

## SOCIAL WORK

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St. Olaf students prepare for lives of service as responsible and knowledgeable people. Those who study social work are committed to enhancing human well-being and promoting social justice. 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 educational requirements for the national BSW licensure examination at the baccalaureate level and are eligible to apply for advanced standing in social work graduate programs.

Courses are appropriate for students who are interested in social welfare policy and practice and/or related areas like family studies/therapy, education, and human resources. Level III and some level II courses are reserved for majors only.

### 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. Practicum sites are in local communities; placement elsewhere can be arranged with advance preparation.

### Intended Learning Outcomes for the Major

See Academic Honors

### Special Programs

The St. Olaf social work program encourages student participation in study abroad and away programs. Majors can conveniently schedule a January term abroad, as there are no required social work courses during January. To participate in a semester program abroad or away 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) 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 gender and sexuality 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

#### 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 meet with a faculty member and consult the department website. 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, 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.

For approvals for courses other than SOAN 121 Introduction to Sociology or BIO 123 Human Biology or BIO 243 Human Anatomy and Physiology: Organs and Organ Systems please see the Social Work Program Director/Chair of Social Work and Family Studies.

### Requirements for the 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 passing grade for Psychology 125 and a grade of C- or better in all other prerequisite courses. Students must receive a C or better in required social work 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	Human Biology <sup>2</sup>	1.00
or BIO 243	Human Anatomy and Physiology: Organs and Organ Systems	
<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

**1**

Or another sociology course approved by the SW Program Director

**2**

Or another biology course approved by the SW Program Director

**3**

SWRK 373 and SWRK 380 together constitute a full semester's work (4.0 credits)

**4**

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.

*\*By completing this major, the student also satisfies the OLE Core Writing in the Major requirement.*

## Courses

### **SWRK 120: I Want to Help People**

Students explore service to human beings as a profession, both vocation and avocation. Who needs help? Who helps? Where? How? What motivates people to help? Using the liberal arts as a foundation for helping people, students study opportunities in areas such as health care, social services, ministry, youth work, and the arts. The class includes lectures, discussions, speakers, and field visits. Offered periodically during January term. Does not count toward social work major.

### **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 January term. Does not count toward social work major.

### **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.

### **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.

**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 empowerment in policy practice. Offered annually in the spring semester.

**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. 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. Open to non-majors by permission of instructor. Offered annually in the spring semester.

**Prerequisite:** social work major.

**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 during fall semester.

**Prerequisite:** SWRK 261.

**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 PSYCH 241, SOAN 121, BIO 123 or BIO 243, and all 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. Also counts toward business and 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 their 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**

## Plan of Study

### Social Work Major - Plan of Study

This is a sample first-year plan that meets the requirements for the Social Work major at St. Olaf. This tool is meant as a guide and does not replace working closely with the student's academic advisor.

Please see the planning guide on the Social Work department's website for additional information.

Courses in the Social Work major 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. Practicum sites are in local communities; placement elsewhere can be arranged with advance preparation

Course	Title	Credits
<b>First Year</b>		
<b>Fall Semester</b>		
FYS 120 or WRIT 120	First-Year Seminar (or Conversation Program) or Writing and Rhetoric	1.00
PSYCH 125	Principles of Psychology	1.00
SOAN 121	Introduction to Sociology	1.00
World Language		1.00
<b>Credits</b>		<b>4</b>
<b>January Term</b>		
SWRK 120 or SWRK 122	I Want to Help People or Global Challenges	1.00
<b>Credits</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>Spring Semester</b>		
WRIT 120 or FYS 120	Writing and Rhetoric (or Conversation Program) or First-Year Seminar	1.00
PSYCH 241	Developmental Psychology	1.00
World Language		1.00
<b>Credits</b>		<b>3</b>

**Sophomore Year****Fall Semester**

BIO 123	Human Biology	1.00
SWRK 221	Social Work and Social Welfare	1.00
<b>Credits</b>		<b>2</b>

**Spring Semester**

This semester is available for study abroad or away enrollment with appropriate planning.

<b>Credits</b>		<b>0</b>
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**Junior Year****Fall Semester**

SWRK 246	Human Behavior in the Social Environment	1.00
SWRK 254	Inclusive Practice: Individuals and Families	1.00
<b>Credits</b>		<b>2</b>

**Spring Semester**

SWRK 258	Social Policy	1.00
SWRK 261	Inclusive Practice: Groups, Organizations and Communities	1.00
SWRK 274 or OFFC 271	Research Methods in Social Work <sup>1</sup> or Augsburg CGEE: Social Work in a Latin American Context	1.00
<b>Credits</b>		<b>3</b>

**Senior Year****Fall Semester**

SWRK 373	Just Practice	1.00
SWRK 380	Field Practicum (3.0)	3.00
<b>Credits</b>		<b>4</b>

**Spring Semester**

SWRK 381	Social Worker as Professional	1.00
<b>Credits</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>20</b>

**1**

Research Methods (SWRK 274) is not offered in the Social Work in Latin American study abroad program (OFFC 271). If study abroad is taken in spring semester of Junior Year, it is necessary to take SWRK 274 in spring semester of Sophomore Year or spring semester of Senior Year.

Students must successfully complete the equivalent of 35 St. Olaf credits through a combination of full-credit and fractional-credit courses to earn the Bachelor of Arts.

Visit the Social Work department webpage for more information.

## Faculty

**Program Director, 2025-2026****Kimberly Doran**

Visiting Assistant Professor of Social Work and Family Studies

**Department Chair, 2025-2026****Erica Kanewischer**

Associate Professor of Practice of Social Work and Family Studies

**Gwendolyn (Wendy) Anderson**

Associate Professor of Social Work and Family Studies

**Hillary Lamberty**

Visiting Assistant Professor of Social Work and Family Studies; Social Work Field Coordinator

**Jessica Simpson**

Adjunct Assistant Professor of Social Work and Family Studies

**Susan E. Smalling**

Professor of Social Work and Family Studies; Associate Dean for Social Sciences; Director of Faculty Community Belonging anti-oppressive research and practice; indigenous populations; family and child welfare

**Beth Winterfeldt**

Adjunct Assistant Professor of Social Work and Family Studies