

Department of Social Work

The Bachelor of Science in Social Work (BSSW) program is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and prepares graduates for employment at the beginning level of professional social work practice as well as for graduate-level professional education. Its mission is to prepare undergraduate students for generalist social work practice with diverse and vulnerable populations in an increasingly complex and interconnected world, emphasizing human rights for populations at risk. The program encourages social work career development through affiliation with professional organizations, the pursuit of graduate education, and involvement in continuing education.

Students seeking to formally declare Social Work as a major must officially apply to the BSSW Professional program. Students are expected to self-initiate the application process, including a review of academic accomplishments, faculty observations of classroom comportment, and completing four essay questions to determine professional self-awareness. For additional information about this admissions process, contact the BSSW Program Director in the UAB Department of Social Work at 205-975-4938 or socialwork@uab.edu.

The required social work curriculum includes content courses about the knowledge, values, and skills essential to social work practice, research, and policy; and service-learning courses that focus on volunteer work and critical reflection. The curriculum culminates with a full-time, one-term field practicum placement that serves as a capstone experience. The UAB BSSW only accepts the transfer of social work courses from other programs accredited by CSWE.

SW 322 and SW 322L, SW 422 and SW 422L, SW 490 and SW 494 must be taken at UAB; transfer credits for these courses will not be accepted.

No minor is required for social work majors. Instead, selected social and behavioral science courses to provide a foundation for professional social work courses. These foundation courses include:

Requirements	Hours
HY 121 The United States Since 1877	3
PY 101 Introduction to Psychology	3
PSC 101 Foundations of American Government	3
or PSC 221 American State and Local Government	
SOC 100 Introduction to Sociology	3
ANTH 101 Introducing Cultural Anthropology	3

These courses must be completed with a grade of C or better. Additionally, students are required to take at least one biology course and laboratory that includes content about human beings (BY 101 or BY 123), also completed with a grade of C or better. This requirement may be taken as part of the Core Curriculum.

Bachelor of Science in Social Work

Requirements	Hours
Required Social Work Courses	
Blazer Core Curriculum	41
General Electives	28
SW 100 Introduction to Social Work	3

SW 200	Communication for Professional Helping	3
SW 207	Racism, Sexism and Other Isms	3
SW 222	Skills and Values for Professional Helping	3
SW 222L	Social Work Service Learning Lab I	1
SW 302	Social Welfare Policy Analysis	3
SW 315	Human Behavior and Social Environment	3
SW 320	Social Work Research I	3
SW 321	Social Work Research II	3
SW 322	Social Work Practice I	3
SW 322L	Social Work Service Learning Lab II	1
SW 422	Social Work Practice II	3
SW 422L	Social Work Service Learning Lab III	1
SW 490	Practicum in Social Work	9
SW 494	Practicum Seminar	3

Social Work Elective

Select six hours from SW courses	6
Total Hours	120

Additional Requirements

General Electives

Students must take general electives to reach the 120 semester hour requirement.

Proposed Program of Study for a Major in Social Work

Freshman

First Term	Hours	Second Term	Hours
EH 101		3 EH 102	3
MA 110		3 HY 121	3
PY 101		3 SOC 100	3
Blazer Core		3 SW 100	3
Creative Arts ¹			
Blazer Core Local		3 PSC 101	3
Beginnings			
	15		15

Sophomore

First Term	Hours	Second Term	Hours
SW 200		3 SW 207	3
BY 101		4 Blazer Core	4
& BY 102		Scientific Inquiry	
Blazer Core		3 Blazer Core City as	3
Communicating in		a Classroom	
the Modern World			
ANTH 101		3 General Elective	3
General Elective		3 General Elective	3
	16		16

Junior

First Term	Hours	Second Term	Hours
SW 222		4 SW 302	3
& 222L			
Blazer Core		3 SW 320	3
Reasoning			
General Electives		9 SW 322	4
		& 322L	
		Social Work	3
		Elective	

		General Elective	3
		16	16
Senior			
First Term	Hours	Second Term	Hours
SW 315		3 SW 490	9
SW 321		3 SW 494	3
SW 422 & 422L		4	
Social Work (SW) Elective		3	
General Elective		1	
		14	12
Total credit hours: 120			

¹ Select One: ARH 101, ARH 203, ARH 204, ARH 206, MU 120, THR 100, THR 105 or THR 200.

Minor in Social Work

Requirements	Hours
Required Social Work¹	
SW 100 Introduction to Social Work	3
Social Work Electives	15
Select five of the courses below	
SOC 200 The Tipping Point: How Societies Change	
SOC 222/ SOC 222L Sociology in the City	
SOC 278 Global Lives: Sociology of Our Interconnected World	
SOC 315 The Sociology of Terrorism	
SOC 320 Sociology Through Fiction	
SOC 340 Deviant Behavior	
SOC 499 Sociology: Honors Thesis	
Total Hours	18

¹ Online option is available.

Grade Requirement

"C" or better is required in all courses applied to the minor.

Purpose

The Social Work Honors Program encourages an opportunity for students to prepare for graduate study and/or professional careers in social work through enhanced and personalized exposure to the application of social work research/evidence-based practice. The Program, through an individualized match with Department faculty and established social work researchers, will build students' problem-solving skills and promote critical and independent thinking. In partnership with a faculty mentor, students can participate in a research project and present the results at an event that highlights student research (e.g., the UAB Expo or the Department's Social Work Month activities). The Honors Program can accept up to five (5) outstanding students each term; thus, meeting the eligibility requirements does not guarantee acceptance into the Program.

Benefits

- Honors students will benefit from one-on-one mentoring and collaboration in research and/or evidence-based practice with faculty

in the Department that can substantially enhance student preparation for graduate school and practice.

- Honor students will participate in a professional presentation, which will provide academic exposure and enhance the student's understanding of the field and practice of social work.
- Students who complete the program will graduate with the "With Honors in Social Work" distinction.

Eligibility Requirements

- Declaration and acceptance into the social work major (application can be in the process of being reviewed at the time of submission); in order to be accepted into the social work major, students must have completed (or be in the process of completing at the time of submission) (SW 100, SW 200, SW 207, SW 222, SW 222L);
- Minimum 3.2 cumulative GPA and a minimum 3.6 GPA in social work courses;
- Completion of Honors Program application process.

Application Process

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Students should self-initiate the application process, and it is recommended that interested students should submit their applications no later than mid-March or mid-November, whichever precedes the desired semester of Honors Program acceptance.

Review Process

Applications will be reviewed by the Honors Program Director and other Department faculty members. In some cases, a subsequent interview with the Honors Program Director may be warranted. Ideally, the review process will be completed within one month of the student's submission of application materials. Students accepted into the Honors Program will receive notification from the Honors Program Director.

Requirements

To complete the Department of Social Work Honors Program and, thus, graduate with Honors distinction, students must:

- Complete all required courses for the Social Work major.
- Complete three course credit hours of Honors Seminar (SW 496); the Honors Seminar is usually scheduled as a 3-hour course.
- Complete three course credit hours of the Honors Independent Study (SW 498); the Honors Independent Study is usually scheduled as a 3-hour course but may be scheduled for 1-3 hours depending on the plan of study agreed upon by the Honors Program student and their faculty mentor.
- Maintain a minimum 3.2 cumulative GPA and a minimum 3.6 GPA in social work courses through graduation.
- Complete a professional research presentation at an approved conference or event.

Contact

For additional information and/or admission to the Social Work Honors Program, contact the Honor Program Director in the UAB Department of Social Work at 205-975-4938 or socialwork@uab.edu.

Courses

SW 100. Introduction to Social Work. 3 Hours.

This course introduces students to the value-based profession of social work. Students will have the opportunity to learn about social work's history, mission, professional values and theoretical frameworks (e.g., the systems/ecological perspective). Furthermore, students will explore areas in anti-racist, diverse, equitable, and inclusive generalist practice and the varied roles and responsibilities of the social work profession. Students will be afforded the opportunity to examine their own personal values and how those values influence their views on social welfare problems and issues.

SW 200. Communication for Professional Helping. 3 Hours.

This course introduces professional writing techniques for social work and other helping practitioners. The course is designed to enhance professional and academic writing skills. Students will study how to craft narratives for case notes, assessments, advocacy materials and funding proposals focused on creating social change and promoting equity and justice for marginalized communities. Students will also gain proficiency in APA style and develop digital communication skills, learning to navigate technology platforms essential for professional practice, such as word processing, presentation tools, and social media for outreach and client engagement. This is a writing-intensive course.

SW 207. Racism, Sexism and Other Isms. 3 Hours.

The content of this course is intended to help students understand from the perspective of social justice, inclusion, and human rights that the dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors, including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Students will examine both the biases in society and their own biases in relating to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups such as minorities, aged, women, LGBTQ+, and disabled persons.

SW 208. Disaster Preparedness. 3 Hours.

This course provides a multi-disciplinary perspective on aspects of disaster preparedness and response utilizing an all-hazards approach. Content covers natural and man-made disasters, current thoughts on disaster preparedness and planning, and local, state and federal response networks and organizations. Students acquire fundamental knowledge of responding to disaster victims, including sheltering, mass care, case management, basic crisis intervention and psychological first aid. This course does not cover international issues.

SW 222. Skills and Values for Professional Helping. 3 Hours.

This course offers an introduction to the helping profession of social work, emphasizing core values and ethics that guide professional helping practice. Through classroom learning and service learning opportunities, students explore principles of self-awareness, professionalism, and ethical practice decision-making. The course fosters critical reflection on professional values that advance social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. As a foundational course, it is required for students seeking admission to the professional social work program and must be taken concurrently with SW 222L, Social Work Service Learning Lab I.

SW 222L. Social Work Service Learning Lab I. 1 Hour.

This lab course offers an introduction to the helping profession of social work with service learning experiences and simulation opportunities. The lab integrates volunteering and observation with critical reflection, professionalism, and ethical practice, focusing on raising awareness about social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. Must be concurrently taken with SW 222 Social Work Values.

SW 244. Trauma-Informed Care. 3 Hours.

This course provides an introduction to and overview of working with individuals and communities who have experienced trauma. Throughout this course, students will learn to recognize the presence of trauma symptoms, acknowledge the role trauma may play in an individual's life, and learn how to provide professional trauma-informed care. In addition, students will be introduced to the use of motivational interviewing as a method of supporting and treating trauma survivors.

SW 277. Social Justice in the City. 3 Hours.

This course examines the intersecting factors of oppression, marginalization, and inequality as they manifest in cities, focusing on how these issues impact vulnerable populations, including children, immigrants, the homeless, elders, and racial/ethnic/sexual minority groups. Emphasis is on exploring the complexities of urban life, the structural roots of inequality, and the role of social policies, planning, and community strategies in promoting equity and justice. Students will analyze current and historical data, evaluate the effectiveness of different social justice strategies, and propose innovative solutions to reduce disparities and enhance community well-being. This course emphasizes the practical application of social justice principles in urban settings, preparing students to become effective advocates for change.

SW 278. Special Topics in Social Work. 3 Hours.

Issues of current interest in social work practice, policy, and research, emphasizing human rights for at-risk populations. Irregularly offered course. Varies in content. May be repeated for credit but the topic may not be repeated.

SW 302. Social Welfare Policy Analysis. 3 Hours.

This course introduces analytical frameworks with which to evaluate contemporary U.S. social welfare policy. It is designed for students with basic knowledge of the history of social welfare and how it has evolved over time. The course also examines the relationship between current policy and the practice of social work today. Additionally explored is the real-world impact of current policy on the well-being of individuals and communities within a social justice, inclusion, human rights, and anti-oppression context.

SW 315. Human Behavior and Social Environment. 3 Hours.

This course examines the interrelationships between the individual, family, small groups, organizations and the community. Special attention is given to diversity, cultural sensitivity, oppression and discrimination.

SW 320. Social Work Research I. 3 Hours.

This course introduces students to research theory, methods and tools through the standpoint of social justice, human rights, inclusion, and diversity. Qualitative and Quantitative research methodologies, sampling, data collection, and data analysis, as well as skills in critiquing research studies, will be taught in the context of ethical standards governing evaluation and research as set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics.

SW 321. Social Work Research II. 3 Hours.

This course advances students to research theory, methods and tools through the standpoint of social justice, human rights, inclusion, and diversity. This course provides the context for understanding the analysis and interpretation of quantitative data as well as the application of findings from research. Specific research methodology concepts will be covered. Students will have an opportunity to develop a project that will apply these concepts and practice.

Prerequisites: SW 320 [Min Grade: C]

SW 322. Social Work Practice I. 3 Hours.

This course focuses on generalist social work practice with individuals and families, providing students with the opportunity to gain the knowledge, skills, values, and competence needed for intervention and prevention at the beginning professional level. Students will learn how to engage, assess, intervene and evaluate client systems and constituents using anti-racist, equitable, and inclusive generalist practice. This course must be taken at UAB. Transfer credits will not be accepted for this course. Must be concurrently taken with SW 322L Social Work Service Learning Lab II.

Prerequisites: (SW 222 [Min Grade: C] and SW 222L [Min Grade: C]) or SW 222 [Min Grade: C]

SW 322L. Social Work Service Learning Lab II. 1 Hour.

This lab course introduces students to working with individual and family client systems through service learning experiences and simulation opportunities. The lab integrates volunteering and observation with critical reflection, professionalism, and ethical practice, focusing on raising awareness about social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. Must be concurrently taken with SW 322 Social Work Practice I. This course must be taken at UAB. Transfer credits will not be accepted for this course.

SW 339. Practice in Child Welfare Settings. 3 Hours.

This course addresses perpetuating issues that children face in today's interconnected and complex society and identifies possible intervention strategies. This course will also identify contemporary trends in service delivery and relevant policy issues concerning the health and well-being of diverse and vulnerable children. Students will have the opportunity to examine inequality in the child welfare system.

SW 340. Practice with Maternal and Child Health Populations. 3 Hours.

This course provides students with a working knowledge of the maternal and child health (MCH) population in the United States, emerging health issues, and social determinants that can affect individual and family long-term outcomes. Topics covered include the history of maternal and child health and emerging health issues across women, perinatal/infant health, child health, adolescent health, and children and youth with special health care needs, with special attention given to application in social work practice. Students will learn about the concept of health disparities and social determinants of health, and how health disparities and social determinants of health can affect women and families across the lifespan.

SW 378. Special Topics in Social Work. 3 Hours.

Issues of current interest in social work practice, policy, and research, emphasizing human rights for at-risk populations. Irregularly offered course. Varies in content. May be repeated for credit but topic may not be repeated.

SW 422. Social Work Practice II. 3 Hours.

This course focuses on the generalist social work practice with groups, communities and organizations, providing students with the opportunity to gain the knowledge, skills, values and competence needed for intervention and prevention at the beginning professional level. Students will learn how to engage, assess, intervene and evaluate client systems and constituents using anti-racist, equitable, and inclusive generalist practice. This course must be taken at UAB. Transfer credits will not be accepted for this course. Must be taken concurrently with SW 422L Social Work Service Learning Lab III.

Prerequisites: SW 322 [Min Grade: C] or (SW 322 [Min Grade: C] and SW 322L [Min Grade: C])

SW 422L. Social Work Service Learning Lab III. 1 Hour.

This lab course offers an introduction to working with groups, communities and organizations through service learning experiences and/or simulation opportunities. The lab integrates volunteering and observation with critical reflection, professionalism, and ethical practice, focusing on raising awareness about social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. Must be concurrently taken with SW 422 Social Work Practice II. This course must be taken at UAB. Transfer credits will not be accepted for this course.

SW 426. Practice in Medical & Health-Based Settings. 3 Hours.

This course provides an introduction to and overview of working with people called "patients" in medical and health-based settings. Through this course, students will obtain a basic understanding of how to effectively assist individuals, groups, families, and communities impacted by various illnesses. The role of the social worker on the care team in various settings will be examined. The course also examines special population groups, resource allocation, service delivery, and legal and ethical considerations.

SW 427. Mental Health & Patient Advocacy. 3 Hours.

This course teaches students the criteria used in assessing mental disorders in children and adults. Students become familiar with selected theories and research regarding the etiology of mental disorders. The impact of these disorders on the client, the client's family, and the community are then discussed, and opportunities for patient advocacy are covered. Students also learn the potential for bias that can result when one applies assessment tools across cultural, ethnic, racial and other groups.

SW 428. Medical and Mental Health Social Work. 3 Hours.

This course provides an introduction to and overview of working with people called "patients" in medical and mental health settings, utilizing culturally relevant perspectives and anti-oppressive practices. Through this course, students will obtain a basic understanding of how to effectively assist vulnerable individuals, groups, families, and communities impacted by various illnesses. The role of the social worker on the care team in various settings will be examined, including collaboration, case management, advocacy and leadership. The course also examines special population groups, resource allocation, service delivery, and legal and ethical considerations.

SW 452. Birmingham Neighborhood Studies. 3 Hours.

This course explores the culture, history, and urban development of four Birmingham neighborhoods in transition. It emphasizes community engagement through active study of Birmingham's historic neighborhoods. Students will study and learn about the history of select Birmingham neighborhoods from different theoretical lens and a social justice perspective; examine artifacts and documents, and engage and collaborate with community members to develop written and creative projects. This course requires significant time spent off-campus in the Birmingham community, and field trips during class time. Field trip permissions must be completed.

SW 453. Practice with Aging Populations. 3 Hours.

The purpose of this course is to educate the student to work effectively with diverse older adults in a variety of settings. The course will blend lecture and experiential learning to prepare social workers for clinic work and collaboration with older adults. Students will explore biases about aging, how health and behavior health circumstances change of the lifespan, end of life issues, cultural competency, and how to effectively advocate in partnership with or on behalf of older adults. The course will allow students to explore the concerns of older adults from both a micro and macro perspective and will address cultural factors regarding aging. There will be opportunities to explore community resources and improve interview skills. Students will be encouraged to work as a team to explore resources as a way of improving their collaborative skills.

SW 454. Working in Addiction and Recovery. 3 Hours.

This course examines the impact of substance use disorder on individuals, families, groups, organizations, institutions, and communities from a holistic, anti-oppressive orientation, considering the client in relation to the environment and the structural factors that contribute to the use, misuse and abuse of psychoactive drugs. This course is recommended for students who want to expand their knowledge and sensitivity to understanding the special problems that substance use disorder brings to society. Course content includes identification of the various drugs of abuse, major theories of addiction, and examination of the psychological and physiological consequences of substance use disorder.

SW 478. Special Topics in Social Work. 3 Hours.

Issues of current interest in social work practice, policy, and research. Irregularly offered course, emphasizing human rights for at-risk populations. Varies in content. May be repeated for credit but topic may not be repeated.

SW 490. Practicum in Social Work. 9 Hours.

This course will prepare students for generalist social work practice by integrating social work knowledge and values with the application of professional helping skills. Students will complete a 400-hour field practicum placement at an approved social service agency under the supervision of a practicing social worker. Students will have the opportunity to work in agencies that provide services to diverse and vulnerable populations and apply evidence-informed interventions with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. This is taken concurrently with SW 494. This course must be taken at UAB. Transfer credits will not be accepted for this course.

Prerequisites: (SW 422 [Min Grade: C]) or (SW 422 [Min Grade: C] and SW 422L [Min Grade: C])

SW 494. Practicum Seminar. 3 Hours.

This capstone course is an integrative seminar that must be taken concurrently with SW 490 (Practicum in Social Work). Seminar provides opportunities for students to process their field experiences and reinforce their practice skills and values, connecting the competency-based knowledge gained in the classroom with the application in the field. The seminar also serves as an open forum for students to self-assess, discuss, and reflect on anti-racist, diverse, equitable, and inclusive generalist practice for all client systems. This course must be taken at UAB. Transfer credits will not be accepted for this course.

SW 496. Social Work Honors Seminar. 3 Hours.

Special seminar for social work honors students. Prerequisite: Admission to the Social Work Honors Program and permission of the Social Work Honors Program Director.

SW 498. Honors Independent Study I. 1-3 Hour.

This course provides opportunities for Honors students to initiate their research project and receive one-on-one mentorship. This independent study is required for all Social Work Honors students. Instructor's permission is required. Course may be repeated.

SW 499. Independent Study II. 1-3 Hour.

This course provides opportunities for student to pursue their specific interests in social issues and topics. Students will work closely with a faculty member to design readings, assignments, and/or activities to meet their learning goals. Instructor's permission is required.