

SOCIAL WORK

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic needs of all people. Social work is rooted in the core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, and the importance of human relationships.

The master of social work (MSW) at Fairfield University focuses on the promotion of social justice and social change on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Fairfield's MSW is a clinical specialist program. Clinical social workers have specialized knowledge and skills in the prevention, assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and evaluation of emotional, mental, and behavioral health problems. Clinical social workers provide services in a variety of settings including private practice, hospitals, community mental health, primary care, and agencies.

Fairfield offers two tracks of study including a two-year, full-time program, and for graduates of a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited bachelor of social work (BSW) program, the advanced standing three-semester, full-time program. Graduates of any accredited CSWE BSW program may apply for advanced standing. Fairfield's MSW curriculum is offered in a low residency format with hybrid and online courses. The MSW is a widely recognized degree offering students the opportunity, once licensed, to work in a range of social service settings including gerontology, social and human services, veterans services, private practice, hospitals, advocacy and coalition groups, addiction support services, social policy and community organization, and more.

Fairfield's MSW program was awarded initial accreditation through 2029 by CSWE. In its review, the Commission found that the program was in full compliance with all accreditation standards and educational policies and granted accreditation for eight years. All students admitted to the MSW program will graduate from an accredited social work program. All faculty members are licensed clinical social workers in the state of Connecticut and maintain national and international recognition in the field through published works, research presentations, and service on numerous professional, state, and national committees.

MSW courses are offered in an online/in-person hybrid model. As this is an advanced clinical degree, to ensure high quality, intensive clinical training, most courses are hybrid (online and in-person seminars) and therefore have a low residency component. Students are required to participate in on-campus seminar hours which are determined by course requirements and will consist of multiple day residencies between 8 - 12 hours. All fieldwork requires students be present on-site and be engaged in clinical social work practice. Fieldwork is fundamental to social work education and training, and provides the opportunity for students to integrate the theoretical and conceptual learning in the classroom with clinical practice. Field experiences enable students to gain clinical competency, while providing clinical services to clients and communities in need.

Program Mission Statement

The Social Work degree programs at Fairfield University prepare graduates to recognize and value the inherent worth and dignity of all people and promote the well-being of individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. The Programs are committed to serving a diverse society and advancing respect for diversity, human rights and social, economic and environmental justice. The Programs seek to prepare graduates who possess strong knowledge, skills and values,

and uphold the highest standards of professional social work conduct. The Programs educate students in collaboration with community partners and advance the social work profession through the scholarly contributions of faculty.

Program Vision Statement

The Social Work degree programs at Fairfield University aim to develop intellectual rigor, personal integrity, multidisciplinary collaboration, informed decision-making, self-reflection and social responsibility and promote the profession of social work by educating students to become leaders for social change. The Programs aspire to prepare highly competent professionals who are skilled at providing effective service, integrating interdisciplinary knowledge, theory, and social work values with practice to address social needs. The Programs seek to inspire students to academic and practice excellence.

Admission to the Program

Application deadlines are listed online.

All potential candidates will be required to participate *in person* in a mandatory on-campus group interview as part of the admission process and will be notified in writing of their eligibility for the group interview.

The MSW program requires continuous enrollment and completion of 60 credits. In addition, candidates must maintain an overall grade point average of 3.0 and complete two years of field experience totaling 900 hours. The first year of field experience is in generalist social work practice. The second year of field experience is in clinical specialist practice.

Given the professional responsibility one assumes as a clinical social worker, candidates whose work continues to be of marginal academic quality despite remedial efforts or who demonstrate personal qualities that are not conducive to the role of a clinical social worker, or after an unsuccessful attempt to maintain or be placed in a practicum or internship site, may be terminated from the program. Failure to comply with ethical and professional standards may also result in termination from the program. In addition, the disposition statement presented in this catalog is applicable to this program as it is to all programs in the School of Education and Human Development.

Students will be charged a one-time \$200 technology fee upon beginning the program.

Programs

- Master of Social Work

Courses

SWRG 5433 Social Justice and Diversity in Professional Practice

3 Credits

Students will examine issues in professional practice with individuals, couples and families from diverse ethnic, cultural, racial, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Students increase their self-awareness of their own social identity, values and biases, and impacts on their clinical (other professional) work. Collaboration and interdisciplinary contextual factors will be considered. The course addresses the role of power, privilege, and oppression in the lives of individuals, families, and the society. The course addresses the issues of gender role stereotyping and changing sex roles, and integrates professional contributions from the professional literature. Crosslisted with MFTH 5433. Previously SK 0433.

SWRG 5447 Human Dev/Family Lifecycle

3 Credits

This course explores the processes of individual and family development from childhood through old age. Presenting theoretical perspectives for studying child, adolescent, adult, and family development, the course examines the modification of family structures over time and psychosocial development within family systems and cultural contexts. Crosslisted with COUN 5447, MFTH 5447. Previously SK 0447.

SWRG 5533 Human Behavior in the Social Environment

3 Credits

This course is designed to introduce social work students to various theoretical models that explain how human behavior is shaped by groups, organizations, and communities. The ecological and strength perspectives are employed for understanding human behavior within the context of these systems. Attention is also placed on the influence of social class and ethnicity on human behavior. This course will look at the different worldviews of diverse populations in order to help students develop and achieve cultural competencies. Previously SK 0533.

SWRG 5551 Generalist Social Work Practice I

3 Credits

Social work practice is based on a foundation of generalist social work. This course begins with an overview of the profession through its history and conceptual development and an examination of fundamental social work knowledge, values, and skills. The content focuses on social work interventions appropriate at the macro environment, mezzo and micro levels of practice. All aspects of practice will be presented in the context of cultural competence and social justice. Previously SK 0550.

SWRG 5553 Social Policy and Practice

3 Credits

This course surveys the history of social welfare policy, services, and the social work profession. It explores current social welfare issues in the context of their history and the underlying rationale and values that support different approaches. Emphasis is placed on major fields of social work service such as: income maintenance, health care, mental health, child welfare, corrections, and services to the elderly. Analytic frameworks with regard to social welfare policies and services are presented. These frameworks identify strengths and weaknesses in the current social welfare system with respect to multiculturalism and diversity; social justice and social change; behavioral and social science theory and research; and social work relevant promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation programs and services. Previously SK 0552.

SWRG 5561 Social Work Fieldwork I

3 Credits

This course offers field practice and immersion into social work process under direct supervision of an LCSW social worker. The field placement engages the student in social work practice, integrates policy formulation into a coherent professional position, and builds an understanding of social justice as integral to the profession. The field placement (and accompanying integrative seminar) is designed to support students in developing and integrating skills and knowledge learned in coursework into their professional social work practice. Fieldwork I and II require a student to spend a minimum of 450 hours in a supervised field setting. Each student is expected to assess her/his social work learning needs, and to plan and complete, with the assistance of the agency-based field instructor, activities that support achievement of structured learning goals. Student progress is monitored throughout the placement using a competency development model. Two formal student evaluations are completed: at mid-placement and at the end of the field placement. All social work fieldwork requires participation in integrative practice seminars throughout the semester. Students must complete 450 hours in generalist social work practice field placement prior to enrollment in this course. Previously SK 0559.

SWRG 5566 Research Methods in Social Work I

3 Credits

This required course is part of the research sequence in the generalist practice curriculum. The purpose of this course is to develop students' understanding and skills in the approaches, techniques, and challenges of conducting social work research and to enable students to be competent and discerning consumers of social science literature. Previously SK 0566.

SWRG 5598 Tevera Site Placement Process

0 Credits

This zero-credit course is designed for students as a mechanism for payment of SWRG Technology Fee associated with the Tevera site placement platform used for the clinical training process.

SWRG 6425 Organizational and Business Management

3 Credits

This course will provide an overview of small business and private practice management. Students will become acquainted with the technical and personal elements necessary to create and sustain a small business. Attention will be focused on narrowing student focus in order to develop a feasible strategy for creating, implementing, and maintaining small business goals. The course will draw on program evaluation research to prepare the student to assess business outcomes to ensure attainment of practice goals. Emphasis will be placed on the mastery of key components required to create and sustain a business including defining the scope and purpose of the professional practice as mandated by licensure and professional standards, marketing, financial, and legal implications, and personal and professional resources, all within the framework of the conceptualized brand. Focus will also be placed upon problem solving through case studies related to student's development of sound business knowledge. Course content will be examined through a self-reflective lens, incorporating self of the therapist, mindfulness and ethical and professional practice. Crosslisted with MFTH 6425. Previously SK 0425.

SWRG 6450 Narrative and Solution-Focused Therapy

3 Credits

Prerequisite: SWRG 5561.

This course will provide an overview of two postmodern and strengths-based therapeutic theories, concepts and applications. Students will become acquainted with the theories and concepts developed by White, Epston, Anderson, Freedman, Combs, de Shazer, Berg, and others. Attention will be focused on distinguishing between the postmodern approaches in terms of assessment, conceptualization, treatment, and theoretical foundations. Previously SK 0450.

SWRG 6552 Generalist Social Work Practice II**3 Credits****Prerequisite:** SWRG 5551.

Social work practice is based on a foundation of generalist social work. This course begins with an overview of the profession through its history and conceptual development and an examination of fundamental social work knowledge, values, and skills. The content focuses on social work interventions appropriate at the macro environment, mezzo and micro levels of practice. All aspects of practice will be presented in the context of cultural competence and social justice. Previously SK 0551.

SWRG 6562 Social Work Fieldwork II**3 Credits****Prerequisite:** SWRG 5561.

This course offers field practice and immersion into social work process under direct supervision of a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. The field placement engages the student in social work practice, integrates policy formulation into a coherent professional position, and builds an understanding of social justice as integral to the profession. The field placement (and accompanying integrative seminar) is designed to support students in developing and integrating skills and knowledge learned in coursework into their professional social work practice.

Fieldwork I and II require a student to spend a minimum of 450 hours in a supervised field setting. Each student is expected to assess their social work learning needs, and to plan and complete, with the assistance of the agency-based field instructor, activities that support achievement of structured learning goals. Student progress is monitored throughout the placement using a competency development model. Two formal student evaluations are completed, at mid-placement and at the end of the field placement. All social work fieldwork requires participation in integrative practice seminars throughout the semester. Previously SK 0560.

SWRG 6562P Social Work Fieldwork II**6 Credits**

See SWRG 6562.

SWRG 6563 Advanced Clinical Skills and Practice I**3 Credits****Prerequisites:** SWRG 5433, SWRG 5447, SWRG 5533, SWRG 5553, SWRG 5566, SWRG 6552, SWRG 6562.

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is "a collaborative conversation style for strengthening a person's own motivation and commitment to change" (Miller and Rollnick, 2012). The definition has intentionally evolved throughout the "lifespan" of this counseling posture (since its inception in the 1980s) to reflect its applicability and effectiveness not only across clinical populations, but also indeed among non-clinical populations. This first required course (of a two course sequence in MI) offers both theoretical foundations and critical skill acquisition for "beginner" competency. Methods of instruction will include didactic modules, written exercises, small-group exercises, video analyses, and many opportunities to practice key skills. Previously SK 0562.

SWRG 6564 Advanced Clinical Skills and Practice II**3 Credits**

This is a clinical skills and practice course, taken during students' final semester in the MSW program. The course is designed to introduce students to a range of therapeutic modalities, including: psychodynamic therapy, cognitive therapy, and family therapy. Students will hone skills in case formulation from multiple theoretical perspectives and application of theory to practice, using above modalities. The final capstone presentation will give students the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge attained throughout the program (across core competencies – ethics, social justice, policy, process of clinical practice) in the format of a case presentation. Students will also share a professional identity statement. 3 credits

SWRG 6568 Advanced Social Work Research and Program**Evaluation****3 Credits****Prerequisites:** SWRG 5433, SWRG 5447, SWRG 5533, SWRG 5553, SWRG 5566, SWRG 6552, SWRG 6562.

Students will develop knowledge of evidence-based practice, including skills needed to identify, acquire, and assess appropriate interventions for practice and basic skills required to evaluate their own social work clinical practice. Previously SK 0568.

SWRG 6569 Assessment Techniques and Psychopathology**3 Credits****Prerequisites:** SWRG 5433, SWRG 5447, SWRG 5533, SWRG 5553, SWRG 5566, SWRG 6552, SWRG 6562.

This advanced social work course addresses clinical diagnosis and assessment in the treatment process. Diagnosis and assessment represent the integration of information from multiple sources to provide a perspective of current individual, partner, and family functioning for the purpose of decision-making, treatment planning, evaluation, and interdisciplinary and larger system communication. This course will highlight an awareness of gender and diversity issues in diagnosis and the ethical use of formal and informal assessments. It will provide an introduction to the nomenclature and decision-making procedures of the DSM-5, and an overview of standardized assessment instruments and self-report inventories available for use with individuals, couples, and families. Previously SK 0569.

SWRG 6570 Assessment Techniques and Psychopathology II**3 Credits****Prerequisite:** SWRG 6569.

This course provides an integrative framework for assessment and diagnosis in clinical practice with adults. The process of assessment is situated in the context of clinical practice, including: collaborative treatment planning, interventions, evaluation, and interdisciplinary and larger system communication. This course will highlight an awareness of anti-oppressive practice in diagnosis and the ethical use of formal and informal assessments. It will provide an introduction to the nomenclature and decision-making procedures of the DMS 5, and an overview of standardized assessment instruments and self-report inventories available for use with adults.

SWRG 6577 Advanced Social Justice, Diversity, and Ethical Professional Practice in Clinical Social Work**3 Credits****Prerequisites:** SWRG 5433, SWRG 5447, SWRG 5533, SWRG 5553, SWRG 5566, SWRG 6552, SWRG 6562.

This course will focus on the key theories that explain the impact of the environment on human experience to be followed by an examination of how dimensions of culture, power, oppression, and cultural contexts can shape individual values, beliefs, worldviews, and identities and therefore play a role in the helping process. The course will build on Social Justice and Diversity in Professional Practice and will continue to explore areas of universality and difference in the context of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, spiritual beliefs, and socioeconomic status, as well as the realities and influence of multiple forms of oppression. Empathic and skillful clinical interventions with individuals, groups, and communities require self-understanding as well as understanding of others. This course provides an opportunity for increased self-awareness. The goal of the course is to enable students to develop a culturally competent framework for analyzing human behavior in order to create empathic, empowering relationships with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The course will also explore ethical decision-making theories and processes. Ethical decision-making is informed by knowledge of legal statutes and the NASW Code of Ethics. Exploration of interdisciplinary collegiality, ethical codes, and professional identity will also be discussed. Previously SK 0577.

SWRG 6581 Advanced Clinical Specialist Field Work I 3 Credits

Prerequisites: SWRG 5433, SWRG 5447, SWRG 5533, SWRG 5553, SWRG 5566, SWRG 6552, SWRG 6562.

In Advanced Clinical Field Work, students are placed in clinical settings where they provide therapy to individuals, couples, families and groups. Students will apply clinical models and interventions in their work with clients across the lifespan. All social work fieldwork requires participation in integrative practice seminars throughout the semester. Previously SK 0580.

SWRG 6582 Advanced Clinical Specialist Field Work II 3 Credits

Prerequisite: SWRG 6581.

This course is a continuation of SWRG 6581. Previously SK 0581.

SWRG 6900 Special Topics 3 Credits

This course explores topics in the field of social work. Topics may vary each semester and are determined by the Social Work faculty as a reflection of pertinent themes of interest in the field.