

# CURRICULUM AND COURSES

## Courses Overview

Within a two-year period, students complete eight required, sequenced courses. As already noted, students must apply to the social work program and be accepted before taking any courses within the program. These eight courses are taught in commingled sections with graduate social work students in their generalist phase of study at the Lincoln Center campus or Westchester campus.

Faculty of the Graduate School of Social Service who teach these commingled classes are knowledgeable about the program and welcome undergraduate students admitted into the program. Program students find that they are accepted into the school environment, and are able to join classmates in learning. Faculty is advised of the graduate or undergraduate status of students in their class. Faculty is expected to hold both types of students to the same standards of performance. Based on its mission and diverse student body, Fordham social service faculty is expected to individualize and treat each student as unique.

Program students have access to a variety of resources to support their study in the classroom. As members of the Fordham University community, they can use the computer center and have individual access to the internet. At Lincoln Center, a writing specialist is specifically designated to work with social work students on an individual and group basis. They lead periodic workshops on academic writing and presentation formats appropriate to social work study.

Program students are expected to meet academic standards in each class and to maintain a combined GPA of 3.0 in their social work classes. The full policy regarding the maintenance of satisfactory progress in the program and the "program continuance review" mechanism appear later in this document, in the policy and procedures section.

Generally, learning concerns and problems in academic classes are handled first by classroom instructors and proceed with the involvement of a student's faculty adviser when appropriate. All students in the program have a faculty adviser who is available to discuss any issues of concern to the student. The faculty adviser regularly confers with faculty to stay current on the student's progress, and can intervene with students and faculty to resolve differences. The faculty adviser and student meet regularly in both individual and group settings with other program students to facilitate students' successful work in the program and their transition into the profession.

## Course Descriptions

### **SOWK 6005. Contemporary Social Welfare Policy. (3 Credits)**

Students will learn that human rights and justice drive social welfare policies and their implementation at the international, federal, state, and local levels. The course introduces students to the underlying values, assumptions and philosophical perspectives that have influenced the development of the US social welfare system, its goals, policies and programs. Students will learn about policy formulation, analysis, and the role of social work in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. The course introduces students to the historical, social, cultural, political, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy.

**Prerequisites:** SOWK 2600 or SSCI 2600 or SOCI 2600.

### **SOWK 6040. Integrating Human Rights and Justice in Practice. (3 Credits)**

Every person regardless of position in society or geographic location has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety and security, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. This course introduces students to how social workers may conceptualize the global intersections and interconnections of justice, equality and human rights. Students are introduced to an integrated practice framework that promotes human rights and justice and identifies the root causes of global social issues. They will explore theories that address human need, social, economic, and environmental justice, intersectionality, diversity, and oppression and discrimination. In this course, students learn how to recognize the extent to which a culture's structure and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power. Students learn to engage in advocacy to advance human rights social, economic, and environmental justice domestically and internationally.

**Prerequisites:** SOWK 2600 or SSCI 2600 or SOCI 2600.

### **SOWK 6305. Social Work Skills Lab. (3 Credits)**

This skill-based course is anchored in the knowledge of generalist social work practice. Students will develop competency in performing essential social work skills via simulations, role-plays and peer activities. These skills will be applied to working with client systems including individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations. Case scenarios developed for this course will reflect the realities of contemporary social work practice. The emphasis will be on student performance in using the engagement and intervention skills with various client systems.

**Prerequisites:** SOWK 2600 or SSCI 2600 or SOCI 2600.

### **SOWK 6320. Social Work Practice With Organizations and Communities. (3 Credits)**

This course uses a generalist framework to prepare students for direct social work practice with organizations and communities. Learners explore the theories, knowledge and fundamental skills necessary to practice successfully with organizations and communities. Students will learn the multiple phases of practices from engagement through termination. Students will be introduced to the ethical and legal obligations that guide social work practice with organizations and communities.

**Prerequisites:** SOWK 2600 or SSCI 2600 or SOCI 2600.

**SOWK 6803. Applied Social Work Research and Evaluation. (3 Credits)**

This course introduces students to social work research. It focuses on the scientific method from the process of developing knowledge to critically evaluating research. Students will learn about formulating a research question; research methodology, including study design, sampling, measurement, and data collection methods; ethical issues in research; and understanding how to read and understand research reports and publications.

**Prerequisites:** SOWK 2600 or SSCI 2600 or SOCI 2600.

**SOWK 6323. Social Work Practice With Individuals Across the Lifespan. (3 Credits)**

This course uses a generalist framework to prepare students for direct social work practice with individuals. Learners explore the theories, knowledge and fundamental skills necessary to practice successfully with individual clients. Students will learn the multiple phases of practices from engagement through termination. Students will be introduced to the ethical and legal obligations that guide social work practice with individuals.

**Prerequisites:** SOWK 2600 or SSCI 2600 or SOCI 2600.

**SOWK 6324. Social Work Practice With Families and Groups Across the Lifespan. (3 Credits)**

This course uses a generalist framework to prepare students for direct social work practice with families and groups. Learners explore the theories, knowledge and fundamental skills necessary to practice successfully with families and groups. Students will learn the multiple phases of practices from engagement through termination. Students will be introduced to the ethical and legal obligations that guide social work practice with families and groups.

**Prerequisites:** SOWK 2600 or SSCI 2600 or SOCI 2600.

**SOWK 6440. Advanced Clinical Assessment and Diagnosis. (3 Credits)**

The course builds on the skills, values, knowledge and processes of the generalist curriculum, serving as a bridge between generalist and advanced assessment theory and practice. Specifically, the course extends the person-in-environment assessment perspective of Generalist Practice with the addition of more intensive assessment of the individual's inner world, including psychodynamic conflicts processes and ego defenses. The course is entitled "Advanced Clinical Assessment and Diagnosis" rather than "Psychopathology" to remind students that clinical assessment need not lead to a diagnosis of mental illness. The course covers practitioner self-awareness; the relationship between mental health and mental illness; risk and resilience; bio-psycho-social-spiritual assessment; a strength-informed cooperative assessment process; a critical use of the DSM-5, and major types of mental illness and their evidence-supported treatments.

**Prerequisites:** SOWK 2600 or SSCI 2600 or SOCI 2600.

**SOWK 6901. BASW Generalist Field Education. (3.5 Credits)**

Field education is an essential component of professional social work education. Students engage in focused practice and service work within an agency or organization that is approved by the Graduate School of Social Service and under the close supervision of a qualified professional. The intent of field education is to provide a synergy of learning by helping students integrate knowledge, values, and theoretical concepts from coursework in a real-world applied practice setting with client systems—individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The Generalist Field curriculum is designed to facilitate students' mastery of the fundamentals of social work practice and the acquisition of the nine professional practice competencies required by the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE). Students are provided a minimum of 450 hours structured across two academic semesters to successfully demonstrate generalist-level social work practice competence. This includes 15 two-hour sessions for their BASW capstone seminar.

## Grading Guidelines

The following are the grading guidelines for papers or essay questions used by the instructors of all eight of the program's classroom courses:

- A student will receive an **"A"** when a paper is well written, interesting, and demonstrates an understanding of the topic. Essential information is included. Literature is drawn upon judiciously and referenced appropriately. Ideas are expressed clearly, and a cogent and convincing case is presented. The topic is approached creatively and the student presents his/her own ideas and observations. The way the material is handled suggests that the student learned, took advantage of the course and its readings, and accepted the challenge posed by the assignment. **An excellent paper or answer exceeds the expectations of the assignment.**
- A student will receive a **"B+"** when a more than satisfactory paper is produced. The topic is handled well, is written clearly, and demonstrates considerable work and effort in organization and presentation. Literature or references are used and cited appropriately and show that the student has done research on his/her own. It is easy to read and interesting. The student has been creative in his/her approach to addressing ideas and points. **A very good paper or answer is more than satisfactory.**
- A student will receive a **"B"** when a satisfactory paper is produced. A satisfactory paper meets the expectation of how the question or topic should be covered. It is grammatically correct, edited, organized, and referenced in presenting relevant points. Necessary and relevant content is included; irrelevant or extraneous material is omitted. The paper demonstrates the student's knowledge of the topic and indicates student input beyond the text or class notes. There are not serious gaps and few wrong or incorrect points (except those from imaginative thinking or risk taking opinions). **A good answer or paper satisfactorily meets expectations of the assignment.**
- A student will receive a **"C"** when the paper is unclear and difficult to read or understand. It raises doubt about the student's grasp of the topic. Poor writing, inappropriate references, and unfocused narrative style may characterize this paper. Irrelevant points or ideas are given as if the student hopes to cover all bases in hopes that some will be correct. The work demonstrates a minimum investment of time and/or effort. There are a sufficient number of points made and references used to suggest the student has some understanding of the topic or question. **A borderline answer or paper barely meets expectations of the assignment.**
- A student will receive an **"F"** when a paper fails to minimally address the topic or respond to the question. No evidence is offered to

indicate the student's understanding of the course content. There is little evidence of independent learning. Writing is poor, making it difficult to understand the student's points or focus. There may be a question of plagiarism or unethical practices in preparing or completing the assignment. **An unacceptable answer or paper fails to meet the expectations of the assignment.**

The undergraduate bulletin describes the grading scale used for coursework.

## **Policy on the Use of "Incomplete" in the Social Work Program**

A grade of "incomplete" is generally discouraged and only employed when faculty conclude that a student is unable to complete assigned coursework due to extenuating circumstances. An incomplete is a grade given at the written request of the student to the course instructor. A time frame acceptable to both the student and faculty must be agreed upon. It is recommended that this time frame not extend beyond four weeks after the final class of the semester.

If an instructor does not have a final assignment from a student and if the student has not requested an incomplete, the instructor may give a final grade based on work completed to that point. Grade submission should not be held back beyond the due date in order to clarify a student's grade. An instructor is under no obligation to accept work from a student after the mutually agreed upon time frame. It is the instructor's decision whether to renegotiate the contract. As in all matters related to grading, an instructor's decision about a grade-related matter is final.