Social Work

Director
• Mercedes E. Bern-Klug

Director, Bachelor of Arts Program
• Carolyn Hartley

Director, Master of Social Work Program
• Carol A. Coohey

Director, Doctor of Philosophy Program
• Megan E. Gilster

Undergraduate major: social work (B.A.)
Undergraduate minor: social work
Graduate degrees: M.S.W.; Ph.D. in social work
Faculty: https://socialwork.uiowa.edu/people
Website: https://socialwork.uiowa.edu/

The School of Social Work's mission is to develop, disseminate, and integrate excellent and compelling research-based knowledge, practice, and policy, particularly that related to children, families, and older adults. The school operates from strengths-based perspectives and systems perspectives. It educates its graduates to be culturally competent scholars and practitioners who are committed to social justice and social work values and ethics, and who are prepared to serve in and have a positive impact on a broad range of family-centered and community-based practice settings throughout the State of Iowa and beyond.

The school provides a program of professional training accredited by the Council on Social Work Education at the baccalaureate and master's degree levels, aimed at developing effective intervention in multiple systems and using professional social work values and ethics. It also offers a Ph.D. program, which prepares students to conduct research that contributes to the knowledge base of social work, to be leaders in setting policy and practice, and to teach in colleges and universities. In addition, the School of Social Work administers the programs listed below.

Minor and Certificates

Aging and Longevity Studies
The School of Social Work administers the graduate certificate and the undergraduate minor and certificate in the Aging and Longevity Studies Program; see Aging and Longevity Studies in the Catalog.

Critical Cultural Competence
The School of Social Work administers the undergraduate certificate program in critical cultural competence; see the Certificate in Critical Cultural Competence in the Catalog.

Resilience and Trauma-Informed Perspectives
The undergraduate certificate program in resilience and trauma-informed perspectives is administered by the School of Social Work; see the Certificate in Resilience and Trauma-Informed Perspectives in the Catalog.

Projects, Seminars
Students may become involved in special projects such as the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and the School of Social Work's programs in gerontology and in end-of-life care.

The school also offers students the opportunity to participate in travel/study seminars.

Continuing Education
Nondegree students may enroll in selected courses. Students who complete continuing education work and later enroll in a degree program may be able to apply a limited amount of their continuing education work toward their degree requirements; applicable credit is determined by the School of Social Work.

Programs

Undergraduate Programs of Study

Major
• Major in Social Work (Bachelor of Arts)

Minor
• Minor in Social Work

Graduate Programs of Study

Majors
• Master of Social Work
• Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work

Courses

Social Work Courses

SSW:1000 First-Year Seminar 1-2 s.h.
Small discussion class taught by a faculty member; topics chosen by instructor; may include outside activities (e.g., films, lectures, performances, readings, visits to research facilities). Requirements: first- or second-semester standing.

SSW:1022 Social Justice and Social Welfare in the United States 3 s.h.
Historical development of social welfare and social justice in the United States; individual values and ethics; role and responsibilities of enhancing society; contemporary practice to address social injustices including poverty, discrimination, various forms of violence; small group discussions and debates of various issues to allow for an exchange of diverse views and perspectives; volunteer work. GE: Values and Culture. Same as SOC:1022.
SSW:1800 Aging Matters: Introduction to Gerontology 3 s.h.
Overview of the field of gerontology from a bio-psycho-social framework; how the human body and brain age, effects of these biological changes on physical and cognitive functions, and interaction of these individual factors with societal contexts; broad perspective to give students a foundation in gerontology, paving the way for more advanced courses in biology of aging, psychology of aging, and global aging; for students from a wide range of disciplines and levels, no prior knowledge of aging required. GE: Social Sciences. Same as ASP:1800, CSD:1800, NURS:1800, TR:1800.

SSW:2042 Intercultural Communication 3 s.h.
Culture defined as a system of taken-for-granted assumptions about the world that influence how people think and act; cultural differences that produce challenges and opportunities for understanding and communication; those differences from several theoretical perspectives; opportunities to examine culture and cultural differences in practical, experience-driven ways. Same as COMM:2042, IS:2042.

SSW:2222 Introduction to Social Work 4 s.h.
Social welfare as a social institution; settings, methodologies of social work, practice; profession of social work; historical development of American social welfare, social work; a minimum of 45 hours volunteer work. Requirements: sophomore or higher standing.

SSW:3135 Global Aging 3 s.h.
Demographic factors that contribute to the worldwide phenomena of population aging in context of WHO Active Aging and the United Nation's Principles for Older Persons frameworks. Same as ASP:3135, GHS:3050.

SSW:3191 Individual Study arr.
Project related to student interest carried out under direction of faculty member.

SSW:3500 Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness I 3 s.h.

SSW:3600 Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness II 3 s.h.
Qualities for leadership of nonprofit organizations, including relationships with staff and volunteers; relationship of nonprofit and outside world; marketing, public relations, advocacy strategies for nonprofits. Same as MGMT:3600, NURS:3600, RELS:3701.

SSW:3700 Introduction to Understanding Trauma and Resilience 3 s.h.
Introduction to understanding key concepts of trauma-informed systems of care in multiple settings; identification of various types of trauma along with behaviors and responses seen in survivors of trauma; students trace effects of historical trauma of marginalized communities and multiple trauma survivor groups to understand the consequences of trauma and its impact in the culture; resilience and strategies to offset consequences of trauma. Same as PSQF:3700.

SSW:3712 Human Sexuality, Diversity, and Society 1-3 s.h.
Introduction to human sexuality from a biopsychosocial, sex-positive perspective; sexuality as a normal and essential component of human existence and expression throughout the life span; influence of gender, class, religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability status, age, and culture on sexuality interwoven and highlighted; diversity of perspectives and experiences shared through active participation and respectful dialogue. Same as NURS:3712.

SSW:3729 Substance Use and Abuse 2-3 s.h.
Chemical dependency for helping professions; etiological, physiological, psychological, legal, sociological aspects; treatment methods.

SSW:3786 Death/Dying: Issues Across the Life Span 3-4 s.h.
Introduction to the field of end-of-life care; examination of student concerns about death, dying, and grieving process; historical, cultural, societal, and personal perspectives of death and dying in modern society. Same as ASP:3786.

SSW:3796 Family Violence 2-3 s.h.
Thinking critically about one of the most damaging family problems prevalent in the United States today—family violence; students examine the phenomena of child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, and elder abuse, including definitions, causes, risk factors, consequences, reporting, assessment, intervention, prevention, and policy.

SSW:3797 Child Welfare Policy and Practice 3 s.h.
Public and private child welfare practice and organizations in the United States; historical and legal aspects, co-occurring issues, foster care, adoption, family preservation.

Human behavior, practice, social welfare policy.

SSW:3840 Human Behavior in the Social Environment 3-4 s.h.
Behavior and development in context of social, ecological systems and human diversity; overview of biopsychosocial dimensions, individual behavior, and development throughout lifespan; contexts of diverse family, group, community, organization, and cultural systems.

SSW:3841 Fundamentals of Social Work Practice 3 s.h.
Professional practice: functions, roles, skills, conceptual frameworks, values, ethics; focus on integrated approach to practice, including assessment, intervention, evaluation of interventions, termination with individuals, families, groups; emphasis on empirically based practice. Corequisites: SSW:3840, if not taken as a prerequisite. Requirements: admission to social work B.A. program.

SSW:3842 Interpersonal Skills Laboratory 2 s.h.
Practice of interpersonal skills required in the helping relationship. Corequisites: SSW:3841, if not taken as a prerequisite. Requirements: admission to social work B.A. program.

SSW:3844 Introduction to Social Work Research 4 s.h.
Scientific approach to knowledge building, with emphasis on critical use of research; quantitative and qualitative methods, evaluation of practice, computerized data analysis, ethics and diversity in social work research. Requirements: admission to social work B.A. program.
SSW:3845 Social Work Processes 4 s.h.
Context of practice examined to understand structural factors that affect clients and communities; culturally competent practice using empowerment perspective. Corequisites: SSW:3840, if not taken as a prerequisite. Requirements: admission to social work B.A. program.

SSW:3847 Discrimination, Oppression, and Diversity 3 s.h.
Theoretical and historical perspectives on racism, sexism, other forms of discrimination; applications to social work, culturally competent practice, change strategies. Requirements: admission to social work B.A. or M.S.W. program.

SSW:3904 Human Services Administration 2 s.h.
Effects of organizational structures/processes on individual performance; models of management, communication patterns, leadership styles; skill in technical writing, decision making, personnel and financial management, applied professional ethics. Requirements: completion of foundation courses.

SSW:4100 Social Work in the Criminal Justice System 3 s.h.
How social work practice intersects with different aspects of the criminal justice system; focus on integrating social work values into criminal justice field; social work's responsibility to address social justice problems (e.g., mental illness, racial disparity, gender, human rights) within criminal justice system; critical examination of past and present practices in criminal justice and implications for social work practice and policy when working with individuals in criminal justice system.

SSW:4130 Family Development Specialist Model 3 s.h.
Use of family development specialist model of family-centered practice to facilitate improved family functioning, economic independence; relationship building, systems theory, family-centered case management, conflict management, empowerment strategies. Requirements: completion of family development specialist certification course.

SSW:4155 Treatment of Substance Use and Co-Occurring Disorders 3 s.h.
Treatment of individuals presenting substance related issues (abuse, dependency, co-occurring disorders); etiological, physiological, psychological, legal, and sociocultural aspects; evaluation of current research and direct application of contemporary treatment modalities to client situations encountered as helping professionals. Recommendations: introductory course in substance abuse.

SSW:4188 Continuing Education: Honors arr.
Supervised individual research. Requirements: honors standing.

SSW:4189 Field Experience Seminar 1 s.h.
Opportunity for students to recount their experiences from generalist practice in agencies; application of knowledge, skills, and values of culturally competent social work. Corequisites: SSW:4193. Requirements: completion of coursework in the major.

SSW:4190 Aging Studies Internship and Seminar 3 s.h.
Opportunities for students in various disciplines to relate their areas of study to older adults and aging; interdisciplinary relationships, approaches to meeting needs of older adults; an online seminar that meets regularly is included in this experience. Same as ASP:4190.

SSW:4192 Honors in Social Work arr.
Supervised individual research. Requirements: honors standing.

SSW:4193 Field Experience arr.
Supervised experience in selected social welfare organizations; application of knowledge and skill common to generalist practice in an agency setting. Corequisites: SSW:4189. Requirements: completion of coursework in the major and social work senior standing.

SSW:4700 Motivational Interviewing in Diverse Application 3 s.h.
Application of motivational interviewing (MI) skills, as a collaborative process and communication style, while working with individuals presenting with ambivalence to change; MI skills are used to guide across the change process ("Stages of Change") by evoking the intrinsic motivation for change; includes application to diverse populations (e.g., cultural groups, veterans, adolescents) and psychological issues individuals may exhibit.

SSW:4843 Social Welfare Policy and Practice 3 s.h.
Basic social welfare policies and programs; economic, social, ideological, and political conditions that have influenced formation and implementation of social policy, current structure of major social welfare policies.

SSW:5194 Social Work Practice in Health Care Settings 2 s.h.
Introduction to organization, provision of social work services in health care settings; practice issues such as models of intervention, ethical questions, impact of cultural diversity on health care.

SSW:5200 Grief Work with Individuals and Families 2-3 s.h.
Complexity of grief and its multifaceted impact on family systems; utilizing grief theories, including Worden's Tasks of Mourning, ambiguous loss theory, several family systems models; examination of multi-generational dynamics that affect how we learn to grieve, how we experience grief, and how we live after a loss; acknowledged and unacknowledged grief and loss; generational family dynamics; difficulties and strengths passed from one generation to the next; assessing grief at individual, family, group, and community levels; how loss can affect personal well-being and professional practice, particularly when working with an interdisciplinary team. Requirements: social work graduate standing.

SSW:5240 Trauma Informed Family Practice 3 s.h.
Theory, knowledge, and skills informing evidence-based assessment and intervention for traumatized children and adolescents in child welfare system, including those exposed to abuse, neglect, witnessing interpersonal crime (e.g., domestic violence, community violence); family events within their ecological context, various family forms, cultural patterns; controversial issues in child welfare, conclusions based on scholarly research, presentation of conclusions in professional oral and written form.

SSW:5250 Resilience and Trauma-Informed Interventions with Individuals 3 s.h.
Focusing primarily on trauma caused by violence, students explore definitions, symptoms, and physiology of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and the impact of violence on individuals, family system, and communities; individual-level assessment and interventions.
SSW:6145 Organization and Community Practice 3 s.h.
Models that underlie theories of organization, community practice; principles of macro social work and skill development in relationship building, needs assessment, decision making, planning, implementing, ethics, program and self-evaluation. Requirements: admission to M.S.W. program.

SSW:6146 Computer Laboratory 1 s.h.
Instruction and hands-on skills in the use of computer applications for research and statistical analysis. Requirements: admission to M.S.W. program.

SSW:6148 Research Practice I 3 s.h.
Knowledge and skills for evaluating practice and carrying out social work research; formulation of research questions; research design and methodology; sampling techniques; protection of human subjects; descriptive statistics; computerized data analysis. Requirements: admission to M.S.W. program.

SSW:6150 Social Work Practice with Individuals, Families, and Groups 3 s.h.
Models and underlying theories of empirically based direct social work practice; emphasis on an ecosystem strengths perspective; phases of helping relationship, strength-based assessment, change process in interpersonal helping relationships. Prerequisites: SSW:3840. Requirements: admission to M.S.W. program; for students who have completed 60 s.h., concurrent enrollment in SSW:6151, SSW:6290, and SSW:6291.

SSW:6151 Social Work Practice Skills Laboratory 2 s.h.
Interpersonal skills practice in the helping relationship; small-group format. Corequisites: SSW:6150 and SSW:6290 and SSW:6291, if not taken as prerequisites. Requirements: admission to M.S.W. program.

SSW:6220 Family Law 3 s.h.
Legal systems, rights, and processes related to families including marriage, divorce, custody, protective services, reproductive rights, adoption, commitment, delinquency, education, poverty, and discrimination; roles of lawyers and social workers in legal system. Prerequisites: SSW:4843.

SSW:6224 Spirituality and Ethics in Social Work 2-3 s.h.
Knowledge, values, and skills that provide a framework for spiritually sensitive social work practice; preparation for responding competently and ethically to diverse spiritual perspectives, for recognizing and reflecting on one’s own spiritual beliefs, and for identifying appropriate ways to apply personal beliefs to practice with varied populations while safeguarding client autonomy and self-determination.

SSW:6228 Theories of Personality and Psychopathology 2 s.h.
Theories and their relevance to social work practice with diverse populations. Prerequisites: SSW:3840. Requirements: social work graduate standing.

SSW:6232 Therapy with Couples 2 s.h.
Introduction to working with couples in interaction and as a social system; theories of functional and dysfunctional systems; theoretical bases for couple’s therapy and techniques of intervention; special attention to couple assessment. Requirements: completion of foundation courses.

SSW:6233 School Social Work Practice 2 s.h.
Evidence-based school social work services from a multilevel approach with student, family, school, and community grounded in social work standards, values, ethics and cultural competence; social and political influences on education and practice; prevention, assessment and intervention; specific practices include response to intervention and positive behavior supports; evaluating and serving students with disabilities including use of functional behavior assessment and development of behavior intervention plans; consultation and collaboration with teachers and school staff, engaging in culturally sensitive practices.

SSW:6234 Social Work Practice and Use of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 3 s.h.
Major categories of psychopathology and the DSM-5 system of classification; the use of the DSM-5 approach to diagnosis allows one to consider all aspects of an individual’s behavior and presentation of symptoms; included in the DSM is information about effects of culture, developmental stage, and gender on the presentation of mental disorders.

SSW:6236 Interventions with Individuals 2 s.h.
Specialized practice; emphasis on thinking about how one works with individuals and importance of emotional (affective) regulation in the professional relationship; focus on emerging findings from the neurosciences combined with attachment theory and object relations; class deliberations involve theory and practice; understanding the overall interpersonal and psychotherapeutic process. Requirements: completion of foundation courses.

SSW:6237 Social Work Practice with Children, Youth, and Families 2 s.h.
Preparation for practice in child welfare, family service agencies; family life cycle, child development, child maltreatment, problems of adolescence, social services for families and children, legal issues. Requirements: completion of foundation courses.

SSW:6238 Introduction to Play Therapy 2 s.h.
Major theories and techniques of play therapy, relevance to social work practice.

SSW:6247 Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness I 3 s.h.
Operational and financing aspects of nonprofit management; mission and governance of organization; strategic planning for effective management, including finance, budget, income generation, fund-raising. Same as HMP:6360, MGMT:9150, PBAF:6278, RELS:6070, SPST:6010, URP:6278.

SSW:6248 Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness II 3 s.h.
Qualities for leadership of nonprofit organizations, including relationships with staff and volunteers; relationship of nonprofit and outside world; marketing, public relations, advocacy strategies for nonprofits. Requirements: for HMP:6365—HMP:6360 or MGMT:9150. Same as HMP:6365, MGMT:9160, PBAF:6279, RELS:6075, SPST:6020, URP:6279.

Topics not covered in another course; diversity, social justice and ethics issues related to a social work practice area.

SSW:6282 Grant Writing 1-2 s.h.
Same as PBAF:6282, URP:6282.
SSW:6290 Foundation Practicum in Social Work  3 s.h.
Generalist practice experience with individuals, families, small groups, organizations, communities; communication skills, change process, professional values and ethics applied at multiple system levels; students evaluate their own practice using a learning contract in an agency setting. Corequisites: SSW:3840, SSW:3847, SSW:4843, SSW:6145, SSW:6146, SSW:6150, SSW:6151, and SSW:6291; if not taken as prerequisites. Requirements: admission to M.S.W. program.

SSW:6291 Foundation Practicum Seminar  1 s.h.

SSW:7000 Seminar for Accelerated Advanced Standing Program  3 s.h.
Preparation for advanced micro and macro SSW coursework; builds on foundation knowledge students obtained about working with individuals, group, families, communities, and organizations at the undergraduate level by introducing them to advanced theory and practice models seen in graduate level courses and practice situations. Requirements: admission to accelerated advanced standing M.S.W. program.

SSW:7250 Family-Centered Theory and Practice I  3 s.h.
Examination and comparison of models and underlying theories of empirically based direct social work for family-centered practice; focus on skill development in problem analysis, case assessment, intervention and implementation of multiple change strategies at the family level. Requirements: completion of M.S.W. foundation courses.

SSW:7251 Family-Centered Theory and Practice II  3 s.h.
Examination and practice of specific in-depth techniques for assessment and intervention in family-centered practice and evaluation of student's own practice; intervention examined for specific family and couple presenting problems (domestic violence, substance abuse, etc.); students are encouraged to select one practice approach to learn in greater depth. Prerequisites: SSW:7250.

SSW:7252 Advanced Social Policy for Family Practice  3 s.h.
Systematic basis for examining social, economic, and political factors that influence formation of social policies; social policy implementation, impact of social policies on vulnerable individuals and issues introduced in SSW:7260; focus on how to create and lead organizational change regardless of position in the organization; project management, advanced leadership skills, and capacity development; emphasis on organizational level as it relates to other system levels (individual, family, coalitions, community, policy); major skills include culturally competent organizational, interorganizational, and community intervention, supervision, and program evaluation.

SSW:7261 Integrated Social Work Theory and Practice II  3 s.h.
Builds on theories, skill development, evaluation, and ethical issues introduced in SSW:7260; focus on how to create and lead organizational change regardless of position in the organization; project management, advanced leadership skills, and capacity development; emphasis on organizational level as it relates to other system levels (individual, family, coalitions, community, policy); major skills include culturally competent organizational, interorganizational, and community intervention, supervision, and program evaluation.

SSW:7262 Advanced Social Policy for Integrated Practice  3 s.h.
Systematic basis for critical examination of social, economic, and political factors that influence formation of social policies; social policy implementation, impact of social policies on vulnerable populations, service providers, communities. Requirements: completion of M.S.W. foundation courses.

SSW:7268 Continuing Education: Individual Study  arr.
Project related to student interest; directed by faculty member. Requirements: completion of course contract.

Thesis research project.

SSW:7270 Research Practice II  2-3 s.h.
Research project relevant to social work practice that builds on knowledge and skills developed in SSW:6148; data analysis, report of results; ethical principles applied to research. Prerequisites: SSW:6148. Requirements: admission to M.S.W. program.

SSW:7271 Individual Study  arr.
Project related to student interest; directed by faculty member.

SSW:7272 Thesis  arr.

SSW:7292 Advanced Practicum in Family-Centered Practice I and II  arr.
Family-centered practice theory and skills implemented in interventions with individuals, families; two semester field course. Corequisites: SSW:7250, SSW:7251, SSW:7252, and SSW:7270; if not taken as prerequisites. Requirements: completion of M.S.W. foundation courses, and concurrent enrollment in SSW:7293 or SSW:7294.

SSW:7293 Advanced Practicum Seminar in Family-Centered Practice I  1 s.h.
Two-semester field course; family-centered practice theory and skills implemented in interventions with individuals, families. Corequisites: SSW:7292. Requirements: completion of M.S.W. foundation courses.

SSW:7294 Advanced Practicum Seminar in Family-Centered Practice II  1 s.h.

SSW:7295 Advanced Practicum in Integrated Practice  arr.
Integrated social work theories and interventions implemented in work with individuals, families, organizations, formal and informal networks; two semester field course. Corequisites: SSW:7260, SSW:7261, SSW:7262, and SSW:7270; if not taken as prerequisites. Requirements: completion of M.S.W. foundation courses; for fall semester—concurrent enrollment in SSW:7297 or SSW:7298.
SSW:7296 Advanced Practicum in School Social Work
Field course; social work theories and interventions implemented in schools. Corequisites: SSW:7250 or SSW:7260, SSW:7251 or SSW:7261, and SSW:7252 or SSW:7262; if not taken as prerequisites. Requirements: completion of M.S.W. foundation courses.

SSW:7297 Advanced Practicum Seminar in Integrated Practice I
Two-semester course; social work knowledge, skills, values, and professional identity integrated in context of advanced practice and direct multisystemic interventions. Corequisites: SSW:7295 or SSW:7296.

SSW:7298 Advanced Practicum Seminar in Integrated Practice II

SSW:7800 Social Work Proseminar
Orientation for new Ph.D. students to program and degree requirements; how to formulate research questions; introduction to faculty research and interests. Requirements: admission to social work doctoral program.

SSW:7803 Social Work Research Practicum
Student work with faculty on various phases of research process including research design, measurement, sampling, data collection, data analysis, human subjects review, and writing for publication. Requirements: admission to social work doctoral program.

SSW:7804 Thesis Writing Seminar
Writing a thesis and an argument; synthesizing literature and justifying methods; development of scientific communication skills; defending ideas at proposal hearing and thesis defense.

SSW:7806 Teaching Practicum
Development of knowledge, skills, and values needed to become effective, culturally competent social work educators through an applied teaching experience; faculty mentors provide ongoing instruction on how to teach and assess student learning. Requirements: admission to social work doctoral program, and concurrent enrollment in or completion of teaching seminar.

SSW:7807 Introduction to College Teaching for Social Workers
Development of knowledge and skills needed to become effective, culturally competent educators; topics may include theories of adult learning, course design, creating a learning culture that is inclusive, instructional strategies, accreditation processes, and writing a teaching philosophy.

SSW:7808 Seminar in Social Work Theory and Knowledge
Examination of fundamental relationship between theory and research and epistemology of micro-level theories used in social work research; emphasis on critical evaluation of theories and understanding the difference between frameworks, theories, conceptual models, and their functions; students present and defend their own analysis of theories applicable to their program of scholarship and engage other students in discussion. Requirements: admission to University of Iowa doctoral program.

SSW:7830 Ph.D. Dissertation
Ongoing and substantial feedback to doctoral candidates on development and defense of dissertation. Prerequisites: SSW:7800 and SSW:7803 and SSW:7806 and SSW:7807. Requirements: submission of comprehensive exam.