

Social Work

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Social work is defined by the U.S. Department of Labor as "a profession of individuals with a strong desire to improve people's lives". Social workers seek to help individuals, families, organizations, groups, and communities engage resources that will alleviate human problems. Social work is also concerned with enabling clients to develop capacities and strengths that will enhance social functioning.

The scope of social work is national and international. There are over half a million highly trained social work professionals in the United States that are committed to values of social and economic justice, empowerment, and advocating for vulnerable and disenfranchised groups.

The Bachelor of Social Work degree (BSW) at Valparaiso University offers a specialized degree from a long-standing accredited program that prepares graduates for generalist practice in direct human service positions. This professional program is built on a strong liberal arts base and a solid social work curriculum that provides students with core foundational knowledge, values, and skills that are transferable to different settings, populations, and social issues.

Students are engaged in learning both in and out of the classroom. The social work major consists of 40 credits plus general education requirements and 18 credits of required interdisciplinary courses, of which most are interchangeable in the general education requirements for the Bachelor of Arts. Students also are involved in learning activities that allow them to apply classroom knowledge such as volunteering at a social service agency as part of the introductory course, visiting the state legislature, and presenting at undergraduate research conferences.

Social work majors at Valparaiso University can broaden their learning by pursuing co-curricular plans of a double major or minor that combines their interest in disciplines such as psychology, theology, international service, political science, sociology, or foreign language. In addition,

students are encouraged to engage in off-campus learning experiences such as Urban Studies, as well as semesters in Namibia, Mexico, China, Cambridge, and Reutlingen.

Internships at Valparaiso University set our graduates apart, as this experience fosters the integration of empirical and practice-based knowledge and promotes the development of professional competence. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated according to stringent criteria established by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). This educationally directed internship program offers students opportunities for practice in a variety of settings in the community. Students complete a 100-hour internship in the spring semester of their junior year and a 450-hour internship in the fall and spring semesters of their senior year.

Graduates from our program are highly marketable and are employed in child welfare, mental health, schools, hospitals, elder care, church, shelters, corrections, and other social service settings. Alumni typically enter graduate school to pursue a Master of Social Work within five years of graduation and are eligible to apply with advanced standing which gives them credit on courses taken within the BSW curriculum and reduces graduate school to two to three semesters. Graduates often pursue post-graduate experiences in the Peace Corps, Lutheran Volunteer Corps, and Americorps.

Faculty are active in the community and have well-defined areas of interest and expertise. The faculty to student ratio of 1:13 enables a rich learning environment that focuses on student development and collegiality.

The Social Work Department has a well-established Student Social Work Organization (SSWO) involved in community projects and also has established a chapter of the Phi Alpha National social work honor society. The Iota Lambda chapter recognizes students who have achieved a 3.25 grade point average in social work and a 3.00 grade point average in all required coursework for the Bachelor of Social Work degree. Potential members are identified who exemplify the characteristics of

consummate social work professionals involved in the community and university.

Major. A minimum of 40 credit hours in social work constitutes a major. Courses must include SOCW 151, 210, 220, 240, 330, 340, 365, 410, 455, 456, and 493.

Also required are BIO 125, PSY 110 and 201, SOC 110 and 220, one course in political science and one of the following courses: ECON 136, 221, 222, 233 or GEO 201.

Field instruction is required for social work majors enrolled in SOCW 340, 455, and 456. Field assignments are concurrently arranged with coursework. The internship selection must meet with Department approval, under the Field Director, and consists of 100 hours in the spring semester junior year and 450 hours for the fall and spring semester senior year. Students are required to maintain an overall 2.50 grade point average in all required social work courses. Liability insurance for field practice is required.

Minor. A minimum of 15 credit hours in social work constitutes a minor. These credits may be selected from SOCW 151, 210, 220, 240, 330, and 390.

Admission. A student's formal admission into the Department as a major requires approval by the Department following the successful completion of SOCW 151, the completion of admissions procedures, and a 2.5 grade point average in the major. Each social work major is assigned a faculty advisor. A Student Handbook is available to all majors as a guide to department standards.

Degree. The Department of Social Work is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. The completion of all required social work courses and general education requirements of the College of Arts and Sciences leads to the Bachelor of Social Work degree.

Approval of Schedules. All students who major in social work must have their schedules approved by the Chair of the Department or an assigned advisor at the beginning of each semester.

SOCW 151. Introduction to the Profession of Social Work.

Cr. 3. The major objective of this course is to inform the student of the basic issues, concepts and systems encountered by the social work practitioner in the helping process. Foundational theories and conceptual materials are introduced. This course is required for all social work majors and minors. It can also be of great

benefit to students pursuing careers in fields such as corrections, education, ministry, law, nursing, medicine and church work. A 25-hour community volunteering experience is required.

SOCW 210. Social Welfare: Policy and Services.

Cr. 3. The objectives of this course are historical overviews of the economics, social and political forces that shape the social welfare structure. Descriptive analyses of current social welfare programs, public and private, are examined. Professional values and ethics undergird the content that further examines macrosystem matters affecting human diversity and social justice. This course offers activities in and out of the classroom that are designed to help students see the relevance of social policy. Prerequisite: SOCW 151 (may be taken concurrently by junior and seniors) or consent of the Chair of the Department.

SOCW 220. Human Behavior and Social Environment.

Cr. 3. A study of bio-psycho-social and cultural variables that affect human development and behavior. The use of various other theoretical frameworks is examined as they apply to different social groups (friendship, family, organization, community). However, social systems theory is intentionally integrated throughout all course content. Gender, race, sexual orientation, and social class issues related to human development and interaction are analyzed. Prerequisite: SOCW 151 or consent of the Chair of the Department.

SOCW 240. Strategies of Intervention.

Cr. 3. A unique experiential and introductory interviewing course where students critically examine and learn about foundational theory for core interviewing skills, elements of basic counseling theory, the overarching helping process in a multicultural context, and then apply theoretical frameworks in role play, videotaped, and cross cultural exchanges. Built on social work systems theory and the strengths perspectives, students gain experience in applying theory and skills with sensitivity to work with people from diverse backgrounds. The aim is for students to develop beginning level intentional competence as communicators, interviewers, and change agents with client systems. Prerequisite: SOCW 151.

SOCW 330. Vulnerable Populations: Color, Gender, and Orientation.

Cr. 3. This course explores the sociopolitical factors that affect current human responses of diversity, major North American populations of African, Mexican, Asian, Native American descent, women of color, sexually-classified groups, and select international groups of oppression are central in social work's approach to group development and interventions. From a

systems perspective of social change and human rights, the emerging cultural response and macro systems policy development are foundational to this study of diversity. Issues around racism, sexism, and heterosexism surface as likely factors in social change planning. Prerequisite: junior/senior status. May be used to fulfill the Cultural Diversity course component of the General Education Requirements.

SOCW 340. Professional Intervention and Human Services.

3+1, Cr. 4. A junior level, integrated learning, practice course, which introduces students to the social work planned change process and generalist intervention model. Students learn theories, concepts, and an ethical guide, that provide a framework for generalist social work intervention. Additionally, students acquire entry level skills needed for working with diverse clients at each of the system levels: micro, mezzo, and macro practice. Students engage in an intermediate level field experience, completing 100 hours, where they apply theoretical frameworks in work with client systems in the context of agency settings. Rigorous weekly learning assignments, both in the classroom and in the field, are compiled to create the junior level learning portfolio, with students demonstrating growth and proficiency in the overarching social work program objectives. Field placement provides an opportunity for direct application and practice of classroom learning and Junior Review concludes the course as an evaluative opportunity for the major and the department, designed to move the student into senior level coursework. Prerequisites: SOCW 151, 210, 220 and 240.

SOCW 365. Introduction to Methods of Social Research.

Cr. 3. This course examines the application of concepts of research methodology to social work practice. All students will conduct original research and present it in both oral and poster presentations at conferences. The research content includes qualitative and quantitative research methodologies; data analysis, including statistical procedures; systematic evaluation of practice; instrument development; proposal writing and critique, biases in research methods and reports. Prerequisite: SOCW 151, 210, 220, 240, and PSY 201.

SOCW 390. Social Work Colloquium.

Cr. 2-3. A study of selected topics reflective of contemporary concerns for the social worker, such as adulthood, women, clinical methods and techniques for helping professions, housing, ethics, substance abuse, juvenile delinquency, and poverty. Listings are announced. Prerequisite: junior standing or consent of the Chair of the Department.

SOCW 391. Advanced Seminar in Social Work.
Cr. 1-3. Full- or half-semester courses specializing in particular areas of social work practice or methodology such as administration, current issues in group services, family therapy, new techniques for solving community problems, supervision and children's services. Prerequisites: junior or senior standing and consent of the Chair of the Department.

SOCW 395. Independent Study.

Cr. 1-3. This curricular offering gives students an opportunity to independently examine a topic in depth beyond the traditional social work courses. Credit is based on the anticipated length and rigor of the project. Students are required to be in good standing and have at least a 2.5 grade point average. Students are assigned a faculty mentor for the project based on faculty expertise and workload. Prerequisite: junior standing and consent of the Chair of the Department.

SOCW 410. Analysis of Social Policy.

Cr. 3. An intensive study of social welfare policy, principally in the United States, and a historical review of the contemporary forces, primarily social and economic, that have shaped their development. Students will each select a specific policy area in which to focus their research. Common policy areas chosen include social services, education, housing, income maintenance, protective services, and health care services. Prerequisites: senior standing, consent of the Chair of the Department, SOCW 151, 210, 220, 240, 330, 365.

SOCW 455. Social Work Practice I.

3+4, Cr. 7. Social Work Practice I with Field Instruction and Integrative Seminar is the first segment of the senior theory and social work practice component designed to prepare competent and effective social work professionals to become generalist practitioners. Students continue their integration of learning pertaining to practice content that encompasses ethics, knowledge, and skills for working effectively with diverse individuals, families, groups, and agencies with particular emphasis on the micro and mezzo levels of practice. For practice evaluation purposes, students identify, analyze, and implement empirically based interventions designed to assist clients in achieving goals. Students further develop their professional social work identity, where critical thinking informs action. The integrative seminar provides senior social work students with a classroom experience whereby concepts, theories, and information covered through the social work course curriculum can be integrated with practice experience in the field placement. Additionally, the seminar facilitates an exchange of ideas and stimulates discussion related to issues of service delivery on a micro and macro

level. Students are enrolled in the seminar course concurrently as they complete an educationally directed field practicum of 225 hours each semester. Students are in their internships every Tuesday and Thursday in a community social service agency. Prerequisites: senior standing and successful completion of all previous foundation courses.

SOCW 456. Social Work Practice II.

3+4, Cr. 7. Social Work Practice II with Field Instruction and Integrative Seminar is the continuation and final professional foundation course in the practice sequence for senior social work students. The primary focus is on critical thinking, professional use of self, practice, and ethical engagement needed for effective intervention particularly at the macro level of practice. Students prepare, evaluate, and reflect on their undergraduate experience by compiling the Senior Level Learning Portfolio where they demonstrate growth and proficiency in the overarching program objectives. This is the second semester of the integrative seminar that occurs concurrently with the field placement where students complete 225 hours of field work in a community social service agency. Prerequisite: SOCW 455.

SOCW 493. Current Issues in Social Work.

Cr. 1. This seminar is jointly designed by senior majors and faculty to deal with those issues of concern which currently face clients and practitioners in the social services delivery system. Prerequisite: senior standing or consent of the Chair of the Department.

SOCW 497. Honors Work in Social Work.

Cr. 3. See Honors Work, page 54.

SOCW 498. Honors Candidacy in Social Work.

Cr. 3. See Honors Work, page 54.