

# Social Work

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The Social Work major is designed to give students an understanding of how people function in contemporary society, the challenges and problems the encounter, and the social services available to them. The program strives to develop in the students an awareness of the interaction of biological, psychological, and social influences on human behavior within the social and physical environment; an understanding of the impact of prejudice, discrimination, and oppression on vulnerable groups within the society; an appreciation of and dedication to working for social, political, and economic justice; the ability to determine areas of social work concern and responsibility; and competence in entry level generalist social work practice, with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. This content in social welfare and social work is integrated with a liberal arts base. The primary objective of the program is to prepare students for immediate employment in social work; a secondary objective is preparation for graduate study.

Students who graduate from Mount Mercy with an accredited baccalaureate social work major may be eligible for "advanced standing" in many MSW programs. This usually allows a student to complete an MSW in a shorter amount of time than the regular program takes. Students seriously considering graduate school should take a course in statistics. They should also be aware that a 3.00 grade point average is assumed as a minimum entrance requirement by most graduate schools of social work, and at least a grade of B in each social work course.

The social work major aims to develop the student's ability, for example, to: demonstrate knowledge of the many facets of the social work profession; evaluate situations and determine the most effective interventions; and identify the impact diversity has on transactions between and among systems.

The program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education for the baccalaureate level. The Mount Mercy transcript shows that the student has earned a Bachelor of Arts degree with the major in Social Work.

## Career Opportunities

Graduates with the Social Work major are prepared for professional generalist social work in a variety of fields. The majority of graduates are employed in social work or related human service positions, including child protective services, foster care, in-home family services, residential services for children and adults, substance abuse treatment, programs for people with disabilities, juvenile and adult corrections, community development, and programs for elderly people. They also are eligible to apply for social work licensure in states where it is either mandatory or voluntary at the bachelor level of practice.

## Admission to the Major

Admission for further study in the social work major is conducted without discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, age, creed, ethnic or national origin, disability, or political or sexual orientation. In order to be accepted for study in the social work major, students must have earned at least a C (2.00 grade points) in all required social work courses that they have taken and in SO 215 Methods Of Social Research and PO 326 Politics and Public Policy if completed by the time they make application for acceptance into the major. All other courses specifically listed as required for the major must be passed with no less than a C- grade. Students also must have a cumulative grade point average of 2.50.

Application for acceptance for further study in the major occurs during the spring term of the junior year. In addition to having completed SW 232 prior to submitting their application, students will need to be enrolled in or have completed SW 300 and SW 320, and have a cumulative GPA of 2.50 or above for their application to be processed. Eligible students will be provided application materials consisting of Social Work Program guidelines for submitting:

1. A written statement reflecting the students' knowledge of social work as a profession and their personal qualifications for it;
2. A brief analysis of hypothetical case material.

The deadline for submission of the materials is identified at the time the student is provided the application. All materials are reviewed by all full-time program faculty to decide on the extent the materials address the guidelines and standards for acceptance into the major. If necessary, the student is contacted by the program chair and given opportunity to supplement the materials and resubmit the application. Once the materials are in compliance, one of the faculty schedules an interview with the student to discuss his/her application for further study. The student is informed of the program decision during that meeting.

Following the interview, the student receives a written confirmation of the outcome of his/her application. The student may be fully accepted, provisionally accepted (with specific requirements and deadline for removal of the provision), or may be denied admission to the program (with specific reasons for the denial listed).

Students who have been accepted into the major but who have not made progress toward completion of the major during any two-year period need to contact the department chair and reactivate their admission for further study.

## Appeals Procedure and Maintaining Good Standings in the Major

A student may appeal a decision considered unjust by submitting a written statement to the program director within ten working days of receiving the decision. In the statement the student must clearly outline the basis of the appeal and indicate if he/she wishes to exercise the right to meet with the program faculty. After reading all written material submitted and weighing the content of any meetings, the faculty will decide on the appeal. The program director will notify the student in writing of the outcome of the appeal. In the event the student still believes he or she has been unjustly treated, appeal of the decision may be made to the Vice President for Academic Affairs as outlined in the "Grievance Procedure for Students" in the *Good Book*.

In order to maintain good standing in the program, students must earn at least a 2.00 grade point average in specified courses required for completion of the major. They must also display the ability to practice within accepted ethical guidelines for professional social work consistent with those outlined in the most recent version of the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers.

Decisions about a student falling below 2.00 grade point average in one or more required courses while maintaining a cumulative average of 2.50 is handled on a case-by-case basis. The social work program follows the institution policies and procedures on handling academic grievances. These procedures are found in the publication the Good Book (<http://catalog.mtmercy.edu/archives/2018-19/thegoodbook>). Those procedures are also found in the *Student Handbook of the Social Work Program*. Each student majoring in social work is provided a copy of the Handbook when they apply for further study in the major. Appeals of decisions not related to performance in theory or field courses will follow the same procedure outlined previously.

## Field Instruction

Admission to foundation and advanced field courses is arranged through the Field Coordinator. This is done the term prior to the student enrolling in the field courses. Appropriate forms and information are distributed to eligible students by the Field Coordinator. Except by special permission from the program, no student on provisional acceptance will be accepted into either foundation or advanced field instruction.

Because the practice of social work involves a public trust, social workers in professional practice are held to high standards. They are expected to conduct themselves in ways that demonstrate collegial respect and that put their client's interests first. Professional social workers are to act in accordance with accepted ethical standards (currently as articulated in the NASW Code of Ethics) and can be subject to sanctions if violations occur.

In light of this, social work majors at Mount Mercy will be held to high academic standards and their attitudes and actions are expected to be consistent with professional standards. Course material includes the study of the NASW Code. Materials for foundation and advanced field instruction identify professional standards and what the faculty considers to be violations of those standards. Those materials also include circumstances in which progress through the field placement and/or the major may be interrupted or terminated. The *Social Work Student Handbook* and the foundation and advanced field instruction manuals contain information pertinent to this.

Depending on the nature of the client population and the services delivered, field agencies may do background checks for founded child or dependent adult abuse, and for certain kinds of criminal behavior. The results of these checks may prevent the student from doing a field placement in that agency and from becoming employed in some agencies. Students are required to sign a disclosure statement to identify impediments to obtaining a social work field placement.

## Program Restrictions

The Social Work Program does not participate in the BAA/BAS degree program. In order to participate in Mount Mercy's second degree program, social work students who have already completed a degree from another college or university must have their core curriculum courses evaluated for equivalency to those required by the Social Work Program. Courses determined to be missing as well as all courses required for the major must be completed. Only courses taken through other accredited baccalaureate social work programs may be evaluated for equivalency of required social work courses. The Social Work program does not waive any of the required coursework based on credit for life experience or for current or past employment.

## Theory and Field Courses for the Social Work Major

Students are encouraged to contact one of the Social Work Program faculty members for advice on the course sequence. Some of the required courses that are not taught in the Social Work Program need to be completed before social work courses.

There are many courses offered by other majors that students are encouraged to take as electives. Social work majors typically find that course work in political science, sociology, psychology, and criminal justice enhances their knowledge base for professional practice. Program faculty also encourage social work majors to enhance their liberal arts foundation by additional course work in English, religious studies, philosophy, history, the fine arts, and offerings in other departments.

## Major

SW 226	Social Welfare Policies and Programs	3
SW 232	Social Work Practice I	3
SW 245	Basic Helping Skills	3
SW 265	Diversity in America	3
SW 300	Human Behavior and the Social Environment	3
SW 320	Social Work Practice II	3
SW 330	Social Work Practice III	3
SW 346	Group Theory And Practice	3
SW 361	Foundation Field Instruction	6
SW 435	Senior Seminar	3
SW 461	Advanced Field Instruction	10
Select one of the following courses:		3
SW 210	Substance Abuse	
SW 225	Aging In America	
SW 235	Family Child Welfare	
SW 250	Human Sexuality	
SW 280	Marital and Family Interaction	
PS 101	Introductory Psychology	3
PS 124	Developmental Psychology	3
SO 122	Introduction To Sociology	3
SO 215	Methods Of Social Research	3
PO 111	Introduction To American Politics	3
PO 326	Politics and Public Policy	3
CO 101	Oral Communication	3
BI 123	Biology Of Human Concern	4
One course from the core curriculum writing courses		4
Total Hours		75

Social work majors may not use SW 265 Diversity in America to satisfy the Self and Society requirement. If students take any of the required, non-program courses at other colleges or universities, they should check with program faculty to assure that the courses are equivalent to those required by the Social Work Program.

## Academic Requirements

Students are reminded to review the previously stated grade requirements for courses crediting toward the Social Work major. The following is the typical sequence of courses required for the major\*:

	Hours
<b>Freshman</b>	
PS 101 Introductory Psychology	3
SO 122 Introduction To Sociology	3
One course from core curriculum writing courses	4
CO 101 Oral Communication	3
BI 123 Biology Of Human Concern	4
PO 111 Introduction To American Politics	3
	20
<b>Sophomore</b>	<b>Hours</b>
PS 124 Developmental Psychology	3
SW 226 Social Welfare Policies and Programs	3

SW 232 Social Work Practice I	3
SW 245 Basic Helping Skills	3
	12
<b>Junior</b>	<b>Hours</b>
SO 215 Methods Of Social Research	3
SW 232 Social Work Practice I (for transfer students)	3
SW 265 Diversity in America	3
SW 300 Human Behavior and the Social Environment	3
SW 320 Social Work Practice II	3
SW 346 Group Theory And Practice	3
	18
<b>Senior</b>	<b>Hours</b>
SW 435 Senior Seminar	3
SW 461 Advanced Field Instruction	10
SW 330 Social Work Practice III	3
SW 361 Foundation Field Instruction	6
PO 326 Politics and Public Policy	3
ME 450 Mercy Experience Capstone	1
	26

Total Hours: 73

The required elective may be taken when the student can schedule it and when prerequisites for it are met. Transfer students should contact a department faculty member to be sure of the appropriate sequence.

### **\*Disclaimer**

The course offerings, requirements, and policies of Mount Mercy University are under continual examination and revision. This *Catalog* presents the offerings, requirements, and policies in effect at the time of publication and in no way guarantees that the offerings, requirements, and policies will not change.

This plan of study represents a typical sequence of courses required for this major. It may not be applicable to every student. Students should contact a department faculty member to be sure of appropriate course sequence.

## **Courses**

### ***SW 100 Social Welfare: A World View Travel Course: 3 semester hours***

All countries have some form of social welfare. The policies, program structure, and availability of resources may vary, but the issues of concern are often shared. Some of these universal issues include homelessness, mental illness, juvenile delinquency, aging and long-term care, child maltreatment and domestic violence. A social worker's understanding of the US social welfare system will be enhanced by exploring how other countries view social welfare problems, and work toward their solutions. This course is built as a travel course that will tour cultural and historical sites throughout selected countries, visit social service agencies, and attend lectures and complete reading specific to the country's system of social welfare. In addition to visiting social service agencies, students will participate in a service project. The majority of student time will be directed toward experiential opportunities. Fulfills the social work elective. Additional travel costs apply. Credit can range from 1 -3 semester hours.

### ***SW 115 Introduction To Human Services: 3 semester hours***

This course is an introduction to the array of people, programs, and organizations whose intent is to respond to human needs of various kinds and intensity. It deals with both professional and non-professional activities. The course provides a basic framework for understanding the ideology and operation of human service systems. In addition, the student will develop a beginning understanding of the relationship between social policy and various approaches to human service programming to meet the intent of those policies. Through exposure to the service system in Linn County and this area of the state, the student will become informed about the service needs that exist and the responses to those needs. Social Work majors who believe they have completed and equivalent to this course should contact the instructor to discuss whether they are required to take this course. (offering winter term.)

### ***SW 210 Substance Abuse: 3 semester hours***

This course describes commonly abused drugs and specific mental illnesses, how they interact, and the resulting impact on individuals, families, and communities. The course will introduce theories of the addictive process, prevention and treatment options for both substance abuse and mental illness, and the dilemma of dual diagnosis. This course is not intended to provide specific counseling of therapeutic skills, but a general knowledge base essential to social work and other disciplines. Prerequisite: SO 122, PS 101 and at least sophomore status. Exemption from prerequisites by consent of instructor.

### ***SW 225 Aging In America: 3 semester hours***

An overview of gerontology, including the major theories used to explain the biological, psychological, and social aspects of aging. The status of the aged in America today will be examined from an historical perspective. Current issues and trends related to finances and retirement, health, living environments, and politics will be presented. Emphasis will be placed on the uniqueness of successive aging generations and students will be utilizing the knowledge acquired in the course to formulate ideas and proposals for responding to the needs of the future aging population. Format will be a combination of lecture and class discussion. Prerequisite: SO 122.

**SW 226 Social Welfare Policies and Programs: 3 semester hours**

This course examines the development of major social welfare policies and programs in the United States. It seeks to sharpen the student's ability to analyze the relationship of policy to social program, and the economic, political and ideological influence on policy and programs in the fields of housing, health, mental health, substance abuse, unemployment, and corrections are studied. Prerequisite: PO 111 and sophomore status.

**SW 232 Social Work Practice I: 3 semester hours**

This is the first course in the social work practice sequence. After examining the historical and current purposes and function of the social work profession within the context of the social welfare institution, students are exposed to an ecological systems approach to entry level generalist social work practice. Emphasized are the value and knowledge base of the profession; the nature and importance of the professional helping relationship; the bases of diversity and its role in social work practice; generalist practice with a variety of client populations and in a variety of fields of practice; and a direct and indirect intervention with both small and large systems. Students will be exposed to the general method of practice, and there is a detailed treatment of worker actions at the various stages of the method. Case studies (written and video) will stress the applicability to populations of varied racial and cultural background. There is also a 30 contact hour observation and counter component in this course. This course is prerequisite for all other social work practice courses. Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

**SW 235 Family Child Welfare: 3 semester hours**

This course analyzes the dilemmas and issues that confront child welfare practitioners as they carry professional roles. It will provide a theory base from which to proceed in service delivery, emphasizing the special work done in family preservation and out of the home care. Legal, social, and economic-political developments that influence this field of practice are included. Recommended: PS 124, SW 226.

**SW 245 Basic Helping Skills: 3 semester hours**

This is an experientially-based course focusing on the values, knowledge, and skills necessary to work in the helping professions. The course provides a model of helping, including communication and basic interview techniques for working with individuals, families, and groups. Class format offers role-plays, simulation exercises, audio-visual feedback, discussion and lecture. The course is open to all majors. First priority goes to students who need this course to complete a requirement for their major. Prerequisite: PS 101 and sophomore status.

**SW 250 Human Sexuality: 3 semester hours**

This course constitutes an overview of the many dimensions of human sexuality: biological, cultural, social moral, psychological, and emotional. The aim of this course is to increase students' knowledge and understanding of both the sexual individual and the sexual society in hopes that they can develop the awareness and skills to enhance their own life and the lives of those around them. Topics include sexual dysfunction, changing sex roles, sexual variations and orientation, issues of reproductive freedom, sexually transmitted diseases, and the exploration of sex and sexuality. Prerequisites: An introductory course in psychology or one in human biology or permission of the instructor. (Not offered every year).

**SW 265 Diversity in America: 3 semester hours**

This course takes a broad view of minority groups in contemporary America. It will address socioeconomic barriers facing such groups as women, ethnic and racial minorities, gay men and lesbian women. Emphasis will be given to developing and understanding of and sensitivity to the minority experience and an appreciation of diverse cultures and life styles. First priority goes to students who need this course to complete their major.

**SW 280 Marital and Family Interaction: 3 semester hours**

This course is an examination of marriage as expressed in contemporary American society. It will treat such topics as legal aspects of marriage, dating and mate selection, motivations of couples to be married, patterns of adjustments to marriage, stages in the life cycle of marriage, and stresses commonly associated with the stages. It also will deal with such contemporary phenomena as contract and open marriages, the high incidence of separation, divorce, and remarriage and dual career marriages that include or exclude children. The emphasis will be on the dynamics of the interpersonal relationship. Prerequisites: PS 101, SO122 or equivalent, or relevant life experience.

**SW 300 Human Behavior and the Social Environment: 3 semester hours**

The emphasis of this course is to provide the student with a social systems framework for analyzing and understanding the transactions between humans and the systems in their environment. Students will be expected to draw on content they have had in prerequisite courses, applying it to the framework. Their information base also will be supplemented by reading and discussion. Although the content of this course is developed within a social work framework, it is relevant to many students. Prerequisites: PS 101, SO 122, BI 123 (or equivalent), PS 124.

**SW 320 Social Work Practice II: 3 semester hours**

Students will use the systems model of social work intervention to study effective generalist involvement with individuals and families. The purpose of social work at these levels and related worker roles and tasks will be emphasized. Theories of intervention will be examined for their contribution to an eclectic knowledge base appropriate to the demands of contemporary social work practice. A strengths-based orientation to practice with diverse populations is emphasized. Prerequisites: SW 232, SW 226 and present enrollment in or prior completion of SW 245 and SW 300.

**SW 330 Social Work Practice III: 3 semester hours**

This course examines social work practice with large systems. Students explore change models specific to working with organizations and communities. Each system is studied to understand its internal organization and functioning, and its linkages with other community systems. Special attention is also given to the role of politics: the effect of politics on social workers, clients, and human service agencies; the social worker's fit with political activism; and the strategies to affect change within the political arena. Students use their critical thinking skills to assess, implement, and evaluate change in organizational, community, and political activities; to acknowledge the presence and etiology of social, political, and economic injustices; and to recognize change opportunities that provide for empowerment of oppressed groups. Prerequisites: SW 232, SW 226, SW 300, PO 111, and current enrollment or prior completion of PO 326.

**SW 346 Group Theory And Practice: 3 semester hours**

This course is an experimental approach to examining interpersonal dynamics in organized groups by studying such concepts as conflict, communication, decision-making, authority, creativity, conformity, and group development. Study will be directed toward acquiring basic skills and knowledge needed to become an effective participant and facilitator in groups. Attention will be given to both task-oriented and growth-oriented groups. This course is interdisciplinary; Social Work majors who believe they have completed an equivalent to this course should contact the instructor to discuss whether they are required to take this course. Prerequisite: PS 101 or SO 122.

**SW 361 Foundation Field Instruction: 6 semester hours**

This educationally directed, field-based course is designed to provide an introduction to the application of theory to social work practice. Students will have an opportunity to experience both direct and indirect service with individuals and large and small systems. Students will spend 12 hours per week in the field placement where they will be supervised by an agency staff member and a Social Work faculty member. Students will be expected to do related readings, assignments, and recording of service delivery experiences. A concurrent seminar will meet two hours per week. This course is graded pass/fail. Prerequisites: SW 226, SW 232, SW 245, SW 300, and PO 326.

**SW 435 Senior Seminar: 3 semester hours**

An examination of current issues in Social work practice and social welfare policies with emphasis on integration of field experience and content covered in courses required for the social work major. Topics researched are analyzed in light of the major themes and content areas developed throughout the social work curriculum. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all other courses required for major.

**SW 445 Social Work Independent Study: 3 semester hours**

Limited to social work majors.

**SW 461 Advanced Field Instruction: 10 semester hours**

This educationally-directed practical experience builds on the junior field instruction and allows students to increase their ability to practice social work in a community agency. Students will spend 24 hours per week in the field placement where they will be supervised by an agency staff member and a social work faculty member. Students will be expected to do related readings, assignments, and recording of service delivery experiences. A concurrent seminar will meet two hours a week. The course is graded pass/fail. Prerequisites; SW 320, SW 361, and full acceptance into the major; prior completion or concurrent enrollment in SO 215.

**SW 462 Senior Field II: 4 semester hours**

This course is an educationally directed field experience in some aspect of generalist social work practice. It will involve the student in a social service agency for 12 clock hours per week per term. Students will be expected to do related readings, recording of case or agency experiences, and meet with agency supervisors and department faculty for educational guidance. This course is graded pass/fail. This does not substitute for SW 461 and must be taken concurrently or subsequently to SW 461. It does not satisfy the elective requirement for the major. Prerequisite: permission of department faculty.