

**Wartburg College Social Work Program  
Curriculum Overview**

The core curriculum of the program consists of eight sequenced social work courses, two field experiences, and three supporting courses from other disciplines (psychology, sociology, biology) 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 (biology lab course)
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Tier 1: Portal Courses (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> year)

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

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

SW 301 Social Work Practice I	SW 302 Social Work Practice II	SW 303 Social Work Practice III
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Tier 4: Senior Capstone & Practicum (4<sup>th</sup> 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 and a short field experience that are taken in the first two years, and are open to any Wartburg student who wishes to take them:

- **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, building on basic concepts introduced in *SW 102: Social Welfare History and Programs*.

- **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 also provides a basic introduction to statistical analysis.

The third tier in the curriculum consists of three 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 fully 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.
- **SW 303: Social Work Practice III.** Taken concurrently with SW 302, this course teaches important practice skills with groups, organizations, and communities. It builds on concepts taught in *SW 202: Group and Organizational Behavior* through three experiential projects: a community assessment, writing and presenting a grant proposal, and the organization of the community's annual *Holiday Shoppe* event. Utilizing organizational skills to further socio-economic justice is a strong theme in this course.

The fourth (and final) component of the core curriculum consists of a 450-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 all (or nearly all) 40 of the curriculum's practice behaviors. In fact, the evaluation of students' work in the practicum is based directly on the identified practice behaviors.

- **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 450-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.** Usually taken in the fourth year as the second of two required natural science courses, 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). Courses that may be taken as alternatives to BI 130 are **BI 131: Biology of Ordinary Things** and **NSC 135: Biology of the Mind**).

### *Elective Courses*

The Program offers a range of elective courses that enable students to explore specialized practice fields and methodologies in more detail. The electives are also an important avenue for exposing students to diverse populations. Social work students at Wartburg usually take six to eight elective courses (from a variety of disciplines) during the course of their study.

- **SW 102: Social Welfare History & Programs.** This course acquaints students with the major programs and policies that make up the U.S. social welfare system and their historical development. It also provides them with the perspectives and beginning skills to conduct a policy analysis.
- **SW 104: Basic Sign Language.** Introduction to American Sign language and its primary uses, and learning about the deaf community as a distinct cultural minority.
- **SW 213: Working With Different Abilities.** Emphasizes the importance of inclusion and ability when working with all people. Through hands-on learning projects, including community-based experiences and training service dogs, students learn about people's needs and strengths.
- **SW 210: Meeting the Needs of Children.** Concepts, policies, and practices designed to meet the needs of children including foster care, residential living, protective services, and day care.
- **SW 220: Changing Roles and Human Sexuality.** An exploration of gender roles and sexual freedom, and their implications for interpersonal and social relationships.

- **SW 250: Current Topics in Social Work Practice.** These courses, offered 2-4 times each year and usually taught by an adjunct practitioner in the community, have been used to teach about a variety of practice fields including practice with veterans and military families, mental health, disabilities, medical social work, and substance abuse.
- **SW 281: Diversity Field Experience.** Offered as a four-week May Term or summer placement, this course exposes students to environments and practice settings with diverse populations or in international settings.
- **SW 306: Social Gerontology.** Helps students to understand the unique and diverse needs of older adults and those who support them.
- **SW 450: Independent Study.** This course affords students, in partnership with a member of the faculty, to explore topics of special, individualized interest.

### ***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**

### **2015 Core Competencies with Corresponding Practice Behaviors**

#### **1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior.**

- a. Students demonstrate an ability to practice in accordance with the NASW Code of Social Work Ethics and other recognized frameworks.
- b. Students articulate a thoughtful integration of their personal values/ethics and those of the social work profession.
- c. Students competently use accepted professional models and tools to analyze and resolve ethical dilemmas in social work practice, demonstrating an appreciation for the fact that there may be more than one ethical approach to the resolution of any given problem.
- d. Students show an understanding of how to use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes.
- e. Students set meaningful and realistic career goals that give adequate consideration to professional strengths/limitations, participation in professional organizations, and continuing education.
- f. Students are able to identify the unique roles and contributions of social workers in an interdisciplinary setting.
- g. Students demonstrate consistent adherence to the standards of appearance, comportment, and communication expected of social work professionals.
- h. Students show an ability to use professional consultation and supervision to enhance the quality of their practice.

#### **2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice.**

- a. Students give due consideration to human diversity and the effects of historical treatment in their assessment of human behavior and practice interventions.
- b. Students articulate an understanding of the ways in which cultural structures and values exacerbate social inequalities among diverse groups.

- c. Students demonstrate an ability to practice social work with a positive regard for the nuances of human diversity and the contributions of diverse groups.
- d. Students can identify and mitigate the negative influences of their own biases and values in working with diverse groups and individuals.

**3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice.**

- a. Students show that they understand the dynamics and historical roots of oppression, recognizing ways in which economic security, social well-being, and environmental justice are related.
- b. Students are able to identify effective policy strategies for alleviating social, economic, and environmental oppression and ways they might be implemented.
- c. Students are able to articulate and advocate for community and policy changes that reflect a high regard for social, economic, and environmental justice.

**4. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice.**

- a. Students are able to design, implement and present a program policy, or practice evaluation that gives due credence to data gathered through professional work.
- b. Students can design interventions that are well-grounded in current, relevant research.
- c. Students are proficient in accessing, evaluating, and using professional literature and research findings in their practice.
- d. Students utilize valid program evaluation strategies to suggest changes designed to enhance the quality of human services and respond to changing social needs.

**5. Engage in Policy Practice.**

- a. Students demonstrate a familiarity with current trends and issues in social welfare policy that impact well-being, service delivery, and access to social services.
- b. Students are able to analyze and assess the effectiveness of social policies and programs.
- c. Students know how to initiate policy changes via legislative and administrative channels.



**6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.**

- a. Students are able to develop a general strategy for engaging clients in planned change that demonstrates a working knowledge of the Ecological and Social Systems Perspectives as integrative frameworks.
- b. Students are able to develop a general strategy for engaging clients in planned change that demonstrates sensitivity to socio-cultural variables.
- c. Students demonstrate an ability to develop effective rapport with clients.
- d. Students demonstrate an ability to develop effective rapport within groups and with various community constituencies.

**7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.**

- a. Using professional assessment tools and protocols, students can collect and accurately interpret relevant client data.
- b. Using professional assessment tools and protocols, students can collect and accurately interpret data relative to community needs.
- c. Students demonstrate an ability to apply basic concepts and theories of human growth and development in their analysis of collected assessment data.
- d. Students are able to develop clear, measurable intervention goals and objectives that accurately reflect assessed strengths, needs, and client preferences.
- e. Students are able to develop clear, measurable intervention goals and objectives with community projects.
- f. Students are able to develop appropriate intervention strategies in micro-practice that reflect a skillful interpretation of assessment data, research knowledge and client values and preferences.
- g. Students are able to develop appropriate intervention strategies with community and professional organizations that reflect a skillful interpretation of assessment data, research knowledge, and community/organizational culture.

**8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.**

- a. Students are able to identify appropriate strategies for intervention that apply their knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.
- b. Students are able to identify appropriate strategies for intervention with community groups that reflect community strengths, culture, and capacity for change.
- c. Students show that they can effectively negotiate, mediate, and advocate on behalf of clients.
- d. Students know how and when to effectively terminate client relationships with sensitivity to future needs and growth.
- e. Students demonstrate an ability to plan and work effectively with professionals of diverse backgrounds to effectively meet the needs of clients.

**9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.**

- a. Students will demonstrate that they are able to accurately assess the impact of their interventions in ways that constructively inform their practice.
- b. Students will demonstrate that they are able to accurately assess the impact of their community interventions in ways that constructively inform their practice.