

# SOCIAL WORK

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## (Social Work and Family Studies)

St. Olaf students prepare for lives of service as responsible and knowledgeable citizens. Those who study social work are committed to enhancing human well-being and alleviating suffering. Social work, a major in the Department of Social Work and Family Studies, builds on students' liberal education by enabling them critically to examine need, illumine inherent human strengths, reflect on their ethical conduct, and explore policies and programs that address social problems. The social work mission is to prepare students ethically to serve diverse populations and to promote a lifelong commitment to a just global community. Completing a bachelor of arts degree in social work prepares students for beginning professional generalist practice with diverse clients, both rural and urban. The Council on Social Work Education has accredited the program since 1990. Graduates meet requirements for the national licensure examination at the baccalaureate level and are eligible to apply for advanced standing in social work graduate programs.

Courses meet WRI, MCG, and ORC general education requirements and are appropriate for students who are interested in social welfare, the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, Lutheran Volunteer Corps, or related areas like family studies/therapy, education, church work, and human resources. Level III courses are reserved for majors.

## Overview of the Major

Social work education builds on the liberal arts with professional foundation courses. It prepares students for generalist practice, students who understand scientific approaches to knowledge building and practice, are reflective of and responsible for their own ethical conduct, and are committed to lives of service and leadership in the global community. Courses are sequential, culminating with the 400-hour field practicum - SWRK 380 Field Practicum (3.0) and a capstone professional development course - SWRK 381 Social Worker as Professional. Students gain experience with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in settings as diverse as child welfare, health, and corrections. Practica are in nearby rural and urban communities; placement elsewhere can be arranged with advance preparation.

## Intended Learning Outcomes for the Major (<http://wp.stolaf.edu/curriculum-committee/social-work-major-ilos>)

### Distinction

See Academic Honors (<http://catalog.stolaf.edu/academic-regulations-procedures/academic-honors/#distinction>)

#### Criteria for Distinction

- An overall St. Olaf GPA of 3.0 or higher
- A GPA of 3.5 or higher in courses required for Social Work (including prerequisite courses)

- Completion of one of the following:

- Independent internship with a written reflection of learning through the experience
- Independent research with written reflection of learning through the experience
- Independent study with written reflection of learning

### Procedure/Process for Distinction

1. During Junior year, or at least by December of senior year, consider possible options for distinction work and discuss with faculty if needed
2. March 1: Senior Social Work major requests consideration for distinction via email to the Department Chair.
3. April 1: Student submits distinction material electronically to the Department Chair.
4. Early April: A committee of department faculty, along with a fieldwork instructor, and/or a social work alum familiar with the content area of the distinction work, reviews the work. The committee then meets in oral interview with the candidate to hear a presentation and discuss the work.
5. Mid April: Committee makes a decision about the distinction application and the chair notifies the candidate of the decision in writing. Department Chair then sends name(s) of distinction awardee(s) to the Registrar.

Distinction is awarded to students who show they have gone above and beyond the requirements of the major in social work. Students should demonstrate how the work is informed by social work theory, methods, research, and ethics – the art and science of social work – and how its completion provides evidence of generalist social work preparation in a liberal arts context. In other words, how is the conception for, completion of, and reflection on this work illustrative of social work, as compared to something similar that might be completed by a history or sociology senior at St. Olaf.

The Department generally awards distinction to fewer than 10% of the graduating class each year. The criteria we use to decide whether the work is deserving of distinction includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Connections to academic learning (How was your work informed by your social work curriculum? How did the content you learned in your theory, research and practice courses inform your work? How did your broader liberal arts education inform your work? What sources in the social work literature are related to your work?)
2. Connections to competencies (Which competencies did you demonstrate in your distinction project and how? No need to demonstrate all ten!)
3. Illustration of relationship between this project and the social work program mission statement
4. Possible connections to field experiences (shadowing, practicum, or other internships)...did the experience confirm or challenge other experiences?
5. Implications for your future career and the social work profession.

The presentation and conversation for the distinction work will be scheduled in early-mid April, after the work is submitted, and will last one hour. We need to have the written work for review by the deadline date. At the meeting to decide distinction, we expect you to present

for about half the time and allow the other half for questions and discussion.

#### Broad guidelines for the presentation of distinction work:

1. Provide a brief (10 minute) introduction to the work. What inspired you to do this work? What did you do? How does this work apply to the next stage in your professional development?
2. The committee will have opportunity to ask questions to clarify and better understand your work (the idea here is to give you a chance to strengthen your possibility of being granted distinction, not to trip you up in any way).
3. The committee will ask you to leave after about 45-50 minutes, then will discuss your work and make a determination about distinction
4. The Chair will notify you by email within 24 hours about the committee's decision; a written letter of notification will follow.
5. The Chair will notify the Registrar's Office of the name(s) of those awarded distinction.

## Special Programs

The St. Olaf social work program encourages student participation in off-campus study, both domestic and international. Majors can conveniently schedule an Interim abroad. To participate in a semester program off-campus (e.g., HECUA in South America, ACM Chicago Urban Studies, Tanzania, Namibia, or Mexico) and complete the major requirements in four years, students must plan in the first year with the help of social work faculty. St. Olaf co-sponsors Social Work in a Latin American Context (Mexico) ([https://studyabroad.augsburg.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=Programs.ViewProgram&Program\\_ID=21254](https://studyabroad.augsburg.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=Programs.ViewProgram&Program_ID=21254)) for social work majors, which fulfills major requirements, in the spring semester of the junior year.

Students often count social work courses for other interdisciplinary majors and concentrations including family studies, race and ethnic studies, and women's and gender studies. Social work majors are eligible for student-rate membership in the National Association of Social Workers and to receive its publications.

Social work faculty occasionally supervise students doing independent study/research in social welfare and social service after the student has completed at least one social work course. Completing the social work major is possible only through regular coursework, however.

## Recommendations for Graduate Study

Students considering social work graduate school are strongly encouraged to consult faculty about appropriate undergraduate courses. Human biology and statistics are usually required for admission to social work graduate programs. Department offerings provide preparation for graduate study in marriage and family therapy, non-profit management, public policy, ministry, special education, law, and related fields. Students who excel in the social work major are often eligible for advanced standing in Master of Social Work (MSW) programs.

## Requirements

### Requirements for the Major Admission to and Retention in the Social Work Program

The program actively seeks and encourages students from diverse backgrounds to consider a social work major and provides one-to-one advising.

First- and second-year students interested in social work are encouraged to submit an Interest Inventory. It is available from program faculty, and on the department website (<http://wp.stolaf.edu/socialwork>). The major application, admission requirements, requirements to remain in good standing in the program, processes for petitioning reinstatement, and grievance procedures for redress of any adverse decision are also there. The program does not discriminate against any student on the basis of age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, geographic location, immigration status, physical or mental ability, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, or sexual orientation. Students are formally notified in writing of admission to the major by January of the junior year.

Students who transfer to St. Olaf at or before the beginning of the junior (third) year may be considered for admission to the major, provided they have completed equivalent prerequisite courses in sociology, psychology, and human biology. Field practicum and practice courses must be completed while enrolled at St. Olaf. No credit or waiver is given for previous internship, work, or life experience.

### Requirements for the Social Work Major

Those interested in the major should contact a department faculty member in their first year or as early as possible. Students in good standing at the college who have satisfactorily completed prerequisite courses and SWRK 221 are eligible to apply for admission to the major. Students are granted major status only after satisfactory completion of SWRK 221, SWRK 246, SWRK 254, and a program application. Students should achieve a grade of C or better in all prerequisite and required courses to progress in the major. Details are specified in the program manual available from faculty or the department website.

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Prerequisite Courses Required for the Major</b>		
SOAN 121	Introduction to Sociology <sup>1</sup>	1.00
PSYCH 125	Principles of Psychology	1.00
PSYCH 241	Developmental Psychology	1.00
BIO 123 or BIO 243	Human Biology <sup>2</sup> Human Anatomy and Physiology: Organs and Organ Systems	1.00
<b>Foundation Social Work Courses Required for the Major</b>		
SWRK 221	Social Work and Social Welfare	1.00
SWRK 246	Human Behavior in the Social Environment	1.00
SWRK 254	Inclusive Practice: Individuals and Families	1.00
SWRK 258	Social Policy	1.00

SWRK 261	Inclusive Practice: Groups, Organizations and Communities	1.00
SWRK 274	Research Methods in Social Work	1.00
SWRK 373	Just Practice <sup>3</sup>	1.00
SWRK 380	Field Practicum (3.0) <sup>3, 4</sup>	3.00
SWRK 381	Social Worker as Professional	1.00

<sup>1</sup> Or another sociology course approved by a social work advisor

<sup>2</sup> Or another biology course approved by a social work advisor

<sup>3</sup> SWRK 373 and SWRK 380 together constitute a full semester's work (4.0 credits)

<sup>4</sup> A field practicum of at least 400 clock hours, professionally supervised in an affiliated agency, is required during fall semester of the senior year.

Students must be admitted to the social work major and in good academic standing to register for all level III courses. Field practicum experience may be completed while living on- or off-campus. Statistics is strongly recommended, especially for students who anticipate graduate study.

## Courses

### **SWRK 122: Global Challenges**

Students explore seven major challenges affecting the world's people including population, resource management, economic integration, information, technology, conflict/security, and governance with an emphasis on their relation to global citizenship and human rights. This course examines issues from social science and global problem-solving perspectives with particular attention to how culture and place affect human experience. Students engage in discussions, forums, a global village activity, and an action project. Offered periodically during Interim.

### **SWRK 221: Social Work and Social Welfare**

Students study the progression of the U.S. social welfare "system" from English Poor Laws through the Social Security Act to contemporary reforms. They examine how its components (public, private, faith-based) interrelate to serve diverse individuals, families, and communities. The development of social work, its foundational knowledge, values, and skills, and its relationship to fields of social welfare are included. Students shadow a social worker for four hours. Offered each semester. Counts toward American studies major, family studies concentration, and race and ethnic studies major and concentration.

### **SWRK 246: Human Behavior in the Social Environment**

Humans relate to one another in diverse families, groups, organizations, and communities. Through traditional and alternative theoretical perspectives on human behavior, students apply prerequisite and advanced material from biology, sociology, psychology, and social work to assess situations encountered by social workers. Diverse examples are drawn from literature, social work research, and from students' autobiographies. Offered annually in the fall semester. Counts toward management studies concentration.

**Prerequisites:** SOAN 121, PSYCH 241, and BIO 123 or BIO 243; open to non-majors by permission of chair only.

### **SWRK 254: Inclusive Practice: Individuals and Families**

Social work majors study the methods and skills of social work practice, particularly intercultural communication. They describe strengths and problems of diverse individuals and families; frame goals and plans for change utilizing the planned change process and the systems perspective; and use ethical decision-making, informed by the scientific method, grounded in the liberal arts, and concerned with social justice. Students demonstrate learning in recorded role playing and have an academic civic engagement experience. Offered annually in the fall semester.

**Prerequisites:** SWRK 221 and concurrent enrollment in SWRK 246.

### **SWRK 258: Social Policy**

Social welfare policies exemplify how society's values and needs translate into policies and programs. Social workers create, implement, and evaluate policies in all areas of social policy. Students study policy formation and analysis that reflect interests and powers of diverse groups as well as economic and social realities of certain populations at risk of poverty and discrimination. The course emphasizes policy impact on women, people in poverty, people of color and the LGBT community, and empowerment in policy practice. Open to non-majors by permission of instructor. Offered annually in the spring semester. Counts toward American studies major and management studies concentration.

### **SWRK 261: Inclusive Practice: Groups, Organizations and Communities**

Social work majors continue to study the methods and skills of generalist practice. They assess strengths and problems of diverse groups, organizations, and communities and use the systems perspective to help client systems frame goals and plans for social change. Students assess macrosystems and develop plans for implementing change that are reflective, scientific, just, and grounded in the liberal arts. This course includes an academic civic engagement community project. Offered annually in the spring semester.

**Prerequisite:** SWRK 254.

### **SWRK 274: Research Methods in Social Work**

Social work majors study scientific philosophies and approaches to ethical knowledge building for social work practice. The course includes an overview of the research process using both quantitative and qualitative methods, with special attention to how research knowledge informs generalist social work practice. Students apply course concepts in the field through an academic civic engagement component. Open only to social work majors. Offered annually in the spring semester. Counts toward management studies concentration.

### **SWRK 280: Social Realities in South Africa (abroad)**

Students study historical and contemporary realities of race, class, gender, health, welfare, and human rights in South Africa. This dynamic society provides unique opportunities to study the challenges and successes of inclusion, respect, restitution, and reconciliation in the post-Apartheid era. Students travel to three regions and meet with scholars, activists, and practitioners in a variety of settings. Special emphasis is on the situations of women, children, and families. Offered periodically during Interim. Counts toward Africa and the Americas and family studies concentrations and race and ethnic studies major and concentration.

**Prerequisite:** one course in political science, sociology/anthropology, social work, economics, psychology, family studies, or women's and gender studies.

**SWRK 294: Academic Internship****SWRK 298: Independent Study****SWRK 373: Just Practice**

This course immediately precedes SWRK 380. The course provides an overview of how structural oppression across cultural positions (e.g. race, sexuality, ability, class) may affect client systems. Students integrate awareness, knowledge, and skills for engaging in anti-oppressive, inclusive practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. This includes role plays assisting clients who are challenged by oppression as part of their presenting problems and brief immersions with diverse communities. Offered annually in September. Counts toward race and ethnic studies major and concentration.

**Prerequisite:** SWRK 261. For senior majors only.

**SWRK 380: Field Practicum (3.0)**

In this experience, social work majors complete at least 400 hours in a rural or urban agency with structured learning about generalist practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities from diverse backgrounds. Students engage in professional responsibilities with careful guidance and supervision from the field supervisor and the field coordinator. Students attend a weekly evening seminar to integrate classroom learning, share experiences, and obtain support. Offered annually in the fall semester.

**Prerequisite:** Majors who have satisfactorily completed all foundation and required courses with numbers below 380.

**SWRK 381: Social Worker as Professional**

This capstone course is for senior majors. Students begin a professional web presence to illustrate their readiness to begin practice as a generalist social worker. Classes emphasize auxiliary knowledge and skills in leadership. Students discuss emerging social work issues and provide peer assistance with professional development strategies. Evaluation includes oral presentation, ethics case analysis, professional development reflection assignments, and self-evaluation of achievement of program competencies. Counts toward management studies concentration.

**Prerequisite:** SWRK 380.

**SWRK 394: Academic Internship****SWRK 396: Directed Undergraduate Research**

This course provides a comprehensive research opportunity, including an introduction to relevant background material, technical instruction, identification of a meaningful project, and data collection. The topic is determined by the faculty member in charge of the course and may relate to his/her research interests. Offered based on department decision. May be offered as a 1.00 credit course or .50 credit course.

**Prerequisite:** determined by individual instructor.

**SWRK 398: Independent Research**

## Faculty

**Chair, 2017-2018 (Spring)**

**Mary S. Carlsen** (on leave fall and Interim)

Professor of Social Work and Family Studies

social policy; global social work; professional ethics; end of life care; family studies

**Chair, 2017-2018 (Fall and Interim)**

**Susan E. Smalling**

Associate Professor of Social Work and Family Studies

anti-oppressive research and practice; indigenous populations; family and child welfare

**Jordon Johnson**

Visiting Assistant Professor of Social Work and Family Studies

**Lisa L. Moore**

Assistant Professor of Social Work and Family Studies

race and culture in families; emerging adulthood theory; social work practice

**Kristen Perron**

Instructor in Social Work and Family Studies