Methods Section Assignment – 20%

This rubric supports a holistic evaluation. Each category is assessed individually, but the final grade reflects the overall quality of the methods section rather than a mathematical average of category ratings.

Categories are ordered roughly by importance. Performance levels assess accuracy, completeness, specificity, and coherence within the stated requirements—not additional tasks. The methodological rationale includes consideration of knowledge, assumptions, and limitations. Data analysis is not required or assessed.

Reading requirement applies only to the Methodological Rationale category: An A in that category requires substantive engagement with at least three relevant class readings. Students must explain how a specific idea from each reading informs their methodological decisions, not simply cite or summarize the readings.

Category	F – Fail	D – Below Average Work	C – Average Work	B – Excellent Work	A – Superior Work
Research Design and Alignment	No identifiable research approach is provided.	Names a research approach without defining the study setting or scope.	Identifies the approach and setting or context, but leaves the scope or link to the existing research question unclear.	Identifies an approach, setting or context, and bounded scope that are consistent with the existing research question.	Clearly and precisely specifies the approach, setting or context, and scope; these elements form a coherent design suited to the existing research question.
Data-Collection Methods, Materials, and Procedures	Does not identify data-collection methods or procedures.	Names a method but does not explain how data would be collected.	Identifies relevant methods and tools and describes basic steps, but omits important procedural details.	Describes methods, relevant materials, and the steps for collecting data, including pertinent details of timing, place, frequency, or documentation.	Presents a precise, complete, logically sequenced description of the selected methods, materials, and relevant operational details, making the proposed data collection easy to understand.
Methodological Rationale, Knowledge, and Limitations	Does not explain the choice of methods or identify the information they could generate; no meaningful use of class readings.	Gives a general reason for selecting the methods but does not connect it to the evidence they would produce; mentions readings without applying them.	Connects the methods to the research question, identifies the kinds of information expected and a relevant limitation, and applies at least one class reading.	Explains why the methods fit the research question, what information they could provide, and relevant limitations or assumptions; meaningfully applies at least two class readings.	At least three relevant class readings are substantively integrated into the methodological rationale, with ideas from each applied to the selected methods. The rationale precisely connects the methods to the question, the kinds of knowledge they could produce, and relevant assumptions or limitations.
Selection of Participants, Sites, or Sources	Does not identify whom or what would be studied.	Identifies participants or sources but does not indicate how they would be selected.	Identifies participants or sources and a general selection or recruitment approach.	Specifies who or what would be studied, selection criteria, a recruitment or access approach where relevant, and an approximate scope.	Clearly and precisely specifies participants or sources, applicable selection criteria, access or recruitment, and scope; the stated elements are consistent with the proposed design.
Ethics and Research Relationships	Omits ethical considerations relevant to the proposed study.	Names a relevant ethical concern but gives no plan to address it.	Identifies relevant ethical responsibilities and at least one corresponding safeguard or practice.	Describes applicable consent, confidentiality, risk, data-handling, or research-relationship responsibilities and the steps proposed to address them.	Accurately and specifically addresses the relevant ethical responsibilities and safeguards in ways consistent with the proposed study and its participants, sources, or communities.
Feasibility and Scope	No workable scope or practical implementation can be determined.	A major practical issue involving scope, access, time, or resources is unaddressed.	Proposes a generally feasible scope but leaves some relevant practical details unclear.	Provides a realistic scope and addresses key practical conditions for conducting the proposed study.	Presents a clearly bounded, feasible plan with internally consistent scope, timing, access, and resource assumptions where relevant.
Organization, Clarity, and Academic Conventions	The section is missing or very difficult to follow, or cited information cannot be traced.	Organization or writing frequently obscures the proposed procedures; major submission conventions are missing.	The work is generally understandable and organized but has some unclear passages or citation/presentation inconsistencies.	Clearly organized and written in future tense; cites and references sources used and includes word count and course-required AI-use statement.	Exceptionally clear, concise, and consistent in terminology; procedures are easy to follow, with accurate references and all required submission conventions.