Social Work (SCWK)

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Degree Conferred: Master of Social Work (M.S.W.)

Program Description: Professional social workers promote human well-being by strengthening opportunities, resources, and capacities of people in their environments and by creating policies and services to correct conditions that limit human rights and the quality of life. The social work profession works to eliminate poverty, discrimination, and oppression. Guided by a person-in-environment perspective and respect for human diversity, the profession works to effect social and economic justice worldwide. The purpose of the graduate social work program at the University of Arkansas is to prepare advanced-level professional social workers as leader/practitioners with the capacity to address complex personal, social, community, and economic problems preventing so many of Arkansas’ people (and people across the country and globally) from moving out of poverty to self-sufficiency. The M.S.W. program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

Areas of Study: The School of Social Work offers focused studies in multi-system life-course. The multi-system life-course perspective prepares students for advanced social work practice with a range of systems (individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities) and for practice with individuals across the life course as they interact with multiple systems.

Primary Areas of Faculty Research: Healthy aging; human behavior and the social environment theory; gerontology; addictions; health and health disparities; poverty reduction; human diversity; international social work; social work history; women and asset development; children and families; domestic violence; and human trafficking.

M.S.W. in Social Work

Admission Requirements: Admission to the University of Arkansas Graduate School as well as admission to the School of Social Work M.S.W. program is required. Admission requirements for all of the M.S.W. programs include: a baccalaureate degree with a liberal arts perspective from an accredited college or university (official transcripts must be provided). A personal statement of motivation for and experiences supporting admission to the MSW program; a social needs paper that discusses a current social need that is of concern and interest to the applicant; three professional reference letters (faculty, employers, supervisors); a basic statistics course; and computer literacy demonstrated through prior course work.

Admission to the Advanced Standing Program (on campus or online). Applicants must have a Bachelor of Social Work from a CSWE accredited University in the past six years. If the bachelor's degree was earned over six years ago, the applicant may submit a petition for exception, demonstrating a significant history of social work employment and continuing education. Applicants must have a minimum 3.00 undergraduate GPA on a four-point scale for the last 60 hours of the first bachelor’s degree. Applicants are exempt from taking the GRE or MAT.

Admission to the two and three year programs. A minimum 3.00 undergraduate GPA on a four-point scale for the last 60 hours of the first bachelor’s degree. Two and three year students may be considered for conditional admission with a 2.75-2.99 GPA with the submission of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or Millers Analogies Test (MAT) to the graduate school.

Two-year Program Option: This option is available for students without a baccalaureate degree from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Students in the two-year option must successfully complete a total of 63 credit hours. The following are required Foundation courses:

- SCWK 5273 Social Work Research and Technology I 3
- SCWK 5093 Human Behavior and the Social Environment I 3
- SCWK 5103 Human Behavior and the Social Environment II 3
- SCWK 5353 Social Welfare Policy 3
- SCWK 5333 Social Work Practice I 3
- SCWK 5543 Social Work Practice II 3
- SCWK 5733 Social Work Practice III 3
- SCWK 5003 Foundations of Culturally Competent Social Work Practice 3
- SCWK 5013 Bridge Course: Evidenced Based Social Work 3
- SCWK 5412 Foundation Field Seminar 2
- SCWK 5434 Foundation Field Internship 4

The following are required Advanced courses:

- SCWK 5073 Social Work Research and Technology II 3
- SCWK 6003 Advanced Social Work Practice Using the MSLC Perspective 3
- SCWK 6442 Advanced Field Seminar I 2
- SCWK 6444 Advanced Field Internship I 4
- SCWK 6452 Advanced Field Seminar II 2
- SCWK 6454 Advanced Field Internship II 4

Three-year Extended Program Option: This option is available for students without a baccalaureate degree from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Students in the three-year extended program must successfully complete a total of 63 credit hours. The following are required foundation courses:

- SCWK 5273 Social Work Research and Technology I 3
- SCWK 5093 Human Behavior and the Social Environment I 3
- SCWK 5103 Human Behavior and the Social Environment II 3
- SCWK 5353 Social Welfare Policy 3
- SCWK 5333 Social Work Practice I 3
SCWK 5543    Social Work Practice II     3
SCWK 5733    Social Work Practice III    3
SCWK 5003    Foundations of Culturally Competent Social Work Practice     3
SCWK 5013    Bridge Course: Evidenced Based Social Work     3
SCWK 5412    Foundation Field Seminar     2
SCWK 5434    Foundation Field Internship     4

The following are required advanced courses:

SCWK 5073    Social Work Research and Technology II     3
SCWK 6003    Advanced Social Work Practice Using the MSLC Perspective     3
SCWK 6442    Advanced Field Seminar I     2
SCWK 6444    Advanced Field Internship I     4
SCWK 6452    Advanced Field Seminar II     2
SCWK 6454    Advanced Field Internship II     4

Please note that the three-year extended program accepts students every other year (e.g. Fall 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, etc.)

Advanced Standing Option: Students with a baccalaureate degree from a program accredited by CSWE are eligible to apply for Advanced Standing. This option requires a total of 39 credit hours including SCWK 5013, SCWK 5442, SCWK 5444, and the advanced course work listed above for the two- and three-year options. Students may complete the advanced standing option on campus or online.

Electives: Each student is required to successfully complete three electives (9 credit hours). Electives are chosen in consultation with and with approval from the student’s major faculty adviser. Students may enroll in electives outside the School of Social Work, with faculty adviser approval.

Each student is required to successfully complete a population-specific practice course (3 credit hours) from either SCWK 6233 or SCWK 6243. Students may choose to take the other population-specific practice course as an elective.

Graduate social work electives include:

SCWK 5143    Global Social and Economic Justice and Oppression     3
SCWK 5163    Social Work Management, Administration and Supervision     3
SCWK 5173    Advanced Practice with Families and Couples     3
SCWK 5183    Advanced Practice with Individuals     3
SCWK 5213    Advanced Practice in Behavioral and Mental Health     3
SCWK 5253    Spirituality and Social Work Practice     3
SCWK 5343    Advanced Practice with Groups     3

Elective topics often change from semester to semester based on faculty expertise and student interest. Therefore, it is not possible to guarantee specific electives.

Other Requirements: M.S.W. students are required to complete a capstone paper and presentation. The capstone project is a research experience in the area of practice/program evaluation, guided and evaluated by a panel of faculty and senior social work practitioners from the community. Students may choose instead, with faculty approval, to complete a thesis. The thesis option is guided by the student’s thesis committee, resulting in a final paper and oral defense. Both options are completed in conjunction with the three-hour Research and Technology course. Only those choosing the thesis option must enroll in thesis hours in their advanced year.

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The Department of Social Work and the School of Law cooperate in offering a dual degree program that allows a student to pursue the Master of Social Work and the Juris Doctor degrees concurrently in order to achieve the following program objectives:

1. To educate practitioners in social work and law to be able to effectively utilize the problem-solving strategies and techniques of both disciplines to the benefit of their clients, their colleagues, and the community.

2. To provide the core curriculum necessary for the education of students in each profession while enabling them to focus on areas of knowledge and practice that correspond to their professional goals.

3. To facilitate integration of the two disciplines through experiential learning opportunities.

4. To promote a philosophy of interdisciplinary collaboration between law and social work professionals and create a collaborative learning environment.

5. To prepare practitioners who have a commitment to a human condition that is free from violence, oppression, and discrimination, and that protects and promotes the development of all people.

J.D./M.S.W. Program

The Juris Doctor/Master of Social Work dual degree is awarded after completion of a four-year integrated course of study. This eliminates approximately one year of study, while meeting all accreditation requirements of the American Bar Association and Council on Social Work Education.

Upon completion of the dual degree, students have earned a total of 135 credit hours (as opposed to 153 credit hours if the degrees are earned separately). A total of 12 hours credit earned in the M.S.W. program count toward completion of the J.D. degree. A total of 6 hours credit earned in the J.D. program count toward completion of the M.S.W. degree. In order to receive dual credit, minimum grade standards for each program must be met.

Students who do not maintain the academic or ethical standards of either degree program may be terminated from the dual degree program. Students in good standing in one degree program but not the other may be allowed to continue in the program in which they have good standing and must meet the degree requirements of that program. If for any reason a student admitted to the dual degree program does not complete the M.S.W. degree, the student cannot count the 12 hours of M.S.W. courses toward the J.D. degree. If for any reason a student admitted to the dual degree program does not complete the J.D. degree, the elective policy for the School of Social Work applies.

To be eligible for admission to the J.D./M.S.W. Dual Degree Program, students must apply separately and be admitted to the master’s program at the School of Social Work, to the juris doctor program at the School of Law, and to the joint program. As such, applicants must meet all of
the requirements for admission to each program. Upon application to the J.D./M.S.W. dual degree, the applicant shall provide a statement of intent for admission that includes a brief explanation of the reasons for pursuing this dual degree program as well as goals upon completion of the program. Each degree will be conferred when the student has met all the requirements of that degree.

Should a student enter one program and later become aware of the availability of the joint program, the student must be admitted to both programs and to the joint program during his or her first year of class work in the program of original enrollment.

Graduate Faculty Courses

SCWK 5003. Foundations of Culturally Competent Social Work Practice. 3 Hours.
The purpose of this course is the acquisition and demonstration of beginning graduate-level social work values and ethics, knowledge, and skills necessary for cultural competence in work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and global contexts. A multi-systems life-course conceptual framework is used. Prerequisite: Admission to the two-year or part-time MSW program. (Typically offered: Fall)

SCWK 5013. Bridge Course: Evidenced Based Social Work. 3 Hours.
This course prepares MSW students to transition from the foundation course to the advanced concentration courses. Students will become familiar with the mission and conceptual framework underlying the advanced concentration and develop beginning knowledge of traditional and alternative approaches to client system assessment. Prerequisite: Admission into the advanced standing MSW program or completion of foundation courses. (Typically offered: Summer)

SCWK 505V. Special Topics in Social Work. 1-6 Hour.
(Formerly SCWK 405V.) Comprehensive study of various topics of importance in contemporary social welfare and social work practice. Graduate degree credit will not be given for both SCWK 405V and SCWK 505V. (Typically offered: Irregular)

SCWK 5073. Social Work Research and Technology II. 3 Hours.
This course is intended to build the advanced research skills necessary to develop a research proposal and complete a thesis or capstone project. Students will plan the project, collect and analyze data and write a research report of their findings. Projects will focus on systematic evaluation of service delivery and personal professional practice. Prerequisite: Completion of year one for two-year students or summer semester for advanced standing students. (Typically offered: Fall)

SCWK 5083. Social Work With Elders. 3 Hours.
(Formerly SCWK 4183.) Survey of theories of gerontology, service programs and unmet needs of the aging citizen. Graduate degree credit will not be given for both SCWK 4183 and SCWK 5083. (Typically offered: Irregular)

SCWK 5093. Human Behavior and the Social Environment I. 3 Hours.
(Formerly SCWK 4093.) Provides a conceptual framework for knowledge of human behavior and the social environment with a focus on individuals. Social systems, life-course, assets, and resiliency-based approaches are presented. Special attention is given to the impact of discrimination and oppression on the ability to reach or maintain optimal health and well-being. Graduate degree credit will not be given for both SCWK 4093 and SCWK 5093. Prerequisite: COMM 1313, PSYC 2003, SOCI 2013, SCWK 2133, and SCWK 3193 and (BIOL 1543 and BIOL 1541L, or ANTH 1013 and ANTH 1011L). (Typically offered: Fall and Spring)

SCWK 5103. Human Behavior and the Social Environment II. 3 Hours.
(Formerly SCWK 4103.) This course applies the basic framework for creating and organizing knowledge of human behavior and the social environment acquired in HNSE I to the understanding of family, group, organizational, community, and global systems. Attention is given to discrimination, oppression, the impact of technology, and poverty at each system level. Graduate degree credit will not be given for both SCWK 4103 and SCWK 5103. Prerequisite: SCWK 4093 or SCWK 5093 (formerly SCWK 4093) and SCWK 4153 or SCWK 5353 (formerly SCWK 4153). (Typically offered: Fall and Spring)

SCWK 5143. Global Social and Economic Justice and Oppression. 3 Hours.
The role and responsibilities of the social work profession are examined in an international comparative context. Particular emphasis is given to social workers’ responsibilities to advance global social and economic justice and reduce human oppression through community, social, economic, and organizational development strategies. Prerequisite: SCWK 5003 or SCWK 5013. (Typically offered: Irregular)

SCWK 5163. Social Work Management, Administration and Supervision. 3 Hours.
This course develops advanced skills in management, administration, and supervision in social work organizations. Emphasis is placed on developing leadership skills in ethics, budgeting, finance, resource development, information management, evaluation, staff hiring, supervision and development, and the use of technology in organizational leadership, development, and maintenance. Prerequisite: Graduate standing and SCWK 5003 or SCWK 5013. (Typically offered: Irregular)

SCWK 5173. Advanced Practice with Families and Couples. 3 Hours.
The purpose of this course is to provide advanced understanding of the knowledge, skills and values needed to assess and intervene effectively with traditional and non-traditional families and couples. The course will examine social systems and life-course strengths approaches to understand how families and couples function. Students will design interventions. Prerequisite: SCWK 5003 or SCWK 5013. (Typically offered: Irregular)

SCWK 5183. Advanced Practice with Individuals. 3 Hours.
This course develops advanced skills in social work practice on a micro level. Students learn to analyze and compare practice models. They gain skills in selecting a practice model and integrating multiple models based on client needs. Prerequisite: SCWK 5003 or SCWK 5013. (Typically offered: Irregular)

SCWK 5213. Advanced Practice in Behavioral and Mental Health. 3 Hours.
This advanced course prepares students to identify mental disorders, plan intervention strategies with clients from a strengths perspective, and understand the use of technology in organizational leadership, development, and maintenance. Prerequisite: Graduate standing and SCWK 5003 or SCWK 5013. (Typically offered: Irregular)

SCWK 5243. The Diagnosis and Treatment of Substance Use Disorders. 3 Hours.
The Diagnosis and Treatment of Substance Use Disorders course will explore the use and abuse of drugs and alcohol with an emphasis on evidence-based treatment approaches to help engage and treat chemically dependent clients. Best practices to be reviewed will include Motivational Interviewing (MI), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), harm reduction approaches, Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT). (Typically offered: Fall and Spring)

SCWK 5253. Spirituality and Social Work Practice. 3 Hours.
This course prepares students to respond competently and ethically to diverse spiritual and religious perspectives. Utilizing social work ethics and values as a guide, students will develop a comparative, critically reflective approach to practice. Prerequisite: SCWK 4103 or SCWK 5103 (formerly SCWK 4103) or SCWK 5003 or SCWK 5013. (Typically offered: Fall and Spring)
SCWK 5253. Drug Policy and Its Impact on Approaches to Substance Use Disorder Treatment. 3 Hours.
The Drug Policy course will explore the history of drug policy within the United States, focusing on the relationship between people, drugs, and the criminalization of certain substances. This course will also examine how the War on Drugs has led to the collateral consequences of mass incarceration, racial discrimination in policy development and sentencing laws, and a treatment system that exists almost exclusively within the criminal justice system. Finally, this course will explore how other countries have developed and utilized harm reduction and decriminalization approaches and policies in order to shift treatment and financial resources from supply and enforcement to demand and treatment. (Typically offered: Fall, Spring, and Summer)

SCWK 5273. Social Work Research and Technology I. 3 Hours.
(Formerly SCWK 4073.) An overview of forms and sources of social work research including existing social data, techniques for collecting original social data, and techniques of organization, interpretation, and presentation of data. Students will also become proficient in the use of current technology for social work research and practice. Graduate degree credit will not be given for both SCWK 4073 and SCWK 5273. Prerequisite: SCWK 4093 or SCWK 5093 (formerly SCWK 4093) and SCWK 4153 or SCWK 5353 (formerly SCWK 4153). Pre- or Corequisite: One of the following: STAT 2303, SOCI 3303 and SOCI 3301L, PSYC 2013, or ESRM 2403. (Typically offered: Fall and Spring)

SCWK 5333. Social Work Practice I. 3 Hours.
(Formerly SCWK 4333.) This is the first in the sequence of practice courses introducing students to the generalist approach to micro social work. This course focuses on developing a solid foundation for practice with individuals, including learning basic communication and helping skills, values, principles, and the connection of theory to practice. Graduate degree credit will not be given for both SCWK 4333 and SCWK 5333. Prerequisite: SCWK 4093 or SCWK 5093 (formerly SCWK 4093) and SCWK 4153 or SCWK 5353 (formerly SCWK 4153). Pre- or Corequisite: SCWK 4103 or SCWK 5103 (formerly SCWK 4103). (Typically offered: Fall and Spring)

SCWK 5343. Advanced Practice with Groups. 3 Hours.
This course provides advanced knowledge, skills, and values needed to assess and intervene effectively with populations seen in the social work practice of group therapy. This course examines group dynamics, life-course and strengths perspectives, and client-centered assessment of needs and their application in agency settings. Prerequisite: SCWK 5003 or SCWK 5013. (Typically offered: Irregular)

SCWK 5353. Social Welfare Policy. 3 Hours.
(Formerly SCWK 4153.) Describes and analyzes the policies and services rendered by local, state, regional, national, and international agencies as well as the policy implications for social work practice. Students prepare to advocate social policy changes designed to improve social conditions, promote social and economic justice, and to empower at-risk populations. Graduate degree credit will not be given for both SCWK 4153 and SCWK 5353. Prerequisite: COMM 1313, PLSC 2003, SCWK 2133, and SCWK 3193. (Typically offered: Fall and Spring)

SCWK 5412. Foundation Field Seminar. 2 Hours.
A required course for MSW students without an accredited undergraduate degree in social work. The purpose of the seminar is to allow students to integrate classroom content with experiences in the field, to learn peer supervision and consultation, and to learn from the experiences of other students in the field. Corequisite: SCWK 5434. (Typically offered: Spring and Summer)

SCWK 5434. Foundation Field Internship. 4 Hours.
This course is required of all graduate students entering the MSW program without an accredited undergraduate degree in social work. Minimum of 330 clock hours of agency-based professional social work practicum experience, supervised by a licensed MSW, is required. Corequisite: SCWK 5412. Prerequisite: SCWK 5003, SCWK 5333 (formerly SCWK 4333), SCWK 5273 (formerly SCWK 4073), SCWK 5093 (formerly SCWK 4093), and SCWK 5353 (formerly SCWK 4153). (Typically offered: Spring and Summer)

SCWK 5442. Field Seminar III. 2 Hours.
This seminar is required of all graduate students entering the MSW program with advanced standing. Students integrate classroom content with experiences in the field, learn peer supervision and consultation, and learn from the experience of other students in the field. Corequisite: SCWK 5444. Prerequisite: Admission to graduate program with advanced standing. (Typically offered: Summer)

SCWK 5444. Field Internship III. 4 Hours.
This course is required of all graduate students entering the MSW program with advanced standing. A minimum of 240 clock hours of agency-based professional social work practicum experience, supervised by a licensed MSW, is required. Corequisite: SCWK 5442. Prerequisite: Admission to graduate program with advanced standing. (Typically offered: Summer)

SCWK 5543. Social Work Practice II. 3 Hours.
(Formerly SCWK 4434.) This is the second course in the social work practice sequence, emphasizing theories, models, and techniques related to generalist practice with families and groups. The course elaborates on system theory as it impacts groups and families, and uses of experiential teaching methods. Graduate degree credit will not be given for both SCWK 4434 and SCWK 5543. Prerequisite: SCWK 4103 or SCWK 5103 (formerly SCWK 4103) and SCWK 4333 or SCWK 5333 (formerly SCWK 4333). (Typically offered: Fall and Spring)

SCWK 5733. Social Work Practice III. 3 Hours.
(Formerly SCWK 4733.) Students acquire and practice the skills, knowledge, and values necessary for culturally competent generalist social work practice with organizations and communities. Special attention is given to the implications of discrimination and oppression for attaining social and economic justice. Graduate degree credit will not be given for both SCWK 4733 and SCWK 5733. Prerequisite: SCWK 4333 or SCWK 5333 (formerly SCWK 4333). Pre- or Corequisite: SCWK 4103 or SCWK 5103 (formerly SCWK 4103) and SCWK 4343 or SCWK 5543 (formerly SCWK 4343). (Typically offered: Fall and Spring)

SCWK 596V. Independent Study. 1-6 Hour.
Independent study designed to meet the particular needs of individual graduate students. (Typically offered: Irregular) May be repeated for up to 6 hours of degree credit.

SCWK 6000L. Thesis Laboratory. 0 Hours.
This laboratory is required for completion of the thesis, which is developed through components of the graduate Research & Technology sequence. Other courses in the graduate curriculum provide support for the conceptualization and development of the thesis. (Typically offered: Fall and Spring)

SCWK 6003. Advanced Social Work Practice Using the MSLC Perspective. 3 Hours.
Advanced Social Work Practice Using the Multi-Systems Life Course (MSLC) perspective teaches advanced practice behaviors with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. This course focuses on integrating the arenas of advanced theory, research, policy practice, direct practice, required competencies and advanced practice behaviors using the MSLC perspective. Prerequisite: Admission into the advanced standing MSW program or completion of foundation courses. (Typically offered: Fall)
SCWK 6233. Advanced Social Work Practice With Children And Youth Using the MSLC Perspective. 3 Hours.
This course focuses on the development, revision, and impact of practice with children and youth from a Multi-Systems Life Course (MSLC) perspective. Historical trends as well as current practices will be examined with a focus on learning and improving social work practice skills. Prerequisite: SCWK 6003. (Typically offered: Spring)

SCWK 6243. Advanced Social Work Practice With Adults Using the MSLC Perspective. 3 Hours.
This course focuses on the development, revision, and impact of practice with adults from a Multi-Systems Life Course (MSLC) perspective. Historical trends as well as current practices will be examined with a focus on learning and improving social work practice skills. Prerequisite: SCWK 6003. (Typically offered: Spring)

SCWK 6442. Advanced Field Seminar I. 2 Hours.
The first of two advanced field seminars required of all students in the MSW program. The purpose of the seminar is to allow students to integrate classroom content with experiences in the field, to practice peer supervision and consultation, and to learn from the experiences of other students in the field. Corequisite: SCWK 6444. Prerequisite: SCWK 5412 or SCWK 5442. (Typically offered: Fall)

SCWK 6444. Advanced Field Internship I. 4 Hours.
This is the first of two advanced field internships required of all graduate students in the MSW program. A minimum of 330 clock hours of agency-based professional social work practicum experience, supervised by a licensed MSW, is required. Corequisite: SCWK 6442. Prerequisite: SCWK 5434 or SCWK 5444. (Typically offered: Fall)

SCWK 6452. Advanced Field Seminar II. 2 Hours.
This is the second of two advanced field seminars required of all students in the MSW program. The purpose of the seminar is to allow students to integrate classroom content with experiences in the field, to demonstrate peer supervision and consultation, and to learn from the experiences of other students in the field. Corequisite: SCWK 6454. Prerequisite: SCWK 6442. (Typically offered: Spring)

SCWK 6454. Advanced Field Internship II. 4 Hours.
This is the second of two advanced Field Internship courses required of all graduate students in the MSW program. A minimum of 330 clock hours of agency-based professional social work practicum experience supervised by a licensed MSW is required. Corequisite: SCWK 6452. Prerequisite: SCWK 6442. (Typically offered: Spring)