



## Colby·Sawyer College

### MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

### Course descriptions Generalist Year

#### MSW 510: Social Work Practice with Individuals, Groups, and Families

This generalist course uses person-in-environment (PIE) and developmental approaches in guiding students through preparation, engagement, assessment, planning/contracting, implementation, evaluation, and termination/referral techniques and services with individuals and families across the life course and in group settings. Utilization of the strengths-based perspective and adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics while engaging in individual and group practice are central to the course. Competencies: 2, 3, 6, 7, 8

#### MSW 521: Skills Lab I

This course focuses on knowledge and skills development with individual and family clients. Using the frameworks of diversity, cultural humility, and ethics as well as systems, biopsychosocial, and foundational theory, students will focus on fluency in core concepts to the field such as empathy, self-care, and using a strengths-based perspective through case study evaluation, data gathering, and report completion. Self-determined planning will be emphasized to honor the individual's preferences and empower their sense of purpose and self-respect. Competencies: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8

#### MSW 522: Skills Lab II

This course expands upon the skills acquired in Skills Lab I with a focus on individuals, families, groups, and communities. Using primary models of practice and theory, students will focus on their competency in engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation using methods such as role play and peer-to-peer interaction to simulate beginning, middle, and ending phases of client work. Concurrent student practicum experience is expected to contribute to assignments, activities, and discussion. Self-determined planning will be emphasized to honor the individual's preferences and empower their sense of purpose and self-respect. Competencies: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8

#### MSW 530: Social Work Research & Evaluation

It is impossible to be an ethical social work practitioner without knowing if our interventions, programs, or policies are effective. Research is the tool by which we build a base of evidence to support our interventions; hence, research is an integral part of all social work practice. This course will teach students how to be critical consumers and creators of research as it applies to social work practices, programs, and policies. Further, students will examine the importance of research in enhancing social work knowledge and practice and its role in decreasing social injustice against oppressed and at-risk populations - part of the mission of social work. This is the first of two courses in the MSW research sequence designed to develop student competence in all phases of social research through active involvement in conducting different individual and group research projects throughout the year. Competencies: 1, 4, 9

#### MSW 540: Social Work Practice with Communities & Organizations

This generalist course prepares students for direct social work practice with organizations and communities. Students become familiar with and use theories, evidence, and fundamental skills to develop competence in their practice with organizations and communities. Students will work in all phases of practice, from engagement through termination, with special attention given to ethical standards, inclusion, and cultural competence/humility. Competencies: 2, 3, 6, 7, 8

### MSW 550: Human Rights and Social Justice

This course will examine systems of oppression with focus on statuses including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and age, and the way intersectionality can affect privilege and marginalization. Further, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics will be used centrally as support for the social worker to develop as an advocate for social, economic, and environmental justice.

Competencies: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8

### MSW 580: Social Welfare Policy

This first social policy course views social welfare policy as the framework from which social work services are developed and delivered; that is, policies provide the context for practice. Students will examine policy practice as a process with underlying theory and methodology. The course emphasizes political advocacy in pursuit of human rights, and social and economic justice and examines the economic context of policy practice. Finally, students will integrate policy and practice through research and analysis of specific social problems relevant to their volunteer, fieldwork and career interests. Competencies: 1, 2, 3, 5

### MSW 700: Practicum Seminar & Preparation

This one-credit, full-semester seminar course introduces students to their upcoming practicum placement experience in MSW 701 and serves as a launch point from which practicum commences. Students work closely with their MSW Practicum Director to locate a field site, secure required permissions, and engage with the organization they will be working with. Further, the course acts as a platform for students to engage with active and reflective social work learning while identifying and highlighting connections between the field and course curriculum. Graded as credit/no credit. Competency: 1

### MSW 701/702: Generalist Practicum & Seminar

This two-course sequence is designed to bring theory to practice and serve as the launch point toward the 900 total hours of field education required for the MSW degree. Students are challenged in the field to apply myriad generalist practices to their placement, while adhering to NASW ethical standards. This course sequence is graded as credit/no credit. Competencies: 1-9



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### Course descriptions & learning outcomes

#### Specialist Year

#### MSW 610: Multicultural Practice

This course explores social work practice and interventions with a focus on diverse identities, including race, ethnicity, nationality, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and age. Utilizing NASW's Standards and Indicators for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice, students will engage with contemporary best practices in multicultural mental health service delivery. The course aims to cultivate a deep understanding of intersubjectivity and the influence of cultural and personal identity on social work practice across various levels. Through critical analysis and practical application, students will enhance their ability to provide effective, culturally responsive and humble services. Competencies: 2, 3, 9

#### MSW 621: Clinical Assessment and Diagnosis

This advanced course focuses on mental disorders and/or dysfunction for various age groups across the life span. Through a bio-psychosocial perspective and incorporating contexts of culture, human resilience, self-determination, and strengths-based approaches, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5-TR) system is the primary tool for analysis. Students will apply the DSM-5 as an organizing framework for the differential diagnosis of mental disorders in children, adolescents, and adults within a person-in-environment perspective. Also addressed are evidence-based treatment (EBT) approaches. The underserving and marginalization of population groups will also be an area of focus. Competencies: 1, 3, 7

#### MSW 630: Advanced Research, Program Evaluation

This course introduces students to program evaluation in social work. Building on research and evaluation techniques covered in generalist training, this course expands student research fluency by preparing students to design, conduct, and evaluate programs in the field of social work. Students will review and assess interventions and evaluations across individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations. Particular attention will be paid to diversity through assessment, evaluation, and professional dissemination concerning the representation of diverse groups within organizations. Competencies: 1, 4, 9

#### MSW 645: Leadership, Supervision, and Management in Social Work

In this course students become acquainted with leadership styles and management theories and apply evidence-based scholarship on leadership in the social work profession. The primary objectives of the course are to self-discover leadership styles, improve leadership and management skills, focusing on positive and effective social change within varied human services settings, understand how leadership is enacted at different levels in organizations through application, and to analyze the roles, functions, and responsibilities of human service leaders. This course prepares graduate students to understand their own sources of leadership, as well as evidence-based management practices to effectively respond to organizational challenges and opportunities. Competencies: 1, 6, 7, 9

### MSW 650: Social Work Practice with Children, Youth, & Families

This course focuses on social work practice with children, youth (adolescents), and families with a focus on family systems perspectives and the use of interventions with diverse child and family populations. Ethics, theories, and evidence-based interventions with children, youth, families, parents, and caregivers will be examined, assessed, and applied using person-in-environment and strengths-based frameworks. Students will develop advanced practice skills within the context of protective and risk factors found at micro-, mezzo-, and macro levels - particularly those risk factors disproportionately found within marginalized populations and communities. Finally, students will be provided opportunities to consider new and varied intervention strategies with children and families. Competencies: 1, 4, 6, 7, 8

### MSW 655: Addiction, Trauma, and Mental Health

This course explores the multi-systemic impact of trauma and substance use on individuals, families, and communities. Emphasis is placed on the treatment of trauma and substance use across the lifespan with diverse populations utilizing trauma informed approaches, including Motivational Interviewing and cognitive behavioral interventions. Competencies: 1, 3, 6, 7, 8

### MSW 680: Comparative Social Policy

Building from social welfare policy, comparative social policy examines major social welfare policies and practices in various societies and offers opportunity for global comparisons. The course examines policy design, implementation, and outcome through using perspectives such as collectivism and individualism, determinations of “effectiveness,” and the culturally defined, subjective nature of welfare and well-being. Students will evaluate and contrast social welfare policies with the purpose of understanding the role of societal and cultural values in policy effectiveness. Competencies: 2, 3, 5, 9

### MSW 675: Ending Poverty

Ending Poverty is a multi-disciplinary course dedicated to discussing and identifying plausible solutions to end poverty in the United States. This course will draw from theories, research, and practice examples from a variety of disciplines such as social work, sociology, law, psychology, public policy, and economics with the goal of defining and identifying best practice models in poverty reduction. Moreover, students will develop critical analysis skills related to poverty and inequality with a focus on competing theories examining the causes of poverty, roles of policy, and socioeconomic dimensions of stratification - including race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, immigration status, and others. We will also examine the existing and emerging policy issues related to ending poverty for families and children. Global perspectives may also be considered; however, the primary focus of this class is the United States and its policies and practices. Competencies: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8

### MSW 665: Independent Study, Macro Practice

Student-driven course work on a topic of interest. May focus on macro subject matter in the discipline of social work, with final course description, learning objectives, and assessment to be determined in consultation with faculty member. Policy and research components are required. Limited number available per term, summer specialist year standing. Prior faculty approval required; competencies determined by student and faculty supervisor.

### MSW 690: Capstone for the MSW

The MSW Capstone serves as the culminating experience of the Master of Social Work program. This course provides students the opportunity to revisit, refine, and integrate key assignments, including those associated with practicum experience. Through guided reflection, synthesis of learning, and ongoing peer and faculty feedback, students critically examine their growth as emerging social work professionals.

Emphasis is placed on demonstrating competence across the nine Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) core competencies, integrating theoretical knowledge with practice experiences, and articulating a professional identity grounded in social work values and ethics. By the end of the course, students will have developed a comprehensive portfolio demonstrating their academic and professional journey and highlighting their professional readiness. Competencies: 1-9

### **MSW 703/704: Specialist Practicum & Seminar**

The second of the two-course field experience sequence is designed to bring theory to practice and serve as the culmination of the 900 total hours of field education required for the MSW degree. Students are challenged in the field to master generalist practices and put advanced techniques into action - while adhering to NASW ethical standards. This course sequence is graded as credit/no credit. Competencies: 1-9