

**The University of Texas at El Paso
Interdisciplinary Health Sciences PhD Program
CHSC 6303 – Theories in Health Sciences (CRN 21562)
Face-to-Face Course Syllabus Spring 2026**

COURSE INFORMATION

***CHSC 6303**: Theories in Health Sciences I
CRN: 21562
Term: Spring 2026
Delivery Method: In-person
Meeting Day and Time: Mondays, 1:00 pm – 3:50 pm
Location: HSSN Room 216

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Jeannie B. Concha, PhD, MPH, Associate Professor
Written Communication: jeannie@utep.edu or by Blackboard
Phone Number: (915)747-8308
Office Location: HSSN, Office 414
Office Hours:

- Face-to-Face: By appointment only
- Virtual: By appointment only though TEAMS or ZOOM

***COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Theories in Health Sciences I: Involves an in-depth review of the philosophy of science, the process of scientific inquiry, key theoretical concepts in health, and expectations for doctoral-level work.

***COURSE OBJECTIVES**

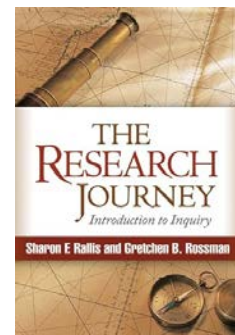
At the completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Discuss how health sciences, as a collective area, have evolved through knowledge obtainment and investigation.
- Critically evaluate the literature and understand theoretical perspectives within the student's area of expertise.
- Understand how theoretical and historical perspectives have shaped the way research methodologies have evolved.
- Describe the theoretical framework for their prospective dissertation work.

REQUIRED MATERIALS





The Research Journey: Introduction to Inquiry
Sharon F. Rallis, Gretchen B. Rossman, Thomas A. Schwandt
(Authors)

- **Publisher** : The Guilford Press
- **Publication date** : March 29, 2012
- **ISBN-10** : 1462505120
- **ISBN-13** : 978-1462505128



EDGE ADVANTAGES

This course is designed to equip students with essential Edge Advantages that contribute to their professional and personal development. Through the completion of course requirements and assignments, such as team projects, presentations, and essays, students will develop the following Edge Advantages:

	Problem-Solving	Assignments will challenge students to identify and address complex issues using innovative and analytical approaches.
	Communication	Class discussions and written assignments will improve students' skills in articulating ideas clearly and persuasively in both oral and written forms.
	Confidence	By actively participating and successfully completing assignments, students will build self-assurance in their abilities to tackle academic and real-world challenges.
	Critical Thinking	The course's emphasis on the analysis and synthesis of information will strengthen students' critical thinking and decision-making.

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*ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Assignments for this course are assessed according to rubrics. You can find these rubrics by clicking on the appropriate assignment link in Blackboard and choosing to "View Rubric" from the button beneath the Points Possible for the assignment.

Grade Distribution:

400-360 = A 359-320 = B 319-280 = C 279-240 = D 239 and Below = F

- 20 Points: Student Discipline, Most Current Theoretical Framework, Seminal Article and Application Article
- 60 Points: Weekly Reading Discussion Post
- 20 Points: Preliminary Scientific Inquiry Statement
- 20 Points: Systematic or Meta-Analysis Review Presentation
- 20 Points: Theoretical Literature Review Narrative Paper Draft
- 80 Points: Final Draft of Theoretical Literature Review Narrative Paper
- 20 Points: Conceptual Framework Illustration Draft
- 20 Points: Literature Review, Synthesis, and Conceptual Framework Draft
- 80 Points: Final Literature Review Synthesis and Conceptual Framework
- 20 Points: Final Presentation
- 40 Points: Class participation by completing in-class activities

Preliminary Scientific Inquiry Statement (20 points)

In this assignment, students will write a short scientific inquiry statement that clearly articulates a focused research problem (1 to 2 sentences). Scientific inquiry = What are you scientifically curious about? The statement should succinctly identify the phenomenon of interest, the population or context being studied, and the key variables or concepts involved. This preliminary statement will set the foundation for the subsequent assignments. The goal is to practice distilling a complex research idea into a clear, precise, and compelling inquiry that could guide dissertation-level research.

Systematic or Meta-Analysis Review Presentation (20 points)

Based on your scientific inquiry statement, identify key concepts, populations, and outcomes you are interested in and use scholarly databases such as PubMed, CINAHL, Scopus, Web of Science, Cochrane Review, or PsycINFO to filter limits to find results for a systematic review or meta-analysis that aligns with your inquiry statement. Prepare a 7-minute presentation to introduce, summarize, and present findings to the class. Use this as a time to reflect on how it can support or inform your preliminary research question.

Theoretical Literature Review Narrative (Draft -20 Points)

Students are required to complete a theoretical literature review on their area of study. The literature review will need to cover and evaluate seminal research papers in the field, comparing and contrasting how these works have shaped contemporary research and methodologies. In the literature review, students should also critically evaluate how various health-related theories have shifted paradigms over time and how local, national, and global issues may have influenced current theories. This assignment should be no longer than 10 pages in length, double-spaced with all citations (in-text and references) following the current APA format. The written document is worth 100 points. Literature review documents will be submitted to Blackboard via SafeAssign.

Conceptual Framework Illustration Draft (20 Points)

Based on your review of the scientific literature, begin with your scientific inquiry statement. Identify the main concepts, variables, or constructs involved in your study. Determine how the concepts relate to one another (e.g., causal links, influences, associations). Consider any moderators, mediators, or contextual factors that affect these relationships. Gather supporting literature by reviewing relevant studies, theories, or frameworks that provide evidence for the relationships among your concepts. Note how previous research has defined and connected these concepts. Choose a visual format by deciding whether to use boxes, circles, arrows, or other shapes to represent concepts and relationships. Ensure the flow is logical and easy to follow (e.g., left-to-right, top-to-bottom). Represent each key concept with a shape (box, circle, etc.). Use arrows to indicate the direction and type of relationship (e.g., influence, correlation, causal pathway). Label all elements clearly, including any moderating or mediating factors. Use Clear labels and legends to ensure all symbols, colors, or line styles have clear meanings. Add a legend if necessary to clarify complex relationships. Check for clarity, logical flow, and completeness. Ensure that your illustration accurately reflects your research inquiry

and aligns with the supporting literature. You may use software such as Microsoft PowerPoint, Word, Canva, Lucidchart, or drawing apps that allow clear diagram creation. Hand-drawn illustrations are acceptable if they are clearly legible and well labeled. This is a preliminary draft. You will submit the final conceptual framework for your paper.

Final Literature Review, Synthesis, and Conceptual Framework Draft (80 Points)

Similar to the theoretical literature review, this review should focus on the health aspects of the students' area of study. The research used in this review may be similar to that in the theoretical literature review, but students should delineate where theory and health converge or diverge historically. Students should critically evaluate how knowledge surrounding health disparities has evolved within their areas of expertise. Conduct a targeted literature review, focusing on studies that clarify relationships among your concepts proposed in your scientific inquiry. Organize key findings into themes or patterns, noting consistency, contradictions, and gaps. Determine how your concepts relate (e.g., causal, correlational, mediating, or moderating relationships). Use evidence from the literature to justify each component and its relationships within your conceptual framework. Create a visual diagram that accurately represents the concepts and their connections, grounded in the evidence. Review and refine your framework to ensure clarity, coherence, and alignment with your research objectives.

This synthesis review and conceptual framework (in appendices) should be no longer than 10 pages in length, double-spaced with all citations (in-text and references) following APA format. The written document is worth 100 points. Literature review documents will be submitted to Blackboard via SafeAssign.

Presentation of Literature Review Synthesis, and Conceptual Framework (20 Points)

Provide a brief 15-minute presentation of your Literature Review Synthesis and how it supports or justifies your Conceptual Framework.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Some course content is delivered via the Internet through the Blackboard learning management system. Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the best browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser.

You will need to have access to a computer/laptop. You will need to download or update the following software: Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat Reader, Windows Media Player, QuickTime, and Java. Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course.

If you do not have word-processing software, you can download Word and other Microsoft Office programs (including Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and more) for free via UTEP's Microsoft Office Portal. Click the following link for more information about [Microsoft Office 365](#) and follow the instructions.

IMPORTANT: If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the UTEP [Technology Support](#) as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students. Please do not contact me for this type of assistance. The Help Desk is much better equipped than I am to assist you!

COURSE COMMUNICATION: How we will stay in contact with each other

Here are the ways we can keep the communication channels open:

- Office Hours: I will have office hours for your questions and comments about the course. My office hours are in-person, however, you can request a virtual meeting and I will send you a Zoom link. Please see the days and times at the top of this syllabus.
- Email: UTEP e-mail is the best way to contact me. I will make every attempt to respond to your e-mail within 24 hours of receipt. When e-mailing me, be sure to email from your UTEP student e-mail account and please put the course number in the subject line. In the body of your e-mail, clearly state your question. At the end of your e-mail, be sure to put your first and last name, and your university identification number.
- Announcements: Check the Blackboard announcements frequently for any updates, deadlines, or other important messages.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Our class meetings are in-person at HSSN Room 216, every Monday from 1:00 pm to 3:50 pm, beginning January 20 through May 11th.

Attendance in the course is determined by participation in the learning activities of the course. Your participation in the course is important not only for your learning and success but also to create a community of learners. Participation is determined by the completion of the following activities:

- Reading/Viewing all course materials to ensure understanding of assignment requirements
- Participating in engaging discussions with your peers
- Other activities as indicated in the weekly modules

Because these activities are designed to contribute to your learning each week, they cannot be made up after their due date has passed.

ILLNESS PRECAUTIONS

Please stay home if you have symptoms of a communicable illness. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations.

***EXCUSED ABSENCES AND/OR COURSE DROP POLICY**

According to UTEP Catalog, "At the discretion of the instructor, a student can be dropped from a course because of excessive absences or lack of effort. A grade of "W" will be assigned before the course drop deadline and a grade of "F" after the course drop deadline." See Policies and Regulations in the UTEP Undergraduate Catalog for a list of excuse absences. Therefore, if I find that, due to non-performance in the course, you are at risk of failing, I will drop you from the course. I will provide 24 hours advance notice via email.

OR

I will not drop you from the course. However, if you feel that you are unable to complete the course successfully, please let me know and then contact the [Registration and Records Office](#) to initiate the drop process. If you do not, you are at risk of receiving an “F” for the course.

DEADLINES, LATE WORK, AND ABSENCE POLICY

Assignments

- Writing assignments will be due on Sundays at midnight (11:59 PM) via Blackboard. No late work will be accepted if the reason is not considered excusable.

MAKE-UP WORK

Make-up work will be given *only* in the case of a *documented* emergency. Note that make-up work may be in a different format than the original work, may require more intensive preparation, and may be graded with penalty points. If you miss an assignment and the reason is not considered excusable, you will receive a zero. It is therefore important to reach out to me—in advance if at all possible—and explain with proper documentation why you missed a given course requirement. Once a deadline has been established for make-up work, no further extensions or exceptions will be granted.

ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF SUBMITTING WORK IN CASE OF TECHNICAL ISSUES

I strongly suggest that you submit your work with plenty of time to spare in the event that you have a technical issue with the course website, network, and/or your computer. I also suggest you save all your work (answers to discussion points, quizzes, exams, and essays) in a separate Word document as a backup. This way, you will have evidence that you completed the work and will not lose credit. If you are experiencing difficulties submitting your work through Blackboard, please contact the UTEP Help Desk. You can email me your backup document as a last resort.

INCOMPLETE GRADE POLICY

Incomplete grades may be requested only in exceptional circumstances after you have completed at least half of the course requirements. Talk to me immediately if you believe an incomplete is warranted. If granted, we will establish a contract of work to be completed with deadlines.

***ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY**

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students who become pregnant may also request reasonable accommodations, in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and University policy. Accommodations that constitute undue hardship are not reasonable. To make a request,

please register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact CASS at 915-747-5148, email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

***SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY**

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as ones' own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the [Office of Community Standards](#) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please visit [HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline](#).

***GUIDANCE ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

AI prohibited

Use of AI technologies or automated tools, particularly generative AI such as ChatGPT or DALL-E, is **not allowed** for assignments in this class. Each student is expected to use critical and creative thinking skills to complete tasks and not rely on computer-generated ideas. Any direct use of AI-generated materials submitted as your own work will be treated as plagiarism and reported to the [Office of Community Standards](#).

AI allowed only with prior permission from instructor

Use of AI technologies or automated tools, particularly generative AI such as ChatGPT or [DALL-E](#), is **only allowed with approval from the instructor BEFORE being used**. Without permission, you will be expected to think creatively and critically to complete assignments without assistance from these tools.

If given permission to use any of these tools, students must properly cite and give full credit to the program used upon submission of every relevant assignment. For example, text generated using ChatGPT must be cited:

Chat-GPT(version). Date of query (year/month/day). "Text of your query."
Generated using OpenAI. <https://chat.openai.com/>

A short paragraph describing how the tool(s) was/were used for the assignment must be included.

AI allowed with proper acknowledgement

Use of AI technologies or automated tools, particularly generative AI such as ChatGPT or DALL-E, is **only allowed with proper attribution given for its use**.

Students must properly cite and give full credit to the program used upon submission of every relevant assignment. For example, text generated using ChatGPT must be cited:

Chat-GPT(version). Date of query (year/month/day). "Text of your query."
Generated using OpenAI. <https://chat.openai.com/>

A short paragraph describing how the tool(s) was/were used for the assignment must be included.

Using AI for brainstorming

Some AI technologies or automated tools, particularly generative AI such as ChatGPT or DALL-E, can be beneficial during the early brainstorming stages of an activity, and you are welcome to explore them for that purpose. However, keep in mind that AI-generated ideas are not your own and may hinder your ability to think critically and creatively about a problem. It is also important to remember that these technologies often "hallucinate" or produce materials and information that are inaccurate or incomplete—even providing false citations for use.

That said, you are not allowed to submit any AI-generated work in this course as your own. If you use any information or materials created by AI technology, you are required to cite it like you would any other source. Consider how this will affect your credibility as a writer and scholar before doing so. Any direct use of AI-generated materials submitted as your own work will be treated as plagiarism and reported to the [Office of Community Standards](#).

Free use of AI without acknowledgement

Use of AI technologies or automated tools, including generative AI such as ChatGPT or DALL-E, is permitted in this class. Students must include a short paragraph, with each relevant assignment, explaining how the tool was used.

PLAGIARISM DETECTING SOFTWARE

Some of your course work and assessments may be submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism detecting software. SafeAssign is used to review assignment submissions for originality and will help you learn how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase.

***COURSE RESOURCES:** Where you can go for assistance

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support. Please refer to the QR code below for a listing of campus resources or visit https://www.utep.edu/advising/student_resources/student-success-resource-hub.html.



Spring 2026 Course Schedule and Activities (Tentative and Subject to Change)		
	Readings for Each Week	In-Class Activities and Due Dates
WEEK 1 January 19th	MARTIN LUTHER KING HOLIDAY	
WEEK 2 January 26 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1: Inquiry as Learning: Beginning the Journey (Rallis et al.) • Identify a Systematic Review or Meta-analysis on your topic of Interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Activity 1.1 “Nanook of the North.” • Learning Activity 1.2 “Problematizing Truth”
WEEK 3 February 2 nd	Chapter 2: Ways of Knowing: Finding a Compass (Rallis et al.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning activity 2.1 “The Magic Eye.” • Learning Activity 2.2 “Alternative Maps.” • Learning Activity 2.3 “Strings.” • DUE Feb 1: Most Current Theoretical Framework Used in Your Discipline- Seminal Article and A Research Article Applying that Theory • DUE Feb 1: Preliminary Scientific Inquiry Statement • DUE Feb 6: Upload Systematic or Meta-analysis for Dr. Concha’s review
WEEK 4 February 9 th	Chapter 3: The Cycle of Inquiry: More Than One Way to Get There (Rallis et al.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Activity 3.1 “Critical Inquiry Triads.” • Learning Activity 3.2 “Walk-Throughs to find a Problem, Question or Surprise.” • DUE Feb 11: Systematic Review Presentation - end of day
WEEK 5 February 16 th	Systematic or Meta-Analysis Review Student Presentations (7 minutes each student)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Presentation Style Feedback
WEEK 6 February 23rd	Chapter 4: Being an Ethical Inquirer: Staying Alert on the Road (Rallis et al.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Activity 4.1 “The Moral Fix-A Debate.” • Learning Activity 4.2 “What

		would you do?"
WEEK 7 March 2 nd	Chapter 5: Constructing Conceptual Frameworks: Building the Route (Rallis et al.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Activity 5.1 "One Study, Four Representations." • Learning Activity 5.2 "Developing a Position." • Learning Activity 5.3 "Completing Your Position." • Learning Activity 5.4 "Concept Mapping."
WEEK 8 March 9 th	Chapter 6: Designing the Inquiry Project: Finding the True North (Rallis et al.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Activity 6.1 "What's the Purpose Here?" • Learning Activity 6.2 "Scripting My Study." • Learning Activity 6.3: Will my Study be doable?
WEEK 8, March 13 th	10 Page Research Topic Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DUE March 18th End of Day
March 16 th	SPRING BREAK WEEK	
WEEK 10 March 23 rd	Chapter 7: Things to Consider in Writing: Staying in the Right Lane (Rallis et al.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Activity 7.1 "Freeing up your Writing." • Learning Activity 7.2 "Analyzing Writing."
WEEK 10 March 27 th	Conceptual Framework Draft	DUE March 27th
WEEK 11 March 30 th		•
WEEK 12 April 6 th	Chapter 8: Knowledge Use: Arriving at Your Destination (Rallis et al.)	Learning Activity 8.1 "Connecting with Other Audiences."
WEEK 13 April 13 th		
WEEK 13 April 17 th	Draft of Final Paper	DUE April 17 th
WEEK 14 April 20 th		
WEEK 15 April 27 th	Student Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Presentation Style Feedback
WEEK 16 May 4 th	Student Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Presentation Style Feedback
WEEK 17 May 11 th	FINALS WEEK	Final Paper Due May 11 th