

**CHENYU ZHAO, MSW**

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**EDUCATION**

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| <b>PhD</b> | The University of Texas at Arlington, School of Social Work<br><i>Doctorate of Philosophy in Social Work</i>                                | Expected July 2027 |
| <b>MSW</b> | Washington University in St. Louis, George Warren Brown School of Social Work<br>Concentration: International Social & Economic Development | Dec 2014           |
| <b>BSW</b> | The University of Texas at Austin                                                                                                           | May 2013           |

**RESEARCH INTERESTS**

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Adolescent mental health; school-based protective factors; educational attainment in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs); suicide prevention; social network analysis; mixed methods research.

**RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

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| <b>University of Texas at Arlington, School of Social Work</b><br><b>Graduate Research Assistant</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | August 2024–Present |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Coordinated recruitment, data collection, and data management activities for a community-based study in rural Kenya involving approximately 70 participants.</li><li>Managed operations for a 2-year virtual-reality suicide-prevention intervention study, including IRB modifications, intervention development, participant testing, and manuscript preparation—supported by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.</li></ul> |                     |

**PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS**

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**Zhao, C.** (2026). Correlates of suicidality among Thai adolescents: Evidence from the 2021 Thailand GSHS. *Mental Health & Prevention*, 43, 200533. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mhp.2026.200533>

Park, Y., Schuman, D., **Zhao, C.**, Cantu, L., & Riviere, L. (accepted). Concurrent risks and resilience characteristics experienced by military spouses. *Military Psychology*.

**MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW**

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**Zhao, C.** & Harrell, D. (revise and resubmit). The mediating role of school connectedness in the association between perceived racial discrimination in school and adolescent depression.  
Submitted to: *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*

**Zhao, C.**, Spadola, C., & Baiden, P. (under review). Sleep as a modifiable pathway linking adverse childhood experiences to adolescent depression.  
Submitted to: *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*

**Zhao, C.** (awaiting reviewer selection). Why Equal Policies Produce Unequal Outcomes: Lessons from Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum  
Submitted to: *Policy Futures in Education*

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#### MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION

**Zhao, C.,** Small, E., Ryan, S., & Mauldin, R. (in preparation). Pathways Toward School Dropout Among Kenyan Youth: A Qualitative Interpretive Meta-Synthesis.

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#### PRESENTATIONS

**Zhao, C.** (2026, June). *Correlates of suicidality among Thai adolescents: Evidence from the 2021 Thailand GSHS [ePoster presentation]*. The Joint Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development, Nairobi, Kenya.

**Zhao, C.,** & Harrell, D. (2026, January). *School Connectedness as a Mediator between School-Based Racial Discrimination and Depression Among Adolescents [Paper presentation]*. Society for Social Work and Research, Washington, D.C.

Schuman, D.L., **Zhao, C.,** Mwibanda, T., Mester, S., Lohman, S., Carter, D. (2026, January). *Equipping Providers Who Serve Rural Veterans at Risk for Suicide: Qualitative Findings to Inform a Virtual Reality Simulation [Conference ePoster]*. Society for Social Work and Research, Washington, D.C.

Fantus, S., & **Zhao, C.** (2025, January). *Lessons learned from a disability and healthcare ethics IPE: Implications for mental health professionals on college campuses [Conference presentation]*. Texas University & College Counseling Center Conference, Arlington, TX.

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#### TEACHING EXPERIENCE

##### University of Texas at Arlington

May 2025–Present

##### Instructor of Record, School of Social Work

- Fall 2026: Teaching “Social Work Professionalism,” an online undergraduate course with 26 students, covering professional ethics, communication and interpersonal skills, self-reflection and professional development, and the application of social work values in practice.
- Spring 2026: Taught “Social Welfare Policy and Services,” a face-to-face undergraduate course with five students, covering the structure, analysis, and evaluation of social welfare systems.
- Fall 2025: Taught “Social Work Professionalism,” an online undergraduate course with 30 students, covering professional ethics, communication and interpersonal skills, self-reflection and professional development, and the application of social work values in practice.
- Summer 2025: Taught “Social Welfare Policy and Services,” an online undergraduate course with 30 students, covering the structure, analysis, and evaluation of social welfare systems.

##### Graduate Teaching Assistant, School of Social Work

- Graduate Teaching Assistant for *Statistics I* and *Statistics III* in the Social Work PhD program.

##### Self-Employed Music Lessons

November 2015–Present

##### Independent Music Instructor

- Taught up to 40 weekly private piano, violin, and guitar students (currently fewer than five virtually), organized six recitals attended by 80–100 parents in Michigan, and used MuseScore to create and edit sheet music to keep students motivated.

## GRANTS

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**Kalman & Ida Wolens Foundation.** *Approaches to Implementing Competency-Based Curriculum in Rural Kenya (AICOR).* **Funded,** \$75,000. May 2025–May 2027.

**Principal Investigators:** Dr. Eusebius Small, Dr. Scott Ryan, Dr. Michael Bennett

**Grant Team:** Chenyu Zhao (Graduate Research Assistant)

- Contributed sections on study design, implementation logistics, and proposal timeline narrative across multiple grant proposal drafts.

**Fulbright U.S. Student Open Study/Research Award (South Africa). Not Funded, 2026.**

*Co-Designing Mindfulness to Support NGO Staff Well-Being in South African Townships*

- Developed a community-based participatory research (CBPR) proposal in partnership with the University of Cape Town and a South African community organization, integrating qualitative and quantitative methods to evaluate a culturally adapted mindfulness intervention.

## FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

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**Travel Grant from UTA Graduate School** to attend SSWR Conference, \$500. 2026

**PhD Student Fund from UTA School of Social Work** to attend SSWR Conference, \$500. 2026

**UTA Dean's Fellowship,** \$2,000. Fall 2026

**Graduate School Dean's Research Assistantship,** \$1,970. Summer 2025

**UTA Dean's Fellowship,** \$2,000. Spring 2026

**UTA Dean's Fellowship,** \$2,000. Fall 2025

**Graduate School Dean's Research Assistantship,** \$1,970. Summer 2025

**UTA Dean's Fellowship,** \$2,000. Spring 2025

**UTA Dean's Fellowship,** \$2,000. Fall 2024

## LEADERSHIP & SERVICE

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**Society for Social Work and Research Doctoral Student Committee,** August 2025–Present

*Communications sub-committee member*

Contribute articles to a bimonthly newsletter, attend monthly meetings, and support digital content initiatives.

**UTA Doctoral Student Association for Social Work,** August 2025–July 2026

*President*

Served as a representative of social work PhD students, advocating for their needs, and fostering peer support and cross-cohort connections by organizing social and volunteering events.

**Puranik Foundation/Northside High School,** August 2022–May 2023

*Volunteer*

Taught weekly yoga and mindfulness classes to high school students with special needs.

## PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK EXPERIENCE

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**Silverspoon Home Services/Maternal Infant Health Program,** social worker, 2015–2019

- Provided in-home assessments, education, and resources for pregnant Medicaid beneficiaries.

**Horizon Outreach,** case manager, 2015

- Managed casework for veteran fathers, connected clients to community resources, and tracked workshop engagement data.

**International China Concern (ICC), social work intern, 2014**

- Led adolescent individual and group sessions and aided adoption readiness.

**Alliance for Building Capacity – Olin Business School, social work intern, 2014**

- Developed Qualtrics survey questions to evaluate a nonprofit board program for MBA students and proposed recommendations.

**Arrow Child & Family Ministries, social work intern, 2013**

- Supported foster families through home visits, court appearances, and psychoeducational workshops for foster parents.

**SKILLS AND CERTIFICATIONS**

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- Completed online trauma-informed yoga training with Prison Yoga Project in 2024.
- Completed 300-hour Yoga Teacher Training in 2023 with Mandala Studio Yoga & Spa in Nepal
- Completed 200-hour Yoga Teacher Training in 2020 with Yandara Yoga Institute in Mexico
- Fluent in Mandarin Chinese – Passed HSK (Chinese Proficiency Test) level 5 in 2012
- Qualtrics and QuestionPro – develop surveys
- SPSS and Stata – regression, mediation, moderation, multilevel modeling, and complex survey analysis