

## **MSW Program Description**

As of September 2010, Westfield State University is working with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) for accreditation of the MSW program. Further details on CSWE accreditation of the program can be requested from the MSW Program Director.

### **Administration and Faculty**

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<i>Program Coordinator:</i>	Dr. Robert Kersting, ACSW, Ph.D., DCSW, MSW
<i>Field Coordinator:</i>	Dr. Jane Mildred, ACSW, Ph.D.
<i>Faculty:</i>	Dr. Sunday Fakunmoju, Ph.D, MSW, LICSW(D.C.), LCSW-C(MD) Dr. Mark Horwitz, Ph.D., J.D., MSW, LICSW(MA), LCSW(CT) Dr. Robert Kersting, ACSW, Ph.D., DCSW, MSW Dr. Jane Mildred, ACSW, Ph.D. Dr. Nora Padykula, LICSW(MA), Ph.D., MSW Dr. Rosemary Sullivan, LICSW(MA), Ph.D., MSW Dr. Katherine Walsh, Ph.D., MSW, LICSW(MA)

### **Program Mission**

The mission of the MSW program at Westfield State University is to prepare advanced level social work practitioners who have specialized knowledge and clinical skills for working with children and families that are based on a firm generalist foundation.

The program places emphasis and value on the development of students who will practice in their areas of competence, maintain ethical standards, and demonstrate leadership within their community as collaborative practitioners who are committed to addressing social, racial, and economic injustice.

The program is built on a strong generalist foundation and is grounded in biological, psychological, and social theoretical paradigms that will promote a spirit of inquiry and critical analysis of developing theories for social work practice with children and families. Students will gain competencies in developing and applying practice modalities that are rooted in various forms of evidence.

As graduates complete their advanced training, they will develop a commitment to life-long learning through self reflection, meeting changing social needs, critically evaluating and integrating emerging practice proficiencies, increasing their levels of cultural competence, and engaging in ongoing skill development to meet the demands of advanced roles and responsibilities.

The program at Westfield is committed to providing leadership throughout the practice community in evaluating and analyzing existing and emerging areas of knowledge to advance social service delivery, social policies, and direct practice with the vulnerable, disenfranchised and marginalized populations that are served by social workers.

### **Goals**

Goal # 1: The program prepares graduates who will have mastered the knowledge, values, and skills of the social work professional generalist practice core.

Goal #2: The program prepares graduates who will have advanced knowledge, values, and skills for clinical social work practice with children and families.

The accomplishment of these goals will be demonstrated by the following competencies:

Competency #1: Graduates will identify as professional social workers and as advanced social work practitioners and conduct themselves accordingly.

Competency #2: Graduates will conduct their professional practice according to the values and ethical principles of professional social work.

Competency #3: Graduates will apply critical thinking and communication skills to evaluate and inform professional judgments in practice.

Competency #4: Graduates will engage in informed, sensitive and competent practice with diverse and oppressed groups.

Competency #5: Graduates will promote human rights and social and economic justice.

Competency #6: Graduates will engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.

Competency #7: Graduates will apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment to professional practice.

Competency #8: Graduates will engage in policy analysis and practice to promote social and economic well-being and to deliver effective services.

Competency #9: Graduates will recognize and respond to the dynamic contexts that shape practice.

Competency #10: Graduates will have the knowledge and skills required for engaging, assessing, intervening and evaluating with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Competency #10(a) Graduates will have the knowledge and skills required to engage client systems of all sizes and specialized skills for engaging children and families.

Competency #10(b) Graduates will have the knowledge and skills required for assessment of client systems of all sizes and specialized skills and knowledge for assessing children and families.

Competency #10(c) Graduates will have the knowledge and skills required to intervene with client systems of all sizes and specialized skills and knowledge for intervening with children and families.

Competency #10(d) Graduates will have the knowledge and skills required for evaluating client systems of all sizes and specialized skills and knowledge for evaluating practice with children and families.

### **Program Curriculum**

The program curriculum is divided into two parts. The first part is designed to give students the generalist practice foundation that is common to all social work programs. The foundation curriculum includes

classroom work and a 400 hour hands -on practicum. The following courses make up the foundation curriculum (number of credits in parenthesis):

SOCW 0511 Research I (3)  
SOCW 0512 Research II (3)  
SOCW 0521 Human Behavior & the Social Environment (HBSE) I (3)  
SOCW 0522 Human Behavior & the Social Environment (HBSE) II (3)  
SOCW 0523 Diversity & Social Justice (3)  
SOCW 0531 Social Welfare Policy Analysis (3)  
SOCW 0541 Generalist Practice I (3)  
SOCW 0542 Generalist Practice II (3)  
SOCW 0561 Foundation Practicum I (4)  
SOCW 0562 Foundation Practicum II (4)  
Total Credits for Foundation Curriculum=32

The second part of the curriculum is designed to give students advanced knowledge, values, and skills for practice with families and children. The advanced curriculum includes required classroom work, two electives, and a 500 hour hands-on practicum. Students who have completed a BSW from a CSWE accredited program can apply for advanced standing and start the program in the second year after completing a summer bridge course. The following courses make up the advanced curriculum:

SOCW 0621 Mental Health & Children (3)  
SOCW 0622 Mental Health & Adulthood (3)  
SOCW 0631 Child Welfare Policy (3)  
SOCW 0641 Advanced Practice I: Child & Youth (3)  
SOCW 0642 Advanced Practice II: Adults (3)  
SOCW 0643 Advanced Practice III: Family (3)  
SOCW 0661 Advanced Practicum I (5)  
SOCW 0662 Advanced Practicum II (5)  
Two Electives (3 credits each) (6)  
Total credits for Advanced Curriculum=34  
Total Credits for MSW=66  
Electives Include:  
SOCW 0543 Advanced Standing Bridge Course (3)  
SOCW 0651 School Social Work (3)  
SOCW 0652 Substance Abuse Treatment (3)  
SOCW 0699 Special Topics in Social Work (3)

### **MSW Admissions Process and Requirements**

All applicants should follow the following process and meet the described requirements (Specific additional requirements for Advanced Standing applicants are identified)

1. Applicants should obtain an application packet from the MSW Program or the Division of Graduate and Continuing Education.
2. Applicants must have a Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university. To apply for **Advanced Standing** the candidate must have a BSW from a CSWE accredited program.
3. Applicants must have an undergraduate degree that included a clear liberal arts base and a firm foundation in the social sciences, government, and human biology. (Applicants should identify their social science, government and human biology courses on the application. Students who do

not meet this requirement may be accepted into the program but will be required to take courses to meet these requirements prior to starting the program.)

4. Applicants need a 2.8 overall undergraduate GPA. For **Advanced Standing** candidates, the applicant should also have a 3.0 social work GPA. In extraordinary circumstances both requirements can be waived by the Admission Committee.
5. Applicants need to complete the Graduate Admission form, specifying Traditional MSW program or Advanced Standing MSW Program and whether they would like to be full-time or part-time.
6. Applicants need to have three letters of reference completed, including one academic reference. **Advanced Standing** applicants need to have one of their letters of reference from their BSW Program Director (or his/her designee). A letter from their Field Placement Supervisor is highly recommended.
7. Applicants need to submit a current resume.
8. Applicants need to complete a professional statement that describes:
  - reason(s) for interest in entering the field of social work;
  - assessment of personal strengths and limitations related to the profession;
  - examination of life experiences and relationship of these experiences to career choice. Discuss here evidence of your commitment to aiding people who are oppressed and/or members of vulnerable populations (good examples are prior work, civic or volunteer experiences); and
  - assessment of personal values and congruence of these beliefs with the social work profession's value system. (We suggest that you review the NASW Code of Ethics prior to writing the professional statement.)

*The professional statement will be evaluated regarding the above material and also will be considered a writing sample to evaluate your ability to express yourself in written form. Applicants who believe that they have extraordinary circumstances regarding the GPA requirements must include their rationale for their request to have the GPA requirement waived.*

*Though human services experience is not required, applicants are strongly encouraged to describe any prior volunteer or work experience in their professional statement. Professional experience is viewed positively and considered when making decisions regarding waiving GPA requirements.*

### **Application Deadlines**

The closing date for receipt of all admission materials is February 1. Applicants whose admission files are not completed by February 1 may not be considered for the academic year which begins the following September. Normally, four to six weeks are required for the School of Social Work to receive transcripts; applicants should therefore make every effort to ensure that all relevant documents are requested well before the deadline date. The Department of Social Work reserves the right to change the closing date for the receipt of application materials. Notice of any deadline extension will be posted.

### **Notification of Acceptance**

Notice of acceptance will occur on or about April 15 for study beginning the following September (there are no midyear admissions). Within ten days of receiving notification, accepted applicants must confirm in writing their intention to enroll in the program. Confirmation of acceptance should be mailed or emailed to the DGCE Director of Admissions.

Due to the competitive nature of this program, we require a nonrefundable “competitive program deposit” of \$150.00 within 10 days of acceptance. This deposit is used to ensure your space in the program. The deposit is applied to your first registration as a matriculated student in the Fall semester immediately

following your acceptance. If we do not hear from you within 10 days, we will assume you have selected an alternative direction, and we will close your matriculation.

## **SOCIAL WORK COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

### **SOCW 0511 RESEARCH I**

**3 s.h.**

The course will introduce students to the basics of social science research by examining the research process, purposes of research, and the philosophy of research. Students will learn about the basics of measurement, sampling, and causation. Students will review the basic approaches to research, including qualitative research, experiments, surveys, and historical and comparative research.

### **SOCW 0512 RESEARCH II**

**3 s.h.**

This course builds on Research 1, In this course students will develop knowledge and skills to complete quantitative and qualitative research. Students will learn how to apply research to social work practice. Specifically, Students will learn how to design and implement Single Subject Design research, design and implement program evaluation research and learn how to evaluate exiting research for its usefulness to social work practice.

### **SOCW 0521 HUMAN BEHAVIOR & THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT (HBSE) I 3 s.h.**

This is the first course of a two-course sequence that will focus on how aspects of the social environment affect human behavior and on individual development across the life cycle. This course examines human behavior in families, groups, communities, organizations, and cultures, and the biological, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects of human development. The course emphasizes the diversity of human experience, the negative impact of oppression on individuals, families, and groups, and the importance of resilience and empowerment.

### **SOCW 0522 HUMAN BEHAVIOR & THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT (HBSE) II 3 s.h.**

This is the second course of a two course sequence that will focus on how aspects of the social environment affect human behavior and on individual development across the life cycle. The major goal of the course is to help students understand the complex interactions between people and their environments and the importance of knowledge and theories about human behavior to social work practice.

**SOCW 0523 DIVERSITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE 3s.h.**

This course examines the histories of diverse social identity groups in the United States and the differential impacts of past and present attitudes, beliefs, practices, and policies on the lives of individuals, families, groups, and communities. The existence of multiple, intersecting, and interlocking systems of advantage and disadvantage and the centrality of diversity competent practice to the field of social work are emphasized.

**SOCW 0531 SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY ANALYSIS 3 s.h.**

Social science, historical, and ideological models, theories, and perspectives are used as a foundation to examine and analyze present social policies and social programs at the organizational, state, national, and international levels.

**SOCW 0541 GENERALIST PRACTICE I 3 s.h.**

This is the first of a two-part course sequence that introduces student to the knowledge, values, and skills that form the core of generalist social work practice. In this course, students examine the roles social workers take with client systems, critical thinking, evidence-based practice, and basic theories of social work, and explore the values and ethics of social work, including managing ethical dilemmas. The course continues with an examination of engaging and assessing systems of different sizes.

**SOCW 0542 GENERALIST PRACTICE II 3 s.h.**

This is the second of a two-part course that introduces student to the knowledge, values, and skills that form the core of generalist social work practice. In this course, the development of service plans with systems of different sizes is examined in-depth. The course continues with an examination of the application of theory, use of self, use of professional values, and development of skills for interventions with individuals, families, groups, and communities. The course concludes with an exploration of the values, knowledge, and skills needed to evaluation social work with clients systems of various sizes and of termination/transition with the client system.

**SOCW 0543 GENERALIST PRACTICE BRIDGE COURSE  
(required for Advanced Standing students) 3 s.h.**

This course is required for Advanced Standing students as a bridge that allows students to be fully ready to enter the advanced level of MSW education. This course focuses on the core knowledge, values and skills that form the foundation of generalist practice.

**SOCW 0561 & 0562 FOUNDATION PRACTICUM I & II  
(each) 4 s.h.**

First year MSW students are required to complete a 400 hour, hands-on social work internship in an approved agency under the supervision of a professional social worker. This internship may be scheduled as a one-semester block placement or a two-semester part-time placement.

Included is a seminar that provides further integration of practice experience with the skills, knowledge, and values and ethics of the field.

**SOCW 0621 MENTAL HEALTH & CHILDREN 3 s.h.**

This course examines mental health problems in childhood and adolescence from a biopsychosocial developmental perspective. A range of relevant theories will be studied as they shed light on the development of child and adolescent disorders. Specific clinical entities such as pervasive developmental delays, physiological disorders, and personality, cognitive, affective, and behavior disorders are considered in terms of their etiologies and features and in relation to the practice challenges they raise. Theories are critically examined with particular attention given to the influences of gender, race, ethnicity, and other forms of diversity on the development of deviations.

**SOCW 0622 MENTAL HEALTH & ADULTHOOD 3 s.h.**

This course will provide the student with advanced exposure to several issues in the area of adult psychopathology and diagnostics. It is intended to provide students with the tools necessary to comfortably utilize the DSM system of classification while maintaining a coherent case conceptualization that is not bounded by this system. Course material will be organized by diagnostic categories.

**SOCW 0631 CHILD WELFARE POLICY 3 s.h.**

This course examines the history and current status of child welfare policy in the United States. The theories, assumptions, politics, and economics underlying child welfare policies and practices are explored and evaluated in relationship to major theories and empirical knowledge about child development, children's rights, human needs, and social work values and ethics.

**SOCW 0641 ADVANCED PRACTICE I: CHILDREN & YOUTH 3 s.h.**

This course examines the knowledge, values, and skills needed to conduct effective interventions with children, adolescents, and significant adults within the context of their specific social environments. Special attention is given to issues of diversity and empowerment as they relate to assessment, building relationships with children and adolescents and their families, treatment planning, intervention, and practice evaluation.

**SOCW 0642 ADVANCED PRACTICE II: ADULTS 3 s.h.**

This course examines theory, knowledge, and skills for advanced practice with adults. The therapeutic process and treatment strategies are examined, incorporating content from multiple theoretical orientations. Theories are compared and contrasted in terms of theoretical assumptions, intervention methods and techniques, and empirical evidence regarding practice outcomes.

**SOCW 0643 ADVANCED PRACTICE III: FAMILY 3 s.h.**

This course focuses on the knowledge, skills, and values needed for advanced social work practice with families. The course includes an in-depth look at clinical social work with families through the process of engagement, assessment, planning, intervention, evaluation, and termination. Further, the course examines multiple theories for clinical social work with families and the integration of current evidence into family practice.

**SOCW 0651 SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK****3 s.h.**

This course explores the role of social workers in school settings including the changing nature of this role, the various roles school social workers play, and the interventions school social workers employ. Building on the social work foundation knowledge, the ecological model and the strengths perspective, this course examines the role of the social worker in helping students, families, and schools including adjusting to and coping with students with special needs and at-risk populations.

**SOCW 0652 SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT****3 s.h.**

This course will provide an overview of the various types of addictive substances, the acute and chronic effects, and the relational impact to human behavior and the social environment. Using a trans-theoretical framework, students will increase their practice knowledge about prevention, assessment, treatment models and techniques, and the importance of aftercare when working with clients who are addicted and/or dually diagnosed.

**SOCW 0661 ADVANCED PRACTICUM I****5 s.h.**

This is the first of a two-part final year MSW practicum experience. Second year MSW students are required to complete a 500 hour, hands-on social work internship in an approved agency under the supervision of a professional social worker. Each semester the student is expected to complete 250 hours of practicum. Included is a weekly seminar that provides further integration of practice with the skills, knowledge, and values and ethics of the field. In this first semester skills around engagement, assessment and service planning will be the focus.

**SOCW 0662 ADVANCED PRACTICUM II****5 s.h.**

This is the second of a two-part final year MSW practicum experience. Second year MSW students are required to complete a 500 hour, hands-on social work internship in an approved agency under the supervision of a professional social worker. Each semester the student is expected to complete 250 hours of practicum. Included is a weekly seminar that provides further integration of practice with the skills, knowledge, and values and ethics of the field. In this second semester skills around intervention, evaluation and termination will be the focus.