



School of Social Work

Course Descriptions

M.S.W. Program – Distance Option

SW 520 Social Work and Social Welfare Policy

4 credits

Course defines and describes social welfare policy and the policy-making process. Examine historical and contemporary issues and their impact on the profession of social work and the institution of social welfare. Emphasis is given to policy analysis and the development of policy-practice skills from the perspective of social and economic justice. Highlights the relationships between social problems, social policies, social programs, and social work practice.

SW 540 Human Behavior in the Social Environment: Micro Theory

3 credits

Presents and critiques basic knowledge of human development from infancy to late adulthood in the context of individuals and families and identifies relationships between theoretical frameworks and biopsychosocial environment. Considers populations at risk and the impacts of racism and other forms of oppression on development. Provides students with knowledge of how developmental frameworks organize information about human dynamics, while still stressing the multicausal nature of behavioral outcomes. Prerequisite: SW 539.

SW 541 Human Behavior in the Social Environment: Macro Theory

3 credits

Presents and critiques basic knowledge of the development, behavior and change process of groups, communities and organizations. Uses social theory to provide students with conceptual frames for analyzing how the actions of both clients and social work practitioners are conditioned and constrained as well as enabled and empowered by broader social forces. Considers the effect of mezzo and macro level forces on the development and functioning of populations at risk. Prerequisite: SW 539.

SW 539 Diversity and Social Justice

3 credits

Explores diversity and oppression based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, (dis)ability status, and social class; models for intergroup relations; the historical context of group relations; and cultural variables significant to ethnic, racial and cultural minority populations. Examines social, political, and cultural processes as they affect intergroup and intragroup relations. Explores the role of social worker as border crosser, cultural learner, and agent of change. Opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue and

content analysis and skills development. Requires examination of the meaning systems in which each of us is immersed, as well as examination of those meaning systems that social workers must strive to understand.

SW 500 Field Instruction I (Internship in agencies)

4 credits

Field practicum which provides generalist practice experience in a field setting. Permits application of knowledge from course work and prior work experience and the development and refinement of generalist skills. Agency field instructors provide guidance for learning in cooperation with the student's faculty adviser.

SW 530 Generalist Social Work Practice I

3 credits

Overview of the major influences on the service delivery system with special emphasis on the multiple roles of the generalist social worker, social work values, and ethics. Development of interviewing skills with focus on engagement, development of rapport, definition of purpose, and advocacy. Introduction to theory and the change process at five levels of social work practice: individual, family, group, organization, and community. Special attention to the issues of cultural diversity and populations at risk. Based on the strengths and ecological systems perspectives.

SW 550 Foundation of Social Welfare Research

3 credits

Introduction to research in social work. Stresses the importance of research to social work practice and policy. Introduction to qualitative and quantitative social work research, group designs, single case studies, and evaluation of programs and of practice. Introduction to critical consumption of research, to ethics of social work research. Considers scientific method, systematic inquiry, relation of theory to research problem formulation, measurement, sampling, design, and data collection.

SW 500 Field Instruction II

4 credits

Field practicum which provides generalist practice experience in a field setting. Permits application of knowledge from course work and prior work experience and the development and refinement of generalist skills. Agency field instructors provide guidance for learning in cooperation with the student's faculty adviser.

SW 531 Generalist Social Work Practice II

4 credits

Based on the generalist social work practice principles, assessment and goal formulation aspects of the change process emphasized at multiple levels: individual, family, group, organization, and community. Family-centered approach is focused upon. Development of interviewing skills related to assessment with cultural considerations. Collaboration and teamwork examined introduction to evaluation. Application of strengths and ecological systems perspectives to assessment. Prerequisite: SW530.

SW 551 Data Analysis in Social Work Research

3 credits

Focuses on techniques of quantitative data analysis and introduces methods of qualitative data analysis. Considers interpreting and using results to improve social work practice including program evaluation. Covers descriptive statistics, probability theory and hypothesis testing, and inferential methods. Includes discussion of culturally sensitive research and ethical issues in social work research. Prerequisite: SW 550.

SW 500 Field Instruction III (Internship in agencies)

4 credits

Field practicum which provides generalist practice experience in a field setting. Permits application of knowledge from course work and prior work experience and the development and refinement of generalist skills. Agency field instructors provide guidance for learning in cooperation with the student's faculty adviser.

SW 532 Generalist Practice III

4 credits

Based on the generalist social work practice model, intervention and evaluation at multiple levels: individual, family, group, organization, and community. Family-centered approaches with emphasis on strategies of promoting empowerment, equity, and social justice. Development of interviewing skills for intervention and role disengagement. Examination of the entire change process with focus on evaluation strategies and technologies. Prerequisite: SW 531.

SW 500 Field Instruction IV (Internship in agencies)

4 credits

Field practicum which provides practice experienced in advanced practice in direct human services. Permits application of knowledge from course work and the development and refinement of advanced skills. Agency field instructors provide guidance for learning in cooperation with the student's faculty adviser.

SW 533 Advanced Practice for Direct Human Services I

3 credits

Reviews the problem-solving process and introduces the process of constructing a frame of reference or model of practice. Addresses the evaluation of practice and theories for understanding individuals and how they both seek and resist change. Application of theories to the direct social work practice process with consideration of the importance of culture, strengths, and empowerment. Prerequisite: SW 532

SW 500 Field Instruction V (Internship in agencies)

4 credits

Field practicum which provides practice experienced in advanced practice in direct human services. Permits application of knowledge from course work and the

development and refinement of advanced skills. Agency field instructors provide guidance for learning in cooperation with the student's faculty adviser.

SW 534 Advanced Practice for Direct Human Services II

3 credits

Addresses the family of origin perspective on family systems theory. Both the worker's and the client's families of origin considered as sources of influence on the intervention process. Provides advanced consideration of family centered practice and integration of other theories with family systems theory. Prerequisite: SW 533

SW 500 Field Instruction VI (Internship in agencies)

4 credits

Field practicum which provides practice experienced in advanced practice in direct human services. Permits application of knowledge from course work and the development and refinement of advanced skills. Agency field instructors provide guidance for learning in cooperation with the student's faculty adviser.

SW 535 Advanced Practice for Direct Human Services III

3 credits

This course builds on material presented in SW 533 and SW 534 and provides students with an opportunity to integrate knowledge gained across courses and field placements. The primary purpose of integrating knowledge and experience is for students to develop and articulate a personal practice model, as this is an essential step to beginning a professional career. Additionally, post-masters professional development including supervision, self-care, and licensure will be addressed. Prerequisite: SW 534; prerequisite: SW 500

SW 510 Intro to Psychopathology

3 credits

This course aims to provide students with an understanding of the principal features and explanatory frameworks of the major mental disorders. A biopsychosocial model of psychopathology will be developed over the course of the semester. A biopsychosocial perspective encompasses neurochemistry, genetics, evolutionary mechanisms, psychological models, and social and cultural influences. In addition to a theoretical and research based understanding of psychopathology, the clinical challenge of diagnosis and the subjective personal experience of psychopathology will be pursued throughout the course. Critiques of diagnosis will be considered, not to argue that diagnosis so lacks validity as to be useless, but to highlight weaknesses and blindspots in the traditional approach to diagnosis. One weakness in diagnosis is the vulnerability to distortion by prevailing social trends and cultural values. A related challenge is using diagnosis in a manner that respects differences. These differences, including ethnicity, culture, social class, gender and sexual orientation, mediate how mental disorders are expressed and experienced. Throughout this course a focus will be maintained on clinical usefulness, including a review of research on both biological and psychosocial treatments for different disorders. This course will employ lecture, seminar discussion, case presentation and conference, videotape and computer presentation.

SW 575 Anti-Oppressive Social Justice Work in Action

3 credits

Examines current perspectives on anti-oppressive, social justice practices for children and families marginalized due to vulnerable social status such as; ethnicity, culture, race, economic status, sexual identity and other forms of bias in the larger service systems and society. Specific assessment and intervention strategies include anti-oppressive, ethnically sensitive practice, socially/economically “just” approaches for intervening with children, families and the social service providers.

Additional electives will be identified for each site based upon student and community feedback to complete the 78 credit hour degree requirement.