week to respond to the committee's questions in writing by sending answers to the thesis committee chair and committee members. The committee will evaluate the answers as exceeding expectations, meeting expectations, or failing to meet expectations. If the answers do not meet expectations, students must consult readings and re-write the answer to the question(s) that do not meet expectations.

B. SELECTION OF THE THESIS COMMITTEE

To begin the thesis process, each student should consult with the MSDA Graduate Coordinator before selecting a committee chair. The student should have ideas about his or her topic and an appropriate member of the graduate faculty to serve as the committee chair. In general, the choice of committee chairperson is determined by the faculty member's interest in the subject matter proposed by the student. After a discussion with the MSDA Graduate Coordinator, the student may approach a faculty member to a request to chair the committee; if the faculty member agrees to do so, he or she must provide written notification of that willingness to act as the thesis chair before the student will be permitted to enroll in Sociology 5398A or 5399A. Once a member of the graduate faculty in the Department has agreed to serve as the thesis chair, he or she will help the student select a committee to direct the thesis. Students should plan to meet with their chairs to discuss expectations and progress on the proposal. A student should have the approval of the chairperson before consulting other faculty members to serve on the committee.

The thesis committee consists of the committee chair and faculty member from sociology and one faculty member from outside the department. The chair should be someone whose area of specialization is related to the thesis topic, if possible. Students can find areas of specialization on the department homepage and ask faculty about their other areas. The chair can provide possible recommendations for the other committee members.

C. THESIS GUIDELINES

The thesis is a major empirical research project on aging. Students choose thesis topics based on their areas of interest in dementia and aging studies and by identifying a significant empirical gap in the academic literature. The thesis must reflect a graduate level understanding of the topic as well as the ability to communicate that understanding on paper. For details and deadlines, refer to the Graduate College webpage: <http://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/students/thesis-dissertation.html>

Students must consult with their committee chair regarding human subjects review and the IRB application process. Most theses require IRB review for approval or exemption. Students must include the time required for IRB application review in their planning. They must ask their thesis committee chair to read and approve all documents required for the IRB application. Students should NOT send anything to the IRB without prior approval from the thesis committee chair. Students must complete the online CITI Program for “Social and Behavioral Students” before they can submit applications to the IRB for approval. All students should complete the CITI program during their first semester, if possible. Check the Texas State Human Subjects webpage for updates: <http://www.txstate.edu/research/orc/IRB-Resources.html>.

Students must write a **thesis proposal**. The proposal describes the proposed thesis study in detail. Because this document is a *proposal*, the project may change as a result of the feedback of the chair and committee. The committee chair will determine whether the project is appropriate for a master’s thesis. Thesis proposals typically include the following items:

1. An introduction and rationale: Introduce the topic and explain why it is important to study. What is the significance of the study in aging, dementia, and/or gerontology? What is the scholarly rationale for conducting this research? Students should not discuss why the topic is important to *them*; instead, they shall emphasize the scholarly relevance.
2. A literature review: What do scholars already know about this topic? This section summarizes most of the relevant previous studies, as they relate to the topic. It should define all central concepts and identify the gap in the literature. It should discuss how the proposed study fills that gap.
3. Theoretical framework(s): This section should describe the theoretical background of the main question. It will discuss the main theories that are relevant to the study. (Note: This document is a proposal; the theories employed in the completed thesis might change.)
4. A description of research questions or hypotheses and rationale.

5. A proposed methodology: Students must apply what have learned in methods courses to their study design. This section must discuss the proposed method and why this method is appropriate for the research questions or hypotheses. It must describe the proposed sample, sampling procedure, and how you will get access to your sample. It must indicate whether the project is under review at the IRB. Quantitative studies shall include a description of independent and dependent variables and how they will be operationalized. If applicable, the survey questionnaire will be part of the appendix. Qualitative studies shall include an explicit discussion of respondents or sites, and the interview guide, if applicable.

6. A proposed and realistic timeline

7. A bibliography

8. Appendices (if applicable):

a. Copy of IRB approval or exemption, when appropriate; most theses must have IRB approval or receive an IRB exemption. Students should consult with their committee chair about the IRB process.

b. Interview guide, survey instrument, etc.

c. Consent form

After the committee chair approves the proposal, the student must

1. Submit the proposal to the committee members;

2. Print, sign and ask the committee chair and committee members to sign the thesis proposal form;

3. Submit the proposal, signed thesis proposal form, and IRB approval or exemption memo to the Director of Graduate Programs in Sociology. The form is available on the Graduate College site. If approved, the graduate director will forward the thesis and the proposal form to the department chair for his or her signature. The office staff will forward the signed and completed form and proposal to the Dean of the Graduate College for approval.

D. THESIS: THE DEFENSE AND COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

The thesis should serve as a “showcase” for the student's abilities and knowledge in the field of aging and dementia studies. The organization of the paper must conform to the general format for a graduate thesis outlined in the current edition of the *Graduate Thesis Handbook*. Citations must follow the ASA format. If the chair approves the thesis report, then the student may send the thesis to the committee and set up the defense. The student should prepare a PowerPoint presentation outlining the major ideas. The defense is considered part of the comprehensive exam. The committee and other faculty present will ask questions about the thesis topic, specifically, and aging and dementia studies, generally. Refer to more specific guidelines on Canvas about the defense and comprehensive exam.

During the thesis defense, the comprehensive oral exam will cover the thesis report, as well as the student's mastery of studies in dementia and aging. The members of the student's thesis committee will constitute the final oral examination committee. They will be the only faculty members to decide whether the student passes the examination. One bound copy of the thesis must be submitted to the chairperson of the thesis committee. The student is encouraged to retain a final copy of their thesis for personal use. Students should submit their thesis to the Graduate College electronically.

Before the defense, students must

- 1) Contact the MSDA Graduate Coordinator with the date, title, abstract, and committee member names.
- 2) Send copies of the thesis to the committee and confirm the date, time, and place of the defense. Give the completed and polished thesis to the committee at least one week before the defense date.
- 3) Check Graduate College deadlines and plan carefully.
- 4) E-mail the thesis title, abstract, and names of committee members, to the MSDA Graduate Coordinator one week prior to the scheduled defense date.
- 5) Study previous methods, theory, and other class notes in order to prepare for comprehensive exam questions during the defense.

After the defense, students must

- 1) Complete revisions and send the final document to the committee chair for his or her final approval.
- 2) Confirm the correct format. The thesis must follow the correct Graduate College format exactly. Thesis chairs and sociology department office staff *will not* help with these details because confirming format, etc. are the student's responsibility.
- 3) Provide a bound copy for the committee chair.
- 4) Complete the online exit interview for the sociology department.
- 5) Celebrate this fine accomplishment.

E. APPEAL PROCESS AFTER THESIS DEFENSE

Should a student take issue with the committee's decision on the comprehensive exam, the following process should be employed to appeal that decision.

1. The student must notify the members of the committee in writing within 10 working days of the decision that the student requests the committee to reconsider its decision. The student should identify specific points or issues to be reconsidered by the committee.
2. The committee has 10 working days after receiving the request to respond to the student in writing.

3. If no satisfactory conclusion can be reached at this level, the student may appeal in writing to the Director of Graduate Programs in Sociology, who will consult with the MSDA Faculty Advisory Council.
4. The DGPS has 5 working days after receiving the request to respond to the student in writing.

LONG TERM CARE AND PRACTITIONER TRACKS: COMPREHENSIVE EXAM AND PRESENTATION

All students must successfully complete comprehensive exams in order to graduate. *IT IS STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITY* to download and save all syllabi, readings, etc. from their MSDA courses. Per university policies, course Canvas sites close and are unavailable to students soon after the course is over. Students in the research track will take their comprehensive exams during their thesis defense question and answer session. Students in the long term care and practitioner tracks will complete written comprehensive exams and submit a required presentation.

GC 5100: Students who have ONLY comprehensive exams to complete and who have completed all coursework (i.e., are taking only comprehensive exams in a semester without taking any other courses) will be required to take a one-hour comprehensive exam course, GC 5100. This is not a course that meets and it does not affect GPA; it simply allows students to access campus resources during their final semester. Because the course is one-hour, it will not be eligible for financial aid. Students in this situation will have to pay out of pocket for the one-hour course. Hence, if possible, we recommend that students complete their comp exams during their last semester of coursework. Contact the MSDA Graduate Coordinator and Lindy Warner in order to register for GC 5100.

In order to schedule and complete written comprehensive exams, students in the Long-term care and practitioner tracks) must contact the MSDA Graduate Coordinator by the second Friday of the semester in which they want to complete exams.

Committee: Students will choose a committee of three faculty members, subject to approval of the MSDA Graduate Coordinator, Dr. Kyong Hee Chee. Students should send a list of potential committee members to the MSDA Coordinator by the second Friday in the semester in which they plan to take comprehensive exams. Dr. Chee will then contact those potential committee members to see whether they are available to serve on the committee. A sociology faculty member will chair the committee. The other two members can be from the sociology department, and/or a Texas State graduate faculty member from whom the student has taken a MSDA class (including Social Work, Long Term Care, Philosophy and/or Communication Disorders) or who teaches and/or conducts research on aging, dementia, and/or gerontology.

Written comprehensive exam: The written take-home exam typically consists of 4-5 questions. The exam will assess students' understanding and application of interdisciplinary theories and empirical studies on dementia and aging. Students are permitted to use their notes and reading materials from their coursework in order to complete this exam. The MSDA Graduate Coordinator will send the exam questions to the student once the exam date has been finalized. The presentation must be complete, recorded, and uploaded to the MSDA Comprehensive Exam Canvas site within two days of sending written answers. The answers and presentation must be uploaded at least three weeks **before the Comprehensive Examination Paperwork deadline** posted on the Graduate College website. The written exam must be completed and turned in **before** the student records and uploads the presentation.

You have 7 days from the date that the MSDA Coordinator sends you the comprehensive exam questions to complete the answers and post the answers in the folder with your name on the MSDA Comprehensive Exam Canvas site. You must use your MSDA course material to answer these questions. Each answer should be approximately 6-8 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font, and written in essay format (complete sentences, organized into paragraphs, etc.). The more examples from readings, the stronger your answer (although paraphrase as much as possible; only 1-2 direct quotes per page). Incorporate as much evidence from your course readings as you can. The questions allow you to show your mastery of all the material you have covered during your degree. **Please be sure to submit all answers to your comprehensive exam in one document when you upload them to the MSDA Comprehensive Exam Canvas site via the Assignments designated for you.** For example, if you are required to answer four questions, you should upload ONE document with answers to all four questions, **NOT** four separate documents. Submit your proofread, polished, and complete answers (answers will be reviewed via *Turn It In*). Upload your presentation separately to the Assignments on Canvas. The comprehensive exam committee will contact the student with their assessment of the exam 7-8 days after the students has submitted the exam answers and presentation.

Citation guidelines, avoiding plagiarism, and academic (dis)honesty: You can refer to your course syllabi readings and also use additional MSDA academic material for your answers. Do not use websites, Wikipedia, dictionaries or encyclopedias in your answers. Cite only academic books, articles, and book chapters. Cite as much as possible and draw on **all** of your MSDA coursework (Sociology, Long Term Care Administration, Philosophy, Social Work, and/or Communication Disorders). Include a bibliography. You should cite using one format throughout (ASA, APA, MLA, or Chicago Style). Indicate the citation format you are using on the title page of your answers. This is an open book, open notes exam, but you must not collaborate with current or former classmates. You must work independently. You must not discuss your exam or share notes or outlines or any sort with others in the program. Finally, you are not permitted to share exam questions with current or former students. Academic dishonesty refers to a variety of transgressions such as cheating on a test to committing plagiarism for a written assignment. Faculty at Texas State University assume that it is the responsibility of each student to know what constitutes academic dishonesty. University statements regarding academic dishonesty can be found in the Texas State Handbook, the University PPS, and on the MSDA Canvas site. In general: **when in doubt, cite. If it's not your idea, you must cite it.** If you paraphrase an idea, you must cite the author. If you take a direct quote (three consecutive words or more) from a source, you must place direct quotes around the quote, provide a page number (if applicable), and cite the author. Be very careful about taking information from authors' literature reviews. If you find yourself thinking, "I wonder whether this is academic dishonesty," then it probably is. *Unintentional plagiarism has the same consequences as intentional plagiarism.* Students often engage in the former, so the general guideline (when in doubt, cite) is useful to follow. Read the handouts on the graduate student MSDA Canvas site about plagiarism. Also refer to the following site: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>.

Presentation: Students in the Long-term Care and Practitioner Tracks must also complete a presentation (about 15-20 minutes), which they will record for their faculty committee to evaluate. The presentation must discuss the student's career plans and how the MSDA coursework has aided the student with his or her career plans. It must demonstrate what the student has learned in MSDA courses that has helped or will help the student's career. It must also incorporate important theories and studies from Sociology, Long Term Care, Philosophy, Social Work, and/or Communication Disorders (at least two of those fields). The presentation must incorporate the application of the research and theories in terms of career, policy and practice (application) to the lives of elders and caregivers. The presentation must be complete, recorded, and separately uploaded to the MSDA Comprehensive Exam Canvas site via the Assignments that has your name, **within two days** of submitting the written answers.

You may post your audiovisual presentation on www.youtube.com. If you would like to keep your information restricted to your committee, be sure to select **Unlisted** as your privacy setting. Add the link to your presentation in a Word document before uploading it to the Assignments in the MSDA Comprehensive Exam Canvas site. You may choose to upload your pre-recorded PowerPoint presentation instead. Use 10-15 PowerPoint slides to give a formal, audiovisual presentation for approximately 15-20 minutes.

Specific advice:

- 1) Use 10-15 PowerPoint slides for the presentation.
- 2) Be careful not to put too much information on each slide.
- 3) Limit the use of photos or pictures.
- 4) Organize the slides in a logical order.
- 5) Start with an introduction.
- 6) Try not to read the slides.
- 7) Do not rush, but do not go over time.
- 8) Your first PowerPoint slide should list your name and the semester in which you are defending.
- 9) Additional advice = Do not rush. Use complete sentences. Avoid "like," "um," "kind of," "you know," etc. Maintain good eye contact. Make sure the presentation can be heard easily. No gum, etc.

Evaluation of Comprehensive Exam Answers: A committee of graduate faculty will evaluate content, insight, correct application of course material, empirical evidence, and citations/sources to determine whether the answers pass or fail. The committee will also examine the answers to ensure that they adhere to our University's Honor Code (see <http://www.txstate.edu/honorcodecouncil/>). If a student appears to have violated the Honor Code, it is up to the discretion of the student's committee to decide on the extent of the violation and whether to report the student to the university Honor Code Council for a violation or violations. If a student fails an answer or answers, he or she will be asked by the comprehensive exam committee chair to consult readings, re-write and re-submit answers to *the committee chair or via Canvas (consult with the chair about his or her preferences)* within 7 days of receiving the committee's evaluation. The committee will then evaluate the student's revision. If a student does not pass the second attempt, then he or she will not be able to graduate in that particular semester. He or she will have to reapply for graduation and will be required to return for the next long semester (fall or spring) after studying for comprehensive exams and take comprehensive exams in one or more areas during that subsequent long semester. The committee will provide the students with suggestions for improvement.

The committee can also request that students take additional course work, complete individual directed readings, clinical studies or reviews, complete individual research in specified areas, and/or other assignments that would be appropriate for assisting the student. A new faculty committee will then evaluate the student's third attempt at answering the comprehensive exam questions successfully.

If the student fails the third attempt, then he or she will not be able to graduate with the MSDA. If he or she is dissatisfied with the decision of the committee at this point, then the student can submit a written appeal to the Director of Graduate Programs in Sociology, who will consult with the MSDA Faculty Council about the next course of action.

EVALUATION RUBRIC

The student's committee will utilize this rubric in order to evaluate whether the student passes, fails, and/or needs to rewrite one or more questions. Students should refer to the MSDA Canvas site and MSDA Handbook for specific guidelines on comprehensive exams. Failing in the category of theories in Question 1 or the category of key literature in Questions 2, 3, and/or 4 results in a fail in that particular question. A fail requires a rewrite within one week of receiving feedback from the committee chair.

QUESTION 1: Theories

Question 1	Pass (earns the equivalent of 70% or above)	Fail (earns the equivalent of 69% or below)	Pass/fail
Theories, perspectives, and concepts	Identifies three appropriate and relevant theories, perspectives, and/or concepts in particular fields. Discusses theories, perspectives, and/or concepts with high aptitude.	Did not identify appropriate and relevant theories, perspectives and/or concepts. Some discussions are inaccurate or limited.	
Key literature(s)	Identifies relevant scholarly literature in particular fields. Review of the literature is thorough.	Did not identify relevant scholarly literature in one or more disciplines. Relies on only one or two sources (chapters or articles).	
Technical Aspects: Grammar, organization, citations	Very few grammatical errors and/or misspellings. All or most paragraphs are organized. Uses a consistent and correct citation format (e.g. APA, ASA). Source material is used accurately.	Several grammatical errors and/or misspellings. Several paragraphs are disorganized. Unclear or inconsistent citation format. Several incorrect or missing citations.	
Overall accuracy and analysis	The answer is accurate, logical, complete, and synthesized.	Several inaccurate sentences. Incomplete ideas. Answers are not analytical.	

QUESTION 2: Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Question 2	Pass (earns the equivalent of 70% or above)	Fail (earns the equivalent of 69% or below)	Pass/fail
Key literature(s)	Identifies relevant scholarly literature in at least two fields. Review of the literature is thorough.	Did not identify relevant scholarly literature in two or more disciplines. Relies on only one or two sources (chapters or articles).	
Technical Aspects: Grammar, organization, citations	Very few grammatical errors and/or misspellings. All or most paragraphs are organized. Uses a consistent and correct citation format (e.g. APA, ASA). Source material is used accurately.	Several grammatical errors and/or misspellings. Several paragraphs are disorganized. Unclear or inconsistent citation format. Several incorrect or missing citations.	
Overall accuracy and analysis	The answer is accurate, logical, complete, and synthesized.	Several inaccurate sentences. Incomplete ideas. Answers are not analytical.	

QUESTION 3: Caregiving

Question 3	Pass (earns the equivalent of 70% or above)	Fail (earns the equivalent of 69% or below)	Pass/fail
Key literature(s)	Identifies relevant scholarly literature in particular fields. Review of the literature is thorough.	Did not identify relevant scholarly literature in one or more disciplines. Relies on only one or two sources (chapters or articles).	
Technical Aspects: Grammar, organization, citations	Very few grammatical errors and/or misspellings. All or most paragraphs are organized. Uses a consistent and correct citation format (e.g. APA, ASA). Source material is used accurately.	Several grammatical errors and/or misspellings. Several paragraphs are disorganized. Unclear or inconsistent citation format. Several incorrect or missing citations.	
Overall accuracy and analysis	The answer is accurate, logical, complete, and synthesized.	Several inaccurate sentences. Incomplete ideas. Answers are not analytical.	

QUESTION 4: Long term care

Question 4	Pass (earns the equivalent of 70% or above)	Fail (earns the equivalent of 69% or below)	Pass/fail
Key literature(s)	Identifies relevant scholarly literature in particular fields. Review of the literature is thorough.	Did not identify relevant scholarly literature in one or more disciplines. Relies on only one or two sources (chapters or articles).	
Technical Aspects: Grammar, organization, citations	Very few grammatical errors and/or misspellings. All or most paragraphs are organized. Uses a consistent and correct citation format (e.g. APA, ASA). Source material is used accurately.	Several grammatical errors and/or misspellings. Several paragraphs are disorganized. Unclear or inconsistent citation format. Several incorrect or missing citations.	
Overall accuracy and analysis	The answer is accurate, logical, complete, and synthesized.	Several inaccurate sentences. Incomplete ideas. Answers are not analytical.	

PRESENTATION

	Pass (earns the equivalent of 70% or above)	Fail (earns the equivalent of 69% or below)	Pass/fail
Application of theories, perspectives, and/or concepts	Presentation demonstrates an application of theories, perspectives and/or concepts to policy, practice, and/or careers.	Did not demonstrate a correct or adequate application.	
Literature(s)	Presentation identifies relevant scholarly literature in more than one field.	Presentation provides limited relevant scholarly literature in one or more disciplines. Heavy reliance on non-scholarly sources or anecdotal evidence.	
Career plans	Presentation discusses career plans. Demonstrates an understanding of the connection between MSDA course material and career.	Lacks career plans. Connection between career and MSDA course material is not explicit.	
Organization and clarity	Presentation is organized and clear.	Presentation is disorganized and unclear.	

V. APPLYING FOR GRADUATION

Apply for graduation during the first week of the semester you plan to graduate. Check the Graduate College deadlines (<https://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/students/deadlines.html>) and plan carefully.

VI. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students found guilty of academic dishonesty are subject to the disciplinary action specified in the Texas State Student Handbook. The rules related to academic dishonesty can be found on the sociology department website and in the University's Honor Code (<http://www.txstate.edu/honorcodecouncil/>). Academic dishonesty refers to a variety of transgressions such as cheating on a test to committing plagiarism for a written assignment. The faculty and Texas State University assume that it is the responsibility of each student to know what constitutes academic dishonesty. University statements regarding academic dishonesty can be found in the Texas State Handbook, the University PPS, and on the MSDA Canvas site. In general: when in doubt, cite. If it's not your idea, you must cite it. If you paraphrase an idea, you must cite the author. If you take a direct quote (three consecutive words or more) from a source, you must place direct quotes around the quote, provide a page number (if applicable), and cite the author. Be very careful about taking information from authors' literature reviews. If you find yourself thinking, "I wonder whether this is academic dishonesty," then it probably is. *Unintentional plagiarism has the same consequences as intentional plagiarism.* Students often engage in the former, so the general guideline (when in doubt, cite) is useful to follow. Read the handouts on the graduate student MSDA Canvas site about plagiarism. Also refer to the following site: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>.

VII. DEADLINES

The Office of the Dean of the Graduate College sets all official deadlines for theses, comprehensive exams, and graduation applications. For the **exact deadline dates** refer to the Graduate College site: (<https://www.gradcollege.txstate.edu/students/deadlines.html>).

VIII. DEPARTMENT POLICY: STUDENT FITNESS AND PERFORMANCE

Students enrolled in all academic programs in the Department of Sociology must maintain high scholastic standards and develop a mastery of the knowledge and methods of the discipline. Students are expected to demonstrate emotional and mental fitness in their interactions with others, use skills and methods that are generally accepted by others in the profession, and conform to the American Sociological Association's Code of Ethics, the Texas State University Honor Code, and the Texas State University Code of Student Conduct. A student's acceptance in any program does not guarantee the student's fitness to remain in that program. The faculty is responsible for insuring that only those students who continue to meet program standards are allowed to continue in any program. Refer to the department website for evaluation criteria and the student review process.