

**Wartburg College Social Work Program
Curriculum Overview**

The core curriculum of the program consists of seven sequenced social work courses, two field experiences, and three supporting courses from other disciplines (psychology, sociology, biology/neuroscience) that enable students to acquire and demonstrate the nine core competencies through all BSW programs accredited by the *Council on Social Work Education*. These core competencies are listed at the end of this document. By department policy, all of the required social work courses are taught by full-time faculty.

Social Work Program Curriculum Plan (required courses)

Supporting Courses (years 1-4)

PSY 101 Introduction to Psychology	SO 101 Introduction to Sociology	BI 130 (Drugs & Personal Health) or NSC 135 (Bio of the Mind)
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Tier 1: Portal Courses (1st & 2nd year)

SW 101 Introduction to Social Work	SW 181 Beginning Field Placement (SW 101 prereq)	SW 201 Human Behavior in the Social Environment	SW 202 Group & Organizational Behavior
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Tier 2: Advanced Learning (3rd year)

SW 300 Social Policy	SW 321 Social Work Research
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Tier 3: Social Work Practice (Methods) Courses (3rd & 4th year)

SW 301 Social Work Practice I	SW 302 Social Work Practice II	
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Tier 4: Senior Capstone & Practicum (4th year)

SW 400 Senior Integrative Seminar	SW 401, 02, 03 Supervised Field Experience
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Curriculum Path

The curriculum begins with three “portal” (or introductory) courses that are open to any Wartburg student who wishes to take them. The Beginning Field Experience (125 hours) has a prerequisite of successfully (C- or higher) completing SW 101.

- **SW 101: Introduction to Social Work & Social Welfare.** Provides a basic introduction to the profession, its fields of practice, and the structure of the American social welfare system. This course is designed to assist students in making decisions about pursuing a major in social work and also provides the foundation for concepts and skills taught in other courses.
- **SW 181: Beginning Field Experience.** With a prerequisite of *SW 101: Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare*, this 150-hour observational placement in an agency selected for the student is typically taken during the May Term of the first year. It provides an experiential demonstration of the concepts learned in SW 101 and is also useful in helping the student gauge her/his interest in continuing to pursue a social work major.
- **SW 201: Human Behavior in the Social Environment.** Usually taken in the second year, SW 201 provides a theoretical background in understanding human behavior that lays the foundation for the practice courses.
- **SW 202: Group and Organizational Behavior.** Conceptualized as a second HBSE course, SW 202 helps students to understand the structure and functioning of groups and organizations and teach the basic skills needed to work effectively as a member/leader of a task group.

The next tier of courses, taken during the third year, provide advanced learning and teach skills in two key areas: social policy and social work research.

- **SW 300: Social Policy.** The course acquaints students with important political processes and teaches them strategies for policy advocacy in legislative and administrative arenas. It also shows them how to analyze and evaluate policy through the lens of social work values and principles of socio-economic justice.

- **SW 321: Social Work Research.** This course teaches students to become discriminating consumers of professional research, strengthens their information literacy skills, and shows them (through a substantive field project) how to conduct and present a program evaluation. The course includes skills for grant writing. This course is both group work and writing intensive.

The third tier in the curriculum consists of two practice courses, which are taken in the second term of the third (junior) year and the first term of the fourth (senior) year. Prior to entering these courses, students must formally apply for and be accepted into the social work major through a process described in the *Student Handbook*. These courses all build on theories taught in earlier courses, with a strong emphasis on *learning through application*.

- **SW 301: Social Work Practice I.** The first of two courses directed at teaching practice skills with individuals and families, its focus is on assessment, the acquisition of interviewing skills, goal-setting, and documentation. It stresses the importance of using the theoretical models of human development and behavior learned in SW 201 in practice and emphasizes important considerations in working with diverse clients.
- **SW 302: Social Work Practice II.** The second course teaching practice skills with individuals and families builds on the first. Case planning, goal implementation, intervention strategies, and beginning-level counseling skills are all taught in SW 302. The course also teaches methods for the evaluation of micro-practice interventions.

The fourth (and final) component of the core curriculum consists of a 425-hour block senior practicum and a concurrent capstone seminar that are taken in the student's last term. Students must have taken all other required social work courses before entering the practicum. They must also file a formal

application (reviewed by faculty) that demonstrates their readiness for this experience. This application process is described in the Field Education Manual.

The senior practicum, by design, provides students with an opportunity to practice and demonstrate their competency with the curriculum's Nine Competencies. In fact, the evaluation of students' work in the practicum is based directly on the Competencies. SW 400 and the Field Experience sequence must all be completed at the same time.

- **SW 400: Senior Integrative Seminar.** Taken along with the senior field experience, this capstone course reinforces skills learned in the practice courses, has a strong focus on applied ethics, and prepares students for entry into post-graduate professional careers. The course is also a focal point for assessing students' learning of the programs competencies and practice behaviors and provides an important opportunity to collect data used in the overall assessment of the program (implicit curriculum).
- **SW 401, 402, 403: Supervised Field Experience.** This 425-hour block practicum earns students three course credits and is taken in an agency placement selected and approved by the field education coordinator. Designed as a partnership between the student, agency field instructor, and faculty liaison, this placement provides an opportunity for students to practice and demonstrate all of the practice behaviors learned in the program.

Supporting Courses

The curriculum requires three supporting courses taken from other disciplines that provide important theoretical foundations for social work practice:

- **PSY 101: Introduction to Psychology.** Taken in the first or second year, this course deepens and reinforces students' understanding of human behavior in the social environment.
- **SO 101: Introduction to Sociology.** This course is important to developing an understanding of social institutions and other structures (including social class) that are fundamental to an understanding of human behavior, socio-economic justice/injustice, social policy, and community practice. It is taken in the first or second year.

- **BI 130: Drugs and Personal Health or NSC 135 Biology of the Mind.** BI 130 helps students to understand the biological roots of human behavior, basic principles of health maintenance, and the effects of medications (prescribed and un-prescribed). NSC 135, also focused on human anatomy, looks more particularly at the neuroscience of human anatomy.

Student Cohorts

The curriculum is constructed intentionally so that students who enter the program at the same time share important learning experiences and develop deep, supportive bonds over time. Not only do they take the core courses together, but also engage with each other frequently and intensively through co-participation in certain key “signature” projects that are a part of the required curriculum: community agency assessment projects in *SW 321: Social Work Research*, the annual NASW Legislative Day project in *SW 300: Social Policy*, and the *Holiday Shoppe* in *SW 303: Social Work Practice III*. The cohorts are also reinforced through common co-curricular traditions such as service trips, Social Work Club, etc. This approach is an effective means of showing students the importance of collegial support in professional social work and an important tool for teaching how to lead and participate in task groups.

Wartburg College Social Work Program

2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) Competencies

<https://www.cswe.org/getmedia/bb5d8afe-7680-42dc-a332-a6e6103f4998/2022-EPAS.pdf>

The Nine Social Work Competencies

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

