



BOSTON COLLEGE

School of Social Work

(Updated 7.25.25)

MSW ELECTIVE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS 2025-2026

SCWK 7719 Migration, Politics, and Social Work: The Challenge of Justice and Care (Group Independent Study) (Summer)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7701

This course will analyze borderlands dynamics and their impact on international human mobility, different regions' social policies, and social services. Recently, global border regions have taken front and center in discussions of migration and forced migration. Emerging nationalistic sentiments have fostered policies to increase surveillance and control along border regions. Border regions remain lively as local and foreign populations interact and try to navigate the effects of migration controls. This course provides students the opportunity to understand and analyze different contexts in border regions. It also allows students to identify vulnerable populations in these settings and reflect on the impact of social work practice, both in the governmental and non-governmental sectors. This course requires participation in two sessions before departure (in a hybrid mode, some in person and some online), eight days of immersion in a specific location. **Note:** This course will be offered in Washington, D.C. The days for the immersion will comprise different sessions and encounters with organizations on the ground. **An application process will limit the course to 12 students.**

SCWK 7724 Neurobiology of Stress Reduction and Resilience (Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7721

This course examines the ways in which stress poses risk to healthy biological, psychological and social development. Using life course perspective and ecological systems theory (micro through macro), the course also highlights the characteristics, relationships, and contexts that increase resilience at each life stage (in utero through end of life). Circumstances relevant to social work (including but not limited to prenatal stress, trauma, bullying, violence, poverty and homelessness) are examined through the dual lenses of stress and resilience. Neuroscientific, genetic and related biological research is emphasized in the course. However, no background in biological sciences is required as a prerequisite.

SCWK 7725 Families Impacted by Military Service (Summer)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7721

This course explores how families are impacted by military service (FIMS) emphasizing the effects of military culture within which military families function. Stressors such as deployment, and the protective factors associated with military communities will be discussed. Attachment theory will be explored as it pertains to the loss and separation involved in long-term and sometimes repetitive deployment cycles. Substance use, anxiety, avoidance behaviors, and risk-taking behaviors will be discussed in terms of their impact on family life and family system functioning. Resiliency theory will be highlighted in terms of preventing or ameliorating post-deployment difficulties in families impacted by military service.

SCWK 7726 Neuroscience of Human Relationships & Development (Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7721

Following human development from conception to end of life, the course provides students with an introduction to key neurobiological aspects (such as brain development and genetics) of the life course. Special attention is paid to examining the association between neurobiology and the nested layers and relationships in which development



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unfolds, including family, school, community and wider society/policy. Concepts important to social work (including but not limited to attachment, trauma, stress, social relationships, emotions, health and mental health) are addressed within various stages of development. No background in the biological sciences is required.

SCWK 7727 Substance Use Disorders (Summer/Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7721

This course is designed to provide students with the fundamentals for understanding the use and misuse of alcohol and other drugs, and a basic understanding of evidenced-based treatment methods. One evidence-based treatment, Motivational Interviewing, will receive in-depth attention. Primary content includes an examination of the epidemiology and basic pharmacology of various substances, established theoretical frameworks for understanding etiology, and clinical practices across an array of populations.

SCWK 7729 Public Health Social Work (Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7721

Public health social work (PHSW) emphasizes health promotion and prevention as well as targeting populations through population-based strategies. The course integrates research on health topics, populations, and settings to learn about the field of PHSW and application of skills to real-world problems. A life course perspective is used to discuss health behaviors and outcomes through all stages of development and across a range of settings. The aim of the course is to provide students a unique perspective on social work from the field of public health by focusing on health promotion, prevention, and reducing disparities at the population-level.

SCWK 7733 Working with LGBTQ Youth, Families and Adults (Summer)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7721

This course blends macro and clinical practice in order to service LGBTQ people most effectively. Students will learn about policies, laws and societal narratives that impact LGBTQ people in both positive and negative ways. The course focuses on the integration of macro and clinical issues and best practice that respects all people regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation. Particular attention will focus on developmental models of gender identity and sexual orientation.

SCWK 7735 Social Determinants of Health and Mental Health (Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7721

The majority of a person's health status is determined at a level beyond their direct control, despite public attention paid to individual-level risk factors like diet and exercise. These higher-level risk factors within the social environment are disproportionately distributed in the population, such that vulnerable populations are systematically exposed to risks across the life course that create and exacerbate social inequalities in physical and mental health. This course will enhance clinical and macro understanding of how population-level social factors shape clients' physical and mental health. The class will provide tools to a) apply the biopsychosocial approach at a population level to examine the social origins of physical and mental health conditions that they will encounter in their social work practice; b) evaluate the impact of specific social factors on population physical health, mental health, and wellbeing; and c) develop and critique programs and interventions that aim to improve health and reduce disparities by addressing the social determinants of health. The course will equip students to improve the physical and mental health of their communities by intervening on those social factors, applying the public health principles of health promotion and disease prevention to social work practice.



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SCWK 7777 Services to Migrants: A Border Perspective (Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7701

The right to migrate and protective stance of sovereign nations creates an inevitable conflict. Along the US border with Mexico there has arisen a variety of responses by government, religious and community organizations that seek to address various aspects of migration. This field based study of policy and services will seek understanding of the conflicts, explore the wants and needs of migrants, pursue the social policies that impact migration north from Central America and assess the range of human services and their outcomes in Tucson, Arizona. (The course requires two weeks of field time during the winter holiday. An application process will limit the course to 12 students.)

SCWK 7794 Immigration and Refugee Issues (Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7701

An overview of the prominent theories, major issues, and controversies in immigration policy is presented. While immigration has become a crucial concern of the American social welfare system as well as an issue of global urgency, immigration controls the fate of growing numbers of asylum seekers. The course will discuss the special needs and problems faced by immigrant and refugee clients and communities; adaptation and coping with a new culture; refugee experience; the impact of relocation on individuals, families, and communities; and a range of world view perspectives including acculturation & assimilation, biculturalism, marginality, and traditional ethnic identities.

SCWK 7799 Independent Study: Practice Sequence

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762

An opportunity to pursue an in-depth study of some aspect of clinical practice. During the 2024-2025 academic year, the following Clinical Group Independent Study will be offered which will run like a regular class. (Please note that on your transcript the course will be listed only as Independent Study: Practice Sequence):

SCWK 7799 01 Group Independent Study: Practice Sequence:

Preventing Childhood Abuse and Trauma: Advanced Theory and Practice (Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762 and SCWK 8800

This course is focused on the topic of child abuse and trauma prevention using a socio-ecological lens and a public health/social work/social justice approach. The class will start broadly, considering children's rights and positionality nationally and globally. We will also cover key elements of prevention practice, theory and how it converges with social work. We will then apply these elements to the topic of child abuse, related trauma, and the intersections of this topic with racism, sexism, ableism, and other forms of privilege and oppression. Child physical abuse will be used as the primary case example for applying a prevention approach. With this, we will cover topics such as the history and normativeness of hitting children for discipline, harms associated with this practice (e.g., risk for reportable child maltreatment, other adverse childhood experiences (ACES), etc.) and changes in this practice and related policies across nations and cultures over time. We will cover evidence-based and evidence-informed practices, from clinical to macro perspectives (e.g., parenting interventions focused on positive parenting techniques, organizational bystander interventions, and policy changes), including both national and global efforts, using both a scientific and a social justice lens.



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SCWK 8807 Global Migration and Forced Displacement: Debates and Responses (Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762 and SCWK 8800

This online asynchronous course provides an overview of contemporary global migration and forced displacement, as well as emergent issues and responses to migration. Students will complete a series of four modules: *Migrants and Refugees in the Global Landscape*; *Basics of Refugee Determination*; *Climate Change, Displacement and Human Rights*; and *Education in Emergencies*. These modules are informed by social work perspectives of person-in-environment and biopsychosocial frameworks and were created by subject experts, emphasizing the need for collaboration, interdisciplinarity, and transdisciplinary approaches to addressing complex social problems. Students will engage in online discussion based on the readings, media extracts, experiences of professionals in the field of humanitarian assistance and current global events affecting vulnerable populations in a global context. This course is not just for global social workers but for all students who want to understand and engage in global humanitarian contexts.

SCWK 8819 Social Welfare Policy Sequence (SWPS) Independent Study (Summer/Fall/Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7701

An opportunity to pursue in more depth either of the two Social Welfare Policy Sequence goals: (1) examination of the social, political, ideological, and economic context within which social welfare policies and programs are conceived and administered to meet social objectives and need; or (2) examination of alternatives in evaluating, formulating, and implementing social welfare policies and programs through an in-depth analysis of specific social welfare issues and their consequences upon human and social behavior and national priorities.

SCWK 8820 Trauma Informed Psychosocial Interventions (Summer)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762 and SCWK 8800

This course provides a foundation for understanding and implementing mental health and psychosocial perspectives in adverse and low resource settings and among culturally diverse populations in the United States and abroad. The interventions explored are trauma informed and designed for settings of adversity such as immigrant detention centers, juvenile justice settings, child welfare settings, and places and populations affected by community violence, forced and irregular migration, war, and pandemics. The course will use a biopsychosocial approach to understand how interventions work to improve outcomes for beneficiaries at the individual, family, and community levels. Throughout the course, consideration is given to how a clinical work as well as macro perspective can inform trauma informed psychosocial interventions. Emphasis will be placed on clinical interventions for individuals, communities and groups that are supported by current and emerging research evidence about effective practice. The psychosocial interventions explored in the course are relevant for both domestic and global settings. The course will focus on 'best practices' and international standards and guidelines for psychosocial and mental health work in humanitarian settings. These standards include the Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) guidelines as well as those of WHO, UNHCR, UNICEF and SAMHSA. The course will also focus on frameworks and policy interventions that strengthen community resilience.

SCWK 8822 Child and Adolescent Trauma: Clinical Assessment and Treatment (Summer/Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762

This course is an introduction to trauma theory and practice with children and adolescents. Theory is framed within a developmental perspective to understand neurobiology, brain development and attachment and their role in



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response to trauma and stress on children. Diversified definitions of trauma are considered, including single event versus complex trauma, attachment based/relational trauma, and structural violence and oppression. Skills for management of vicarious trauma are also explored. The latter half of the course examines selected modalities in the treatment of trauma, including TF-CBT, ARC and TST with a goal to understanding the theoretical approach of each modality, differential application and development of clinical skills for practice. Treatments are also examined within developmental context. Special consideration is given to the impact of separation from caregivers for youth placed in foster care, congregate care settings, and refugee youth experiencing family separation and immigration detention. The role of advocacy and resistance of youth movements in response to structural violence, oppression and historical and intergenerational trauma are also examined.

SCWK 8823 Practice in Health and Mental Health Settings with Older Adults (Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762 and SCWK 8800

An advanced course designed to develop micro and macro practice skills in working with older adults and their families in health and mental health settings. The course explores the biopsychosocial knowledge base required to develop effective interventions with specific foci on the physical and mental health considerations facing older adults and their families. Substance abuse issues and the special challenges of reaching a client population often invisible to service providers are discussed. The role of spirituality in older adults' lives and the challenges of death, dying, and bereavement facing the older adults are also covered.

SCWK8828 Wraparound Systems of Care for Youth and Families (Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762 and SCWK 8800

The purpose of this course is to enhance student exposure and understanding of macro and clinical interventions available for youth and families, with a close examination of systems across the Commonwealth. With an understanding of the history of why Massachusetts offers the services that it does, as well as a deep dive into the details of this work, students will leave the course feeling better prepared for the workforce. Topics covered include theoretical underpinnings of our systems of care, safety planning, wraparound services, and in-home therapy. Students will investigate multi-levels of care, all while imagining better and thinking creatively about what that might look like. Each session will explore services and care through a diversity lens, aligning goals and ideals with race, equity, and inclusion.

SCWK 8830 Social Work and Spirituality (Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7721

This course explores spirituality as a core dimension of human development and as a necessary area of concern for social workers. We will consider both non-religious expressions of spirituality as well as spirituality shaped by religious traditions. We will explore how spirituality contributes to optimal human development and, in particular, the power of spirituality to advance psychosocial competence, coping, and well-being. Although all students will explore common questions and topics, as a group independent study, students will enjoy considerable freedom to shape the learning experience to advance their specific professional objectives.

SCWK 8831 Dying, Grief, and Bereavement (Summer/Fall/Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7721

Beginning with an overview of the social phenomena of death and how social attitudes and practices influence the environmental context in which death takes place in contemporary society, the course explores the influence of cultural diversity in the way death is experienced by diverse groups. The tasks of mourning following a person's death



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and the bereavement process present complex socio-emotional challenges for family and friends throughout the lifespan. Issues in self-reflection and self-care are presented to offer practitioners ways to grow personally and professionally through the process of their clients' losses.

SCWK 8836 Psychodynamic Theories of Individual Development (Summer/Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7721

An advanced course that provides an overview of the psychodynamic theories that best explicate individual psychological development over the life cycle from a biopsychosocial perspective, with attention given to sources of development of individual strength and resilience. These theories include drive theory, ego psychology, object relations, self psychology, and intersubjectivity theory. Students will begin to learn to critique and compare theories for their applications to, and usefulness for, social work practice as they reflect particular sets of values and intersect with ethnicity, social class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, and other forms of diversity.

SCWK 8839 HBSE Independent Study (Summer/Fall/Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7721

An opportunity to pursue an in-depth study of some aspect of human behavior theory or knowledge. The study must be designed so that it contributes to the student's understanding of the individual, group, organizational, institutional, or cultural context within which human behavior is expressed and by which it is significantly influenced. The area of investigation must be of clear significance to the contemporary practice of social work. Any student who has successfully completed the foundation course in Human Behavior and the Social Environment is eligible to pursue independent study.

SCWK8840 Climate Change and Environmental Justice: Implications for Social Work (Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 8800

One of the key Grand Challenges of Social Work is to explore pathways to "create social responses to a changing environment". Thus, exploring interactions of environment, climate, and communities, and engaging and addressing these inequities for vulnerable poor households is needed more than ever. This course is designed as a seminar to give students an in-depth understanding of environment and climate change and its interface with communities, and its impact on vulnerable populations in North America and the Global South (particularly South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa). Topics discussed in this course will explore current literature and evidence on the interactions between ecological and social systems. Students will learn about the debates and issues foregrounding the need to view ecology and human society as a whole in order to understand and prepare for environmental and climate change.

SCWK 8843 Theories of Design Thinking for Social Change (Summer)

Prerequisite: SCWK 8800

"Design thinking" is a non-linear, iterative process that organizations use to understand users (e.g., clients, families, communities), redefine complex problems, and create innovative solutions to prototype and test. It is increasingly present in organizations striving to increase equity. This course, relevant to clinical- and macro-oriented students, will focus on theories and approaches to understand the context of program and policy development as well as fieldwork research. Topics include behavioral health frameworks, stakeholder engagement, co-design, user interviews, community advisory boards, trauma-informed approaches, and more. This material will prepare students for success in the capstone course, *Practicing Design Thinking for Social Change*.



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SCWK 8844 History of Activism in the Black Community (Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7723

Black communities in continental Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, and the United States have had a significant influence on the development of the world throughout history. Historically, Black people have been providing mutual aid long before their efforts would later be defined as "social work" and have often done so as a response to a profession that did not help them and to a profession that did not know how to help them. This course will explore the cultures, histories, advocacies, and activism that frame a universal context and the many diverse experiences of people of African descent. The goal of this course is for students to understand how policy (de facto or de jure) influenced the engagement of advocacy and activism of Black people. This historical and global context will frame their activism and see connections with how it evolved in our current climate.

SCWK 8845 Afrocentric Organizations (Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7723

The Afrocentric theory applies many African philosophies to administration, policy analysis, leadership and democracy. This class will explore Afrocentric organizations and infuse important concepts in applied techniques in community-based systems dynamics, design thinking, DEI practice and future(s) thinking to supervision and management of a social service agency. The history of significant Black-led social service organizations such as the National Urban League and the National Advancement for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) will be explored. Course work will focus on developing leadership skills in Black communities and organizations responsive to combating racism, developing activist agendas, and building capacity within the Black communities.

SCWK 8848 Practicing Design Thinking for Social Change (Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 8800 and SCWK 8843

In this course, students will practice methods connected to the theories and approaches introduced in *Theories of Design Thinking for Social Change*. "Design thinking" refers to a non-linear, iterative process that organizations use to understand users, redefine complex problems, and create innovative solutions to prototype and test. Students will become well-versed in how design thinking methods are applicable to a wide variety of work environments (e.g., those focused on education, healthcare, research, legislation, community organizing, and others in both clinical and macro roles). Major topics include prototyping, interviewing, usability testing, measuring impact, and planning for sustainability as well as scalability.

SCWK 8849 Independent Study in Research (Fall/Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7747

An opportunity for students to engage in specifically focused work in one of two areas: the formulation, design, and implementation of an empirical study of the type not possible to operationalize within other course practicum opportunities available; or the in-depth study in a particular research methods area about which no graduate level courses exist within the University.

SCWK8853 Global Humanitarian Practice (Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762 and SCWK 8800

This asynchronous online course provides foundational knowledge for those working in humanitarian crisis contexts both within and outside of the U.S. This course will enhance student awareness of protection issues, how to engage with diverse communities in crisis, and the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration. Students will complete a series of four online modules: Community-Based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, Introduction to International



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Child Protection, Gender-Based Violence, and Public Health in Emergencies. Students will analyze these modules through weekly discussion boards and oral and written assignments. This course is intended for global social workers but also for any student who wants to understand and engage in global humanitarian contexts.

SCWK 8854 Advanced Clinical Practice with Latinx Populations (in Spanish) (Summer)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762

This course prepares students for effective clinical practice with Latinx populations living in the United States. There are three units within this course meant to address the inherent needs and complexities of the Latinx community. The first unit examines the intersection of clinical social work and Latinx culture through themes of identity, family systems, and attitudes toward mental health. The second unit focuses on clinical social work and immigration by exploring experiences of migration, generational differences within families, and feelings of guilt and stress related to immigration status. The third unit is centered on the varied experiences of trauma in Latinx communities and how social workers can empathically engage these experiences in culturally relevant capacities. In each of these units we will explore (1) diagnosis, misdiagnosis, and depathologization; (2) evidenced based practices and interventions; and (3) strengths, protective factors, and resilience. This course will be taught in Spanish.

SCWK 8857 Group Therapy for Children and Adolescents (Summer)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762

This course will prepare students to design and facilitate experiential skills-based groups with both children and adolescents. Building on first-year foundational content this course prepares students to learn how to facilitate skills-based group therapy with youth. Several guiding theories, including (CBT, DBT, Solution Focused Therapy, Narrative Therapy and Motivational Interviewing), will be integrated with multiple experiential activities as vehicles for the engagement in the interventions. Most guiding theories dominate a minimum of two weeks in the syllabus to ensure depth of learning and exploration of possibilities for theory into practice. The experiential activities will include music, adventure, bibliotherapy, art therapy, and technology to assist in the engagement of clients in the learning process and will be utilized throughout the course. Assignments challenge students to develop two innovative original experiential group sessions and demonstrate competence in facilitating both of their group sessions.

SCWK 8858 Clinical Practice in Schools (Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762

An advanced clinical course that provides a comprehensive overview of the necessary skills to prepare students for effective communication with teachers and school personnel as well as with diverse families on issues related to assessment, building family partnerships, family-based treatment, and multicultural issues. The course reviews assessment and use of state-of-the-art diagnostic testing instruments. Given the relationship between school social work and special education, students will be exposed to the diverse populations served in schools and learn how to engage in practice with children with a variety of issues, including learning, physical, behavioral, developmental, neurological, and emotional disabilities.

SCWK 8860 Couples Therapy (Summer/Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762

An advanced course examining and analyzing theories, research, and interventions with couples. The use of cognitive, behavioral, emotion-focused, brief treatment, and skills-training approaches are critically evaluated. Research on their empirical bases is examined. Emphases include working with couples from diverse cultural backgrounds, practice with same-sex couples, and special issues such as living with chronic illness, poverty and economic stress,



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facing divorce, infidelity, interpersonal violence, and sexual dysfunctions. The course will describe how to adapt couple-based assessments and interventions to various settings, such as acute medical, psychiatric, and child-focused settings.

SCWK 8862 Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (Summer/Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762

An advanced practice course that integrates CBT theory, practical assessment tools, and treatment applications with work with children and adults. Lab skills classes will provide students with the opportunity to practice specific techniques. With an emphasis on the extensive literature supporting CBT as an evidence-based model, the course focuses on the CBT assessment and treatment of specific disorders, including anxiety, pain, depression, bipolar disorder, ADHD, substance abuse disorders, and personality disorders. The relevance of Cognitive-Behavioral practice with populations at risk confronting issues of age, race/ethnicity, gender, class, religion, sexual orientation, and disability will be addressed.

SCWK 8863 Cross-Cultural Social Work (Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762

This advanced clinical practice course examines effective assessment and intervention with persons of diverse cultural backgrounds. Recognizing that culture is always a salient factor in social work practice, special attention is given to the need for practitioners to have an approach that ensures practitioners' awareness of culture, and incorporation of culture into practice skills, while supporting the cultural identity of the client. Understanding culture and the dynamics of power as contextual factors determining people's realities - and consequently the values and behavioral adaptations they develop - the course focuses on the helping relationship and issues in assessment and intervention. The course is designed to increase students' knowledge of their own and clients cultural background and awareness of the values and beliefs they hold about understandings of self, family, community, mental health and well-being. Skills necessary to integrate cross-cultural issues into social work practice will be explored in the areas of assessment, intervention, case conceptualization and application of treatment approaches, in a culturally responsive frame.

SCWK 8864 Group Therapy (Summer/Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7721

This course considers many applications of social work group treatment. Through a thoughtful review of selected group therapy literature, analysis of process recordings of group therapy sessions, lectures, class discussion, and role-play exercises, students will develop an appreciation of the unique ways in which group treatment can promote individual psychosocial competence. Students will develop skills in the practice of social work treatment.

SCWK 8865 Family Therapy (Summer /Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762

An advanced course designed to integrate family therapy theories of practice and intervention techniques. Throughout the course critical issues relative to power, gender, and race will be interwoven with outcome effectiveness, research, and evaluation. Emphasis will be placed on the adaptation of the family process to the stressors of chronic illness, aging, addictions, and interpersonal violence. The strengths and problems of minority families, families living in poverty, blended families, adoptive families, and families of same sex parents will be reviewed.



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SCWK 8867 Internal Family Systems Therapy (Fall/Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762

This advanced clinical course focuses on Internal Family Systems, a non-pathologizing approach to identifying and unburdening the faulty beliefs and patterns of interaction that people carry from childhood trauma and replacing them with self-led resources, such as compassion, curiosity, courage and connections. Students will develop an understanding of the conceptual framework of the IFS Model, including its history, the Protective System (Managers and Firefighters), the Exiles and the Self. Students will learn application of the IFS model to specific topic areas, including working with couples, families, groups, children and adolescents, trauma and dissociative disorders, addictions and phobias.

SCWK 8868 Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (Summer/ Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762

This course is designed to instruct and prepare students to integrate and apply Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), a comprehensive and flexible evidence-based treatment. Students will learn to conduct thorough risk assessments, develop crisis management plans, understand borderline personality disorder from the DSM-5 and DBT lenses, create a DBT theory-driven case formulation and treatment plan by stages and targets, observing dialectic dilemmas, balancing acceptance and validation, integrating communication styles, applying commitment strategies, conducting chain/solution analysis, implementing diary cards and collaboratively problem-solving with clients and peers. Students will learn the four DBT modules: Mindfulness, Distress Tolerance, Interpersonal Effectiveness, and Emotion Regulation.

SCWK 8869 Clinical Social Work Independent Study (Summer/Fall/Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762

An opportunity for those in the Clinical Social Work concentration to investigate one aspect of social work practice in-depth. The area of investigation must be of clear significance to contemporary clinical social work practice with individuals, families, or groups. Any clinical social work student may submit (in the prior semester) a proposal for independent study in the fall and/or spring semester of his/her final year.

SCWK 8875 SCWK Macro Independent Study

Prerequisite: SCWK 8800

An opportunity to pursue an in-depth study of some aspect of macro practice.

SCWK 8876 Solution-Focused Therapy (Summer/Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762

An advanced clinical course focusing on time-effective treatments with individuals, families and groups. The course focuses primarily on Solution-Focused Therapy. Primary concepts include the paradigm shift from problem to possibility, the role of an active intentional clinician, and the careful use of language. Emphasis is given to the evaluation as key to the process, which involves building rapport, identifying a goal, and understanding the client's relationship to that goal. The course examines pivotal treatment strategies, including language, task setting, and creating hope in clients through our interventions.



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SCWK 8877 Narrative Therapy (Summer/Fall/Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762

This course focuses on narrative practice skills that are based on a belief in the power of the meaning-making systems. The course will examine models, research, and theoretical and clinical foundations of narrative therapy. Using lecture, discussion, and exercises, students will be introduced to various narrative therapy practices.

SCWK 8879 Advanced Trauma Theory and Treatment Modalities (Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 8822 or SCWK 8874; or permission from the professor

This course builds on the introduction to trauma theory and practice of Adult Trauma and Child and Adolescent Trauma to provide students with an advanced understanding of trauma theory and development of specific skills for clinical practice. The course utilizes advanced trauma theory to understand the mechanisms of change of selected modalities and differential application of these mechanisms in clinical practice, utilizing an experiential approach to trauma practice, with in class exercises and practice integrated throughout the course. Students are strongly encouraged to have taken SCWK8874 or 8822 prior to this course, or to have significant background in trauma practice and familiarity with all theories and material covered in one of these courses.

SCWK 8880 Social Work Practice in Child Welfare (Fall)

Prerequisites: SCWK 7762 and SCWK 8800

An advanced course designed to provide practice knowledge and skills for micro and macro interventions. Throughout the course the issues of poverty, diversity, and services for children of color are considered. Stressing the importance of providing services to children and families so that the family unit is preserved, issues related to family preservation, foster care, family reunification, adoption, legal issues, and emerging trends will be explored. The central focus will be on developing a solid foundation in child welfare policy and practice as a means to promoting a more responsive service delivery system.

SCWK 8881 School Social Work: Program Development & Educational Policies (Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 8800

An advanced course that provides a comprehensive overview of the history, theory, practice and policy of social work in an educational setting. Beginning with a historical perspective, this course is rooted in school social work principles that emphasize collaborative work with families, school and community personnel, professional standards, and diverse practice roles. This course provides a comprehensive overview of education policy and the legal rights of students and their families. Special issues in school social work practice related to health, child abuse, school safety and violence, trauma, substance abuse, and high-risk behavior are addressed.

SCWK 8884 Strategic Planning for Public & Nonprofit Organizations (Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 8800

Focusing on the strategic trends and issues which impact the public and nonprofit sectors, this course explores the role of strategic planning as a fundamental tool of public and nonprofit institutions to build high performance organizations, maximize organizational strengths, and enhance community problem-solving. Students will acquire practical skills through case study analysis and the development of a strategic plan.

SCWK 8886 Financial Management and Resource Development (Summer)

Prerequisite: SCWK 8800



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This Elective course prepares students to develop and manage appropriate resources for creating, supporting, and sustaining effective human service organizations. Managers must understand an organization's financials to exercise fiduciary responsibility. In order to meet the mission, agencies also depend on effective and efficient direct care staff, supervisors and managers. If there is no money, there is no mission; and if there is not sufficient and motivated staff to perform their functions, human service organizations cannot be successful. This course concentrates on these two core aspects of human services management: understanding organizational finances and human resources management and development.

SCWK8887 Global Child Protection (Summer/Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 8800

This course introduces the systems in which children, families, groups, organizations, and communities thrive and struggle in international settings. In particular the course focuses on child protection in the context of vulnerable international settings and complex humanitarian emergencies including famine, conflict and displacement. The role of social work and allied professions in such settings is explored with emphasis on the principle of 'do no harm'. The International child protection policies of Governments, United Nations agencies and International Non-Government agencies will be presented and analyzed. Strategies for translating these policies into best practice will include identifying child protection concerns and developing rigorous international child protection programs.

SCWK 8899 Macro Independent Study

Prerequisite: SCWK 8800

An opportunity to pursue an in-depth study of some aspect of macro practice. During the 2025-2026 academic year, the following Macro Group Independent Study will be offered which will run like a regular class. (Please note that on your transcript the course will be listed only as Macro Independent Study).

SCWK8899 01 Interdisciplinary Approaches to Borderlands and Human Mobility (limited enrollment based on seat availability; travel required) (Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 8800

This course will analyze borderlands dynamics, their impact on international human mobility, and different disciplinary approaches to creating effective interventions and/or regional analysis. Emerging nationalistic sentiments have fostered policies and dynamics to increase surveillance, control, and conflict along border regions. The "Remain in Mexico" and "Title 42" policies are some examples of how the United States government externalizes its borders and enforces policies that impact people's lives at different levels. This course offers the opportunity to understand and analyze different contexts in border regions, as well as the opportunity to interact with students from different disciplinary backgrounds. It also allows students to identify vulnerable populations in these settings and reflect on their particular discipline's impact on understanding and participating in borderland dynamics. **This course is a travel course** that requires the completion of two online modules, participation in two online sessions before departure, 8 days of immersion during the spring vacation of March 2025 in the San Diego, U.S.-Tijuana, Mexico region, and one additional session upon return. Participants will need to cover their transportation costs and the course tuition fee.



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ADVANCED FIELD-OF-PRACTICE COURSES: LIMITED ELECTIVE OPTIONS

On a space-available basis, Advanced Practice Field-of-Practice courses may be elective options for students in other Fields-of-Practice. Since Field-of-Practice courses are restricted to students in the Field-of-Practice, you must submit a waitlist request form. Indicate clearly on the waitlist form that the course you are requesting is an elective option for your program of study.

Summer Semester: Final Year students only

SCWK 7797 Frameworks and Tools for Global Practice (Summer)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762 and SCWK 8800

Required for Global Practice Field-of-Practice; elective for others.

An advanced course that prepares students for effective practice in a global context and covers three broad areas: a framework for the rights-based perspective; rights-based programming with reference to vulnerable groups; and building sustainable systems. Students will be exposed to “rights-based approaches” to social work practice mainly in countries of the global south. Areas of focus include working with vulnerable populations such as children in a variety of settings, gender issues, migration as well as working with various NGOs, governmental and United Nations systems. Emphasis will be placed on working with diverse client populations in each practice setting.

Fall Semester: Final Year students only

SCWK 8806 Global Policy Issues and Implications (Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7701

Required for Global Practice Field-of-Practice; elective for others.

An advanced policy course that introduces approaches, issues, and competencies of global social work policy interventions. This course focuses on policy analysis in the context of world-wide poverty, underdevelopment, and sustainable development. In the context of social justice, equality, universal human rights and international collaboration (partnerships), it perceives global systems and their policies as both a challenge for a sustainable planet and for the growth of its interdependent national/local communities.

SCWK 8837 Social Services with Latinx Populations in the United States (Fall) (This course is taught in Spanish)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7721

Corequisite: SCWK 9933 or SCWK 9943 or permission

Required for Latinx Communities Field-of-Practice; elective for others.

In this advanced seminar students will learn how different groups of Latinx in the United States understand what social benefits they are entitled to, how they experience the process of working with services providers, and how this process contributes to their empowerment and their incorporation in society (or lack thereof). Students will learn about best interventions and will acquire practical skills to provide services to different groups of Latinx and their families in the United States.



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SCWK 8846 Advanced Practice in Afrocentric Social Work (Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762 and SCWK 8800

Corequisite: SCWK 9933 or SCWK 9943 or permission

Required for Black Leadership in Social Work Field-of-Practice (formerly known as Afrocentric Social Work); elective for others.

As part of a holistic approach, the content of the course is directed towards a critical examination of social work from an African-centered perspective. The Afrocentric perspective is an orientation to data that places African people as participants and agents in shaping their life chances and experiences. We will explore implementing an Afrocentric perspective across developmental stages with Black communities, families, groups, and organizations. We will discuss the connection between intersectionality and anti-racism with the Afrocentric perspective; lastly, we will explore ways to implement the Ubuntu model and Hip Hop in clinical and macro social work practice. Thus, the course is intended to be descriptive, theoretical, practice focused, experiential, provocative, and emancipatory.

SCWK 8872 Advanced Clinical Interventions with Children, Youth, and Families (Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762

Corequisite: SCWK 9933 or permission

Required of Clinical Social Work students in the Children, Youth and Families Field-of-Practice; elective for others.

An advanced clinical course focused on the development of specific intervention skills utilized with children and their families. Clinical practice skills in individual, family, and group treatments highlight prevention and intervention strategies that promote self-efficacy and resiliency. Specific skills include parent management training, parent-child interaction therapy, solution-focused therapy with children, adolescents, and their families, trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy, and group therapy with children. Course structure will utilize experiential skills labs to promote student skill acquisition.

SCWK 8873 Integration of Behavioral Health and Medical Care Practice (Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762

Corequisite: SCWK 9933 or permission

Required of Clinical Social Work students in the Health Field-of-Practice; elective for others.

An advanced course that utilizes the biopsychosocial model of assessment of individual and family response to illness. In addition, the course will address issues in behavioral and complementary and alternative medicine. The effect of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status on health, health care treatments, and health care availability to diverse populations will also be addressed. Finally, the importance of social work contributions to research in health care will be examined.

SCWK 8874 Adult Psychological Trauma: Assessment and Treatment (Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7762

Corequisite: SCWK 9933 or permission

Required of Clinical Social Work students in the Mental Health Field-of-Practice; elective for others.

An advanced clinical course focusing on adults exposed to acute or chronic psychological trauma. Theoretical constructs stress an interactive approach: person, environment, situation. Emphasis is on the interconnections of intrapsychic, interpersonal, cognitive, and behavioral sequelae to catastrophic life events, with attention to socio-economic and cultural factors which influence an individual's differential response to trauma. Various methods are evaluated with the goal of multi-model treatment integration. This course utilized an expanded definition of trauma to include structural violence and oppression and the role of social justice in the treatment of trauma.



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SCWK 8885 Management of Organizations Serving Children, Youth, & Families (Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 8800

Corequisite: SCWK 9943 or permission

Required of Macro Social Work students in the Children, Youth and Families Field-of-Practice; elective for others.

An advanced practice course for macro students that emphasizes personnel management skills that promote employee well-being and organizational effectiveness, financial management skills including budgeting and cost analysis, and strategic fund-raising with a focus on revenue sources that support child and family services. Multiple theoretical approaches to leadership are examined, as well as organizational change, the supervisory process and the use of power and authority, and effective application of the diversity model for the inclusive workplace.

SCWK 8897 Planning for Health and Mental Health Services (Fall)

Prerequisite: SCWK 8800

Corequisite: SCWK 9943 or permission

Required of Macro students in Health AND Mental Health Fields-of-Practice; elective for others.

A course designed to introduce program planning, strategic planning, proposal writing, and state-of-the-art service delivery models. Significant emphasis will be placed on developing practical skills in the area of proposal development and program design through applying class material to practice through a major group planning assignment. Skills to analyze critical issues in mental health and health care delivery, including system design and financing, are emphasized. Critical issues of access to health care, the crisis in health care, and managed care will be discussed and analyzed. Models of service delivery will be critically reviewed.

Spring Semester

All students are eligible who have met the prerequisite requirement.

SCWK 7722 Psychosocial Pathology (Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7721

Required of Clinical Social Work students; elective for others.

An examination of the etiology and identification of adult mental disorders utilizing the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Focus is on psychological, genetic, and biochemical theories of mental illness; biopsychosocial stressors in symptom formation, assessment and treatment; cultural determinants in psychopathology; differential diagnosis; and drug therapies.

SCWK 8889 Social Innovation (Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7721

Required of Macro Social Work students; Elective for others.

Designed to prepare students with the skills to develop transformational responses to social problems through learning concepts related to innovation, needs assessment, and grant development, this course provides students with knowledge about how to create new, innovative responses to social problems and put these ideas into action. Students study examples of social entrepreneurship, learn how to assess social need, and develop new programmatic responses through grant-writing. Participation in the Social Innovation Lab allows students a first-hand look at innovation in action in existing non-profits and at how the redesign process promotes and supports new thinking.



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SCWK 8805 Policy Issues in Family and Children's Services (Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7701

Corequisite: SCWK 9934 or SCWK 9944 or permission

Meets requirement for Advanced Policy course; elective if taken in addition to another Advanced Policy course.

This course focuses on a critical examination of alternatives in formulating, implementing, and evaluating policies and programs in the area of family and children's services. Students will be informed about specific policies impacting children and families in the U.S., critically analyze how policies impact child and family well-being, and explore methods of advocating for effective policy development. Specific policy issues explored in the course include family legislation; welfare reform; balancing work and family; housing and homelessness; family and domestic violence; maternal, child, and family health; education; juvenile justice; cultural issues; immigration/refugees; and approaches in other nations.

SCWK 8817 Health and Mental Health Policy (Spring)

Prerequisite: SCWK 7701

Corequisite: SCWK 9934 or SCWK 9944 or permission

Meets requirement for Advanced Policy course; elective if taken in addition to another Advanced Policy course.

An advanced policy course designed to provide students with a knowledge and skill base for analyzing and synthesizing the policy structures that undergird the U.S. health and mental health care system. General health indicators, prevalence of mental health conditions, health disparities, and general definitions and components of health/mental health are examined. The development and organization of health/mental health services and public and private financing of services are discussed. Finally, the contemporary and near future issues and conflicts regarding accessing care, the costs of care, and the quality of care are addressed.