

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

Mission Statement

The Social Work Department at the University of Nebraska at Kearney will prepare competent social work practitioners. Our graduates will be equipped with evidence-based generalist social work knowledge, skills, ethics and values to promote the dignity and well-being of all people within a diverse society.

Department Goals

1. Equip students with core competencies for beginning generalist social work practice that enables them to work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
2. Prepare students for lifelong learning and the application of critical thinking to guide professional decision-making by combining a liberal arts foundation with social work education.
3. Prepare students to develop a professional identity, which will incorporate the knowledge, skills, values, and ethical principles of the social work profession that are crucial for the advancement of human rights, and economic and social justice.
4. Prepare students for evidence-based practice with diverse and marginalized populations.
5. Prepare students as beginning social work generalist practitioners who are engaged in research informed practice and practice informed research.

The Social Work Department is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. The department does not grant academic credit for life experience or previous work experience. Social Work students are expected to work closely with their advisor to ensure that General Studies and major requirements are taken in the right sequence.

Social Work Major

One option is available in this major:

1. Social Work Comprehensive (<http://catalog.unk.edu/undergraduate/departments-programs/social-work/social-work-comprehensive-bs>) - Bachelor of Science Degree

The Social Work (<http://catalog.unk.edu/undergraduate/departments-programs/social-work/social-work-minor>) minor is available and recommended for students pursuing majors in other helping professions or human services.

Jody Van Laningham, **Chair**

Professor: Maha Younes

Associate Professor: Christina Sogar, Jody Van Laningham

Assistant Professor: Kristina Faimon, Lauren Gage

Senior Lecturer: Nadine Stuehm

Lecturer: Teresa Van-Freeling

Social Work (SOWK)

SOWK 170 – Introduction to Social Welfare 3 credit hours

The course explores the foundation and principles of social welfare in American society. The spectrum of social welfare programs and issues are examined with emphasis on the contexts that shape them and the impact they have on vulnerable and underrepresented groups.

SOWK 172 – Human Service Ethics and Experience 3 credit hours

This course presents the values and ethical principles that underlie social work and other human service professions. Course requirements include the completion of a 50 hours volunteer work experience at a human service program in the community. Students are advised to complete the course early in their program of study.

SOWK 388 – GS Capstone 3 credit hours

An interdisciplinary experience where students apply the knowledge, cognitive abilities, and communication skills they have gained from General Studies in designing and completing an original project or paper. Students employ methods and interpretive means of two or more disciplines to integrate knowledge and synthesize their results. Satisfies the General Studies capstone course requirement. Students may take their Capstone course in any discipline.

Prerequisite: Junior or senior level standing or within 6 hours of completing general studies requirements.

SOWK 400 – Human Behavior in the Social Environment 3 credit hours

This course analyzes human behavior in the social environment from a life-span developmental approach from conception through adulthood. The theories, which emphasize biological, psychological, sociological, spiritual and cultural aspects of the individual are examined. A systems approach is combined with an ecological perspective to analyze social conditions and to identify problem areas in society

Prerequisite: SOWK 170

SOWK 410 – Social Policy & Programs 3 credit hours

The course examines the historical evolution of Social policy, value assumptions, as well as the social, political, and economic contexts and processes that impact it. Students learn the skills required for analysis of policies and advocacy for social and economic justice.

Prerequisite: SOWK 170

SOWK 420 – Diversity and Social Justice 3 credit hours

The course examines cultural, social, and economic diversity; the role of social institutions and social, political, and cultural processes as they relate to discrimination and oppression based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, social class and disability status.

SOWK 440 – Fundamentals of Research in Social Welfare 3 credit hours

This course will introduce students to the concepts and principles of social work research methodology, educate them about the ethics and politics involved, and promote their understanding of research issues relevant to diversity, multiculturalism, as well as social and economic injustices.

Prerequisite: STAT 235 or STAT 241

SOWK 441 – Social Work Practice with Individuals & Families 3 credit hours

This course provides a foundation for generalist social work practice with individuals and families using a problem solving approach within a systems framework.

Prerequisite: Minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 and SOWK 400 and SOWK 410.

SOWK 442 – Social Work Practice with Groups 3 credit hours

The course expands on the generalist practice foundation and skills gained in SOWK 371 and focuses on social work practice with task and therapy groups.

Prerequisite: SOWK Majors - Cumulative GPA of 2.5 or above and a grade of "C" or above in SOWK 441 CSP LADC Certificate Program - minimum GPA of 2.5 and successful completion of CSP 417 LADC certificate students should enroll in SOWK 442 during spring semester.

SOWK 443 – Social Work Practice with Organizations and Communities 3 credit hours

This course focuses on macro social work with organizations, communities, state, and federal entities. It examines the models of community planning and organization with emphasis on individual and community empowerment and modifications of institutional structures. Program development, social planning, and administration of social agencies are taught and issues of equity and social justice issues related to populations at risk such as minorities, elderly, and women are explored.

Prerequisite: Minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 and completion of SOWK 441 and SOWK 442 with a grade of C or better

SOWK 468 – Introduction to Disabilities 3 credit hours

A theoretical framework grounded in the social welfare values of self-determination and dignity across the lifespan is used to explore diverse issues in the disabilities field including demographics, etiology and policies, social welfare programs and community resources, and the role of social workers in serving people with disabilities.

SOWK 469 – Introduction to Mental Health Issues 3 credit hours

This course enables students to develop a broader understanding of the occurrence and impact of mental illness in society and from a social work perspective. Mental health issues across race, class, gender, and culture will be examined with the goal of promoting practice skills and sensitivity to future clients.

SOWK 470 – International Social Work Experience 1-6 credit hours

This summer experience takes students to foreign countries and immerses them into the social, cultural, political, and economic environment that impact citizens there. Policy issues and human rights are emphasized, compared to the American system, and assessed for support or hindrance of general wellbeing especially related to at-risk and underrepresented groups.

Department Consent Required

Total Credits Allowed: 6.00

SOWK 471 – Aging Services 3 credit hours

The common problems of the aged and their families are studied, knowledge of existing services is provided, and students are exposed to the initial theory and practice of delivering services to the aged in both the outpatient and inpatient setting.

SOWK 473 – Child Welfare Services 3 credit hours

The common problems of children and families needing services are studied. Knowledge of existing services is imparted, and students are exposed to the initial how of doing child welfare work.

Prerequisite: SOWK 172 and SOWK 400 and SOWK 410

SOWK 475 – Child Abuse and Neglect 3 credit hours

The course prepares students for child welfare practice and provides an overview of child maltreatment. A historical perspective of child abuse is used to examine issues related to reporting, legal response, treatment, and prevention, and intervention.

Prerequisite: SOWK 170

SOWK 476 – Social Work in Legal Settings 3 credit hours

An overview of social work practice, theory, and skills for working within and with legal host agencies, and a brief examination of legal consequences of social work practice.

Prerequisite: SOWK 172 and SOWK 400 and SOWK 410

SOWK 477 – School Social Work 3 credit hours

An overview of services provided by school social workers and the interrelationships with other student services.

Prerequisite: SOWK 172 and SOWK 400

SOWK 478 – Medical Social Work 3 credit hours

An overview of social work services provided in medical and other health care settings. The relationships to other professionals are explored in all health care settings. Students are introduced to the specific recommendations for practice in medical and other health care social services.

Prerequisite: SOWK 400 and SOWK 410

SOWK 479 – Violence Across the Lifespan 3 credit hours

The course focuses on the causes, prevalence, treatment and prevention of violence that individuals may encounter throughout the lifespan. It maintains a dual focus on victims and perpetrators of violence, the impact of violence on vulnerable groups, and prevention and intervention strategies that may be used in practice, programming, policy, and research.

SOWK 480 – Field Placement I 3 credit hours

The complete field placement experience, SOWK 480 & 481, consists of 400 actual contact hours of supervised experience in an approved social service agency, along with scheduled group seminar meetings with the field placement coordinator. The field placement experience allows students to integrate the theoretical foundation and skills gained throughout their academic preparation with practice in a supervised professional setting. A field placement application and approval process must be completed prior to enrollment in this course. This course represents the first 200 hours and involves an orientation to the agency, observing and learning the structure of the agency, and the integration of classroom content with practicum experiences.

SOWK 481 – Field Placement II 3 credit hours

The complete field placement experience, SOWK 480 & 481, consists of 400 actual contact hours of supervised experience in an approved social service agency, along with scheduled group seminar meetings with the field placement coordinator. The field placement experience allows students to integrate the theoretical foundation and skills gained throughout their academic preparation with practice in a supervised professional setting. A field placement application and approval process must be completed prior to enrollment in this course. This course represents the second 200 hours and involves actual hands on participation where students are expected to demonstrate a higher level of skills and an increased responsibility for their learning and performance.

SOWK 482 – Senior Social Work Seminar 3 credit hours

This course is designed as an integrating seminar to be taken concurrently with Field Placement. It facilitates the transition from student to professional social worker practice. Assignments build on the field placement experience to promote the integration of knowledge, skills, and values.

Prerequisite: SOWK 442 and permission of Field Coordinator.

Corequisite: SOWK 480 and SOWK 481.

SOWK 499 – Special Studies in Social Work 1-3 credit hours

An in-depth study of contemporary social work practice issues. The project is supervised by the director. This course may be repeated to a maximum of six hours.

Total Credits Allowed: 6.00

Prerequisite: 6 hours of Social Work and permission of the director