

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 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 two-semester, full-time program. In addition to the full time programs, students have the opportunity to complete their MSW education with a part-time 3-or 4- year option. Fairfield's MSW curriculum is offered in a low residency format with synchronous online live classes and with an in-person residency component 2-3 times a semester. The MSW is a widely recognized degree that prepares students to enter a profession which offers diverse potential career opportunities and the opportunity to work in a range of settings including schools and educational settings, child welfare agencies, community mental health centers, hospitals and medical settings, nonprofit organizations, addiction treatment centers, correctional facilities and law enforcement, government agencies and advocacy organizations, international settings, private practice, geriatric facilities as well as many other diverse settings of practice.

Fairfield's MSW program has been 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 and are eligible to apply for social work licensure in any state in the United States. Fairfield University has a highly qualified and accomplished faculty in the field of social work, with all faculty members holding the highest clinical level of licensure and sharing a commitment to excellence in education and practice. The faculty also has achieved national and international recognition through published works, research presentations, service to the profession and society, and a commitment to advancing the field and addressing societal needs.

MSW courses are offered in an online/in-person hybrid model. As this is an advanced clinical degree, to ensure high quality and 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 in person weekend residencies several times a semester. All fieldwork requires students be engaged in clinical social work practice. Fieldwork is completed simultaneously with course work and is considered the signature pedagogy of the social work profession. A variety of dynamic field instruction experiences provide the opportunity for students to integrate the theoretical and conceptual learning in the classroom with real world clinical practice fundamental to social work education and training, and provides the opportunity for students to integrate the theoretical and

conceptual learning in the classroom with real world 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

Please contact the Office of Graduate Admission at gradadmis@fairfield.edu for deadline information.

All potential candidates will be required to participate in a mandatory interview as part of the admission process and will be notified in writing of their eligibility for the 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 professional behaviors that are not conducive to the role of a clinical social worker, or after an unsuccessful attempt to maintain a practicum or internship site, may be terminated from the program.

Failure to comply with the National Association of Social Work's 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.

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.

SWRG 5447 Human Behavior and the Social Environment II 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.

SWRG 5533 Human Behavior and the Social Environment I 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.

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.

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.

SWRG 5554 Introduction to Substance Abuse Treatment 3 Credits

This course is an introduction to the field of substance abuse and addiction. Systemic, post-modern, and linear perspectives will be presented. A variety of models to assist in understanding the complexity of substance use and process addiction will be explored. Attention is also paid to gender, socio-economic, and cultural factors that impact substance abuse and recovery. Assessment techniques, intervention strategies, and relapse prevention issues will be reviewed from systemic, post-modern, and linear models. Throughout the course the participants will be asked to consider their own beliefs about substance use and process addictions and how those beliefs might impact their effectiveness as clinicians. The course will be heavily affective and require a great deal of personal involvement in understanding addictions.

SWRG 5561 Social Work Fieldwork I 3 Credits

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 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.

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.

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 5890 Integrated Care in Mental Health: Context, Teaming Skills, & Brief Clinical Interventions 3 Credits

Behavioral health providers are increasingly working in fast-paced, team-based settings that integrate health, mental health, substance use disorder treatment, among others. Examples of settings include: mobile crisis, health care, and higher education. This course provides students with a foundation in health care policies and new models of team-based care and prepares them to engage in effective collaborative practice using brief treatment modalities. Grounded in Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC) Competencies, student will learn effective communication strategies for working on interprofessional teams as well as develop understanding of cultural humility and client-centered care. The course will also cover core components of evidence-based clinical interventions such as SBIRT (using motivational interviewing), mindfulness, cognitive-behavioral therapy, self-management skill development, and psychoeducation. Students will engage in interprofessional discussions, practical applications/simulations, and reflective exercises throughout the course. This elective is open to any SEHD behavioral health master's student. (3 credits)

SWRG 6450 Narrative and Solution-Focused Therapy 3 Credits

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.

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.

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.

SWRG 6562P Social Work Fieldwork II 6 Credits

See SWRG 6562.

SWRG 6563 Advanced Clinical Skills and Practice I 3 Credits

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 required course 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.

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 Behavioral Therapy, and Dialectical Behavioral 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

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.

SWRG 6569 Assessment Techniques and Psychopathology 3 Credits

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.

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

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.

SWRG 6581 Advanced Clinical Specialist Field Work I 3 Credits

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.

SWRG 6582 Advanced Clinical Specialist Field Work II 3 Credits

Prerequisite: SWRG 6581.

This course is a continuation of SWRG 6581.

SWRG 6611 Trauma Informed Clinical Practice 3 Credits

Trauma Informed Clinical Practice is a clinical course that examines trauma and interpersonal violence from a critical lens exploring the various types of trauma, their effect on human lives and trauma-informed, evidence-based interventions for social work practice. Exploring the prevalence and complex dynamics of trauma and interpersonal violence from an ecosystems lens, this course contextualizes the environment in which traumatic events occur, analyzing the historical roots of movements and social policy influencing social thought about trauma and response strategies. Students will learn to think critically about the intersection of sociopolitical discourse with existing intervention approaches, as well as the intersectionality of persons vulnerable to trauma exposure and their historical, cultural legacies, and the importance of reflexive practice to effectively engage in the work. The biopsychosocial impact of interpersonal violence, relationally based trauma and traumatic events will be examined, and its effects on the developmental life course. Students will learn about the neurobiological impact and complex manifestations of trauma, including the effects of surviving adverse childhood experiences as it relates to social determinants of health. The various types of traumatic event exposure in childhood and adulthood will be reviewed. Issues of social justice and oppression will be highlighted in relation to social work practice with survivors of trauma, particularly the manifestation of power dynamics and potential re-enactment in the therapeutic relationship. (3 credits).