

# SOCIAL WORK

## Department Overview

The Social Work Program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education at the baccalaureate level. The major has two primary objectives:

- to prepare students for beginning-level generalist social work practice; and
- to prepare students for graduate study in social work.

The social work curriculum stresses integrating knowledge of human behavior, social welfare policy and services, and research, with the values and skills of the social work profession.

*Chair of the Department of Social Work:* Kelly Melekis

Professor: Crystal Dea Moore

Associate Professor: Kelly Melekis

Assistant Professor: June C. Paul

Senior Teaching Professor and Director of Field Education: Peter McCarthy

Professor Emeritus: Thomas P. Oles

## Social Work B.S.

The major leads to a Bachelor of Science degree. The social work major must successfully complete the following eleven courses (40 credits) in social work:

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Required Courses</b>		
SW 212	Power, Privilege and Oppression: Advancing Social Justice	4
SW 222	Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare	3
SW 241	Research Methods for Social Justice	4
SW 253	Human Behavior and the Social Environment	3
SW 320	Service Learning in Social Work	1
SW 333	Social Work Practice With Individuals and Families	3
SW 334	Social Work Practice With Groups, Organizations, and Communities	3
SW 338	Social Policy and Social Justice	4
SW 340	Field Preparation Seminar	1
SW 381	Social Work Field Practicum Seminar and Senior Coda	3
SW 382	Social Work Field Practicum	12
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>41</b>

## Suggested Liberal Arts Courses for Prospective Social Work Majors

Students are encouraged to think carefully about how they approach the liberal arts requirement. A liberal education involves an appreciation of the relationship between the past and the present, an understanding of the social world, and the ability to communicate orally, in writing, and across cultures, as well as reasoning scientifically and quantitatively.

Study in the liberal arts produces a deepened sense of self, and most profoundly, a commitment to lifelong learning. Social work practice rests on the liberal arts; the profession depends on broadly educated, reflective practitioners who integrate knowledge and ways of knowing from multiple disciplines, and who are committed to a life of curiosity, inquiry, and learning. Students considering a social work major are encouraged to consider the courses below as they fulfill the liberal arts requirement.

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Expository Writing</b>		
AM 230	Born in America	4
<b>Quantitative Reasoning</b>		
EC 103	Introduction to Macroeconomics (fulfills liberal arts requirement for social work majors)	4
EC 104	Introduction to Microeconomics (fulfills liberal arts requirement for social work majors)	4
MS 104	Introduction to Statistics	4
SO 228	Statistics for the Social Sciences	4
<b>Humanities</b>		
AM 262	Civil Rights in Twentieth-Century United States	3
PL 102	Introduction to Political Philosophy	3
RE 103	Understanding Religions	3
<b>Natural Science</b>		
BI 120	Human Biology and Medical Decisions: Food, Disease, Sex, Sleep	5
HP 111	Introduction to Exercise Physiology	4
NS 101	Introduction to Neuroscience	4
<b>Social Sciences</b>		
ED 115	School and Society	4
PL 101	Introduction to American Politics	3
PL 211	Courts, Politics, and Judicial Process in the United States	3
HI 225	Race and Ethnicity in American Thought	3
SO 202	The Individual in Society	3
SO 203	Femininities and Masculinities	3
SO 204	Introduction to Race, Class, and Gender	3
<b>Cultural Diversity</b>		
AM 231	Ethnic and Immigrant Experience	3
AM 342	Black Feminist Thoughts	3
HI 228	Race, Class, and Gender in Latin America	3
RE 215	Islam (A)	3

## Policies and Procedures

### Admission

Students must apply for admission to the social work major during their sophomore year. Selection is based on demonstrated academic competence, a willingness to abide by the profession's code of ethics, and suitability for beginning professional practice. Applications for admission are available from social work faculty. Students planning on going abroad should talk with the program director in their first year.

### Senior-Year Field Experience

The social work major culminates in a field experience in the spring semester of the senior year. Students must complete all course prerequisites prior to enrolling in the field practicum. In addition, the

nature of the field experience requires that the department reserves the right to deny enrollment in the field practicum to any student, if in the judgment of the faculty that student's scholastic or professional preparation for beginning social work practice is insufficient.

Students serve as beginning social workers four days per week for a minimum of 400 hours over the course of the semester. This experience provides them with opportunities to apply knowledge and skills gained in the classroom in an agency setting. They are integrated into the field experience as regular staff and assume the functions of beginning social work practitioners in such roles as counselors, advocates, and researchers. They receive supervision from agency field instructors and support through ongoing monitoring of the placement by the social work program. Students also meet in a weekly seminar to discuss their field experiences and professional development.

### Writing Requirement in the Major

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Required Writing-Enhanced Courses</b>		
SW 241	Research Methods for Social Justice	4
SW 333	Social Work Practice With Individuals and Families	3

The writing requirement prepares students to write effectively for a variety of professional audiences including researchers, clinicians, and supervisors. In these courses, students will:

1. Develop a feasible research proposal that includes a well-integrated literature review, a thorough description of the selected research methodology, a discussion of the practice/policy implications of the proposed work, and an appropriate data collection instrument (SW 241 Research Methods for Social Justice);
2. Develop a clinical portfolio that includes a well-defined learning contract for field work, clear and concise progress notes, an objective and comprehensive psychosocial assessment, and a self-assessment that demonstrates the student's ability to reflect on their work with clients and connect field work to course concepts (SW 333 Social Work Practice With Individuals and Families).

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## Honors

To be eligible for departmental honors in social work, students must meet the minimum College GPA requirement of 3.000 overall and 3.500 in the major. Of students who are qualified, up to four students will be awarded departmental honors, each recognized for distinction in one of three areas:

- research
- practice
- overall academic achievement

Distinguished research performance is demonstrated by the completion of high quality research products in SW 241 Research Methods for Social Justice and subsequent superior independent or collaborative research; distinction in practice is demonstrated by superior performance evaluations of practice competencies in SW 333 Social Work Practice With Individuals and Families, SW 334 Social Work Practice With Groups, Organizations, and Communities, and SW 381 Social Work Field Practicum Seminar and Senior Coda; and overall academic achievement is demonstrated by the highest overall GPA.

## Course Listing

### SW 212 - Power, Privilege and Oppression: Advancing Social Justice

Credits: 4

This course explores social work values, provides opportunities to identify and clarify conflicting values and ethical dilemmas, and examines the impact of discrimination, economic deprivation, and oppression on groups distinguished by factors such as race, ethnicity, culture, class, age, gender, sexual orientation, ability, national origin, etc. Students will consider linkages between various aspects of identity and inequality by evaluating existing systems of power, privilege and oppression, exploring theoretical debates, and examining multicultural and intersectional strategies of response. Specific attention is focused on critically analyzing and applying the social justice-based foundations of social work and the role of social workers in addressing unjust systems and structures that marginalize and disadvantage particular groups in contemporary America.

**Prerequisites:** SSP 100.

**Note(s):** Fulfills Cultural Diversity and Social Sciences requirements; fulfills Bridge Experience requirement.

### SW 214 - Death and Dying

Credits: 3

Analyses of death and dying from historical, cultural, and religious perspectives. Examination of theories of grief and mourning processes and of death-related practices, such as wills and funerals. Review of approaches to and strategies for working with the dying and their families. Students may examine their own attitudes toward death and dying.

### SW 217 - Obsessions and Addictions

Credits: 3

Approaches to individual situations and cultural variations in compulsive and addictive behaviors related to such matters as drugs, gambling, love, work, and material success. This course uses a comprehensive view of human addictions that involves a person's expectations, values, sense of self-worth, and alternative opportunities for gratification and treatment.

### SW 219 - Community Engagement

Credits: 3

A course designed to provide students with opportunities to engage with the broader community beyond Skidmore through service and to encourage critical reflection on their experiences. Students volunteer their services in local nonprofit agencies for six to eight hours a week and learn to assume the role of a volunteer to: understand the history of the nonprofit sector, research client needs, and demonstrate skills that promote effective and sensitive community service.

**SW 220 - Service Learning in Social Work**

Credits: 1

Service-learning through partnerships with community agencies. Service learning integrates academic work with community service.

Students learn to apply knowledge gained in the classroom to "real life" by getting hands-on experience in the community. Service learning benefits students by enhancing their understanding of concepts learned in the classroom, promoting personal identity, fostering the development of civic responsibility, and giving them the opportunity to work with diverse populations in a "real world" setting. Community partners benefit from the relationships formed and the services students contribute in response to community needs. Students will engage in fieldwork with underserved and under-represented populations in local community agencies. Students will have the opportunity to practice basic communication and relationship skills, be introduced to social problems and issues, and learn skills relevant to social work theory and practice.

**Prerequisites:****Corequisites:** SW 222.**Note(s):** Not for liberal arts credit.**SW 222 - Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare**

Credits: 3

Introduction to social welfare and the field of social work from a historical, educational, and theoretical perspective. The course explores the values, knowledge, and skills required in the profession, along with their practical application in the field, and factors affecting social work practice, e.g., class, gender, race.

**Note(s):** Fulfills Social Sciences requirement.**SW 224 - Special Studies in Social Work**

Credits: 3

One topic of current interest in an area of social work. Topics will vary from year to year depending on interests of faculty and needs of students, and might include social work practice with alcoholism and narcotic addiction, social work in correctional settings, social work with the developmentally disabled, social work with the aged, advocacy in social work, or the dynamics of racism in social work practice.

**Note(s):** May be taken three times with a different topic for credit.**SW 225 - Social Work With Children and Adolescents**

Credits: 3

Reviews conceptions of and approaches to working with troubled children and adolescents. Topics include divorce, child abuse, learning difficulties, substance abuse, delinquency, foster care, and parent-child conflict.

**SW 241 - Research Methods for Social Justice**

Credits: 4

Examination of the research process used by human service professionals. Students learn about social science methodology from the perspective of a future practitioner and research consumer. Topics include: problem formulation, measurement, design, qualitative and quantitative modes of observation, data collection, and analysis. The course addresses practical issues such as single-subject design, program evaluation, and the ethical dilemmas involved in conducting human subject research. As part of the writing requirement for the major, students will develop a feasible and thorough quantitative research proposal.

**Note(s):** Laboratory time is used for students to work directly with instruments and data.**SW 244 - Statistics for Social Justice**

Credits: 4

The purpose of this course is to further develop students' ability to utilize and engage in research to advance human rights and social justice. Skills in research methodology (e.g., hypothesis generation, measurement, and instrument construction) will be reinforced and strengthened, with a focus on quantitative data analysis and interpretation. Students will learn and apply statistical techniques to analyze social issues. In addition to exploring how social differences (e.g., gender, race, class) can shape individuals' life experiences, the course will focus on the use of statistics as a vehicle to better understand the injustices faced by certain individuals, groups, and communities. Students will consider the relationship between epistemology and methodology, with particular attention to the strengths and limitations of quantitative reasoning from a transformative perspective.

**Prerequisites:** SW 241 or another methods course or instructor permission; placement at AQR level or completion of an FQR course; SSP 100.**Note(s):** Fulfills Social Sciences requirement; fulfills Applied Quantitative Reasoning and Bridge Experience requirements.**SW 253 - Human Behavior and the Social Environment**

Credits: 3

A multidisciplinary examination of theories and knowledge of human bio-psycho-social development from birth through later years. The course draws on research from biology, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and political science to study the impact of biological, psychological, social, and cultural systems on health and well-being. Students explore the range of social systems in which individuals live (families, groups, communities, and organizations) and study the importance of ethnicity, culture, gender, disability, and other elements of diversity in human development.

**SW 298 - Explorations in Social Work**

Credits: 1

A topical workshop, seminar, discussion group, service learning experience, or research project that can link to a regular social work course or serve as a freestanding course.

**Prerequisites:** *Permission of instructor.***Note(s):** Courses integrating an exploration in social work carry 4 rather than 3 credit hours. The course may be repeated.**SW 299 - Professional Internship in Sociology**

Credits: 1-4

Internship opportunity for students whose academic and cocurricular work has prepared them for professional activity related to social work. With faculty sponsorship and department approval, students may design experiences in such areas as direct work with specific populations, community organizations, and social welfare management, administration, and research.

**Prerequisites:** SW 334 or SW 333 or permission of faculty sponsor.**Note(s):** Not for liberal arts credit.

**SW 320 - Service Learning in Social Work**

Credits: 1

Service-learning through partnerships with community agencies.

Service learning integrates academic work with community service.

Students learn to apply knowledge gained in the classroom to "real life" by getting hands-on experience in the community. Service learning benefits students by enhancing their understanding of concepts learned in the classroom, promoting personal identity, fostering the development of civic responsibility, and giving them the opportunity to work with diverse populations in a "real world" setting. Community partners benefit from the relationships formed and the services students contribute in response to community needs. Students will engage in fieldwork with underserved and under-represented populations in local community agencies. Students will have the opportunity to practice basic communication and relationship skills, be introduced to social problems and issues, and learn skills relevant to social work theory and practice.

**Prerequisites:**

**Corequisites:** SW 333 or SW 334.

**Note(s):** Not for liberal arts credit.

**SW 324 - Advanced Special Studies in Social Work**

Credits: 1-4

An examination at the advanced level of current topics in social work not available in regular course offerings. Topics will vary from year to year depending on the interests of faculty and needs of students and will build upon previously completed coursework.

**Note(s):** The course in a different subject area may be repeated for credit.

**SW 333 - Social Work Practice With Individuals and Families**

Credits: 4

Part of a two-semester sequence designed to prepare students for entry-level generalist social work practice and to provide students with an overview of social work theory and its relation to practice. The course focuses on the knowledge, skills, and values needed for beginning social work practice with diverse individuals and families and addresses all phases of the helping process, including assessment, planning, intervention, evaluation, termination, and follow-up. Students will be encouraged to examine the relationship between theory and practice, and contextualize particular practice methods within a general theoretical perspective. Assignments emphasize critical thinking skills and theoretically grounded, research-based practice strategies. Students learn to apply knowledge gained in the classroom to "real life" by getting hands-on experience in the community. Students will engage in fieldwork with underserved and under-represented populations in local community agencies.

**Prerequisites:** SW 222, SW 212, and SW 241 are required prior to enrollment in this course. The course assumes students have also taken SW 253 - Human Behavior and the Social Environment OR are enrolled in SW 253 concurrently. Concurrent enrollment in SW 320 Service Learning in Social Work is also required.

**Note(s):** Not for liberal arts credit.

**SW 334 - Social Work Practice With Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Credits: 4

Part of the practice sequence designed to prepare students for generalist social work practice. Student learn social work theory and practice methods employed by social workers in providing services to communities and organizations in a changing world. Special attention will be given to professional relationships characterized by mutuality, collaboration, and respect, and on practices aimed to advance human rights and social justice. Students learn to apply knowledge gained in the classroom to "real life" by getting hands-on experience in the community. Students will engage in fieldwork with underserved and under-represented populations in local community agencies.

**Prerequisites:** SW 212 and SW 222 are required prior to enrollment in this course. The course assumes students have also taken SW 241 - Research Methods for Social Justice OR are enrolled in SW 241 concurrently. Concurrent enrollment in SW 320 - Service Learning in Social Work is also required.

**Note(s):** Not for liberal arts credit.

**SW 338 - Social Policy and Social Justice**

Credits: 4

The study of social policy, welfare program planning, and social service implementation, evaluation, and analysis. The class will interrogate the value, political, and societal issues that underpin policies and programs, giving specific attention to the evaluation of policies through research and application of principles of social justice. Students will examine reviews of selected policies on federal, state, and local levels as well as compare the social policies of the United States with those of other countries.

**Prerequisites:** SW 222 or permission of instructor.

**SW 340 - Field Preparation Seminar**

Credits: 1

Provides historical and current context for understanding the requirement of field instruction in social work programs. Students explore social work partnership with community agencies, the supervision process, and ways to enrich the practicum experience. Through in-class discussion, individual meetings with the instructor, and on-site agency interviews, students assess their areas of interest, professional and academic goals, and potential field practicum placements for SW 382, offered during the spring semester.

**Prerequisites:** Permission of instructor.

**Note(s):** Open only to senior social work majors. Not for liberal arts credit.

**SW 371 - Independent Study in Social Work**

Credits: 1-4

Individual reading and/or research in social work under the guidance of a member of the department. Open with consent of the department to qualified students. Individual conferences to be arranged.

**SW 381 - Social Work Field Practicum Seminar and Senior Coda**

Credits: 4

Provides discussion and analysis of practicum-related experiences and professional issues. A major purpose of the seminars is the development of professional judgment through examination of cases and practice situations encountered in field instruction.

**Prerequisites:** all required social work courses and permission of instructor.

**Note(s):** Fulfills Senior Experience Coda requirement. Open only to senior social work majors. Not for liberal arts credit.

**SW 382 - Social Work Field Practicum**

Credits: 12

Thirty-five hours per week spent in social service agencies and related organizations in Saratoga County and the surrounding area. Specific placements made according to academic interests and needs of individual students.

**Prerequisites:** *all required social work courses and permission of instructor.*

**Note(s):** Offered only to senior social work majors. Not for liberal arts credit. Must be taken S/U.

**SW 398 - Advanced Explorations in Social Work**

Credits: 1

A topical workshop, seminar, discussion group, service learning experience, or research project that can link to a regular Social Work course or serve as a freestanding course.

**Prerequisites:** *permission of instructor.*

**Note(s):** Courses integrating an exploration in social work carry 4 rather than 3 credit hours. The course may be repeated.