

BSW FALL 2026 Course Electives

HWC 479 Special Topics in Social Work; An Introduction to Trauma Informed Care and Social Work Practice

Trauma is a widespread, harmful and costly public health problem. It occurs as a result of violence, abuse, neglect, loss, disaster, war and other emotionally harmful experiences. The need to address trauma is increasingly viewed as an important component of effective behavioral health service delivery. Trauma-Informed Care is a strengths-based approach to social work practice, which recognizes the prevalence of trauma and its impact on the emotional, psychological and social wellbeing of people. This course will examine the definitions, types and prevalence of trauma, while providing an understanding of the implementation of a trauma-informed approach within the social work profession.

HWC 379 Anti-Racist Social Work: Understanding White Fragility and Black Rage

The course will assist social work students in understanding the complex nature of the dynamics of social oppression, racism, and anti-racist practice. Students will explore their own personal values, beliefs, and behaviors that may limit their ability to practice effective social work with people of diverse backgrounds, in particular, disadvantaged and oppressed persons. Students will acquire the knowledge needed for practice using an anti-oppressive and anti-racist lens framed by an understanding of systemic racism.

HWC 379 Special Topics in Social Welfare: Leadership in Social Welfare Education (Social Work and Emerging Technologies)

Technology is reshaping the world around us and we must be prepared to use it thoughtfully and effectively. This course explores the opportunities and challenges presented by emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, cyborg, robotics, and interactive systems such as video games. From remote work environments to algorithm-driven decision-making, students will examine how these tools influence individuals, organizations, and broader systems. By engaging with the ethical, theoretical, policy, and practical dimensions of these innovations, students will develop a deeper understanding of how technology shapes decision-making and professional practice across fields. The course equips students to think critically, navigate complexity, and respond responsibly in an increasingly digital world.

HWC 379/479 Special Topics in Social Welfare: Special Populations – Undocumented Immigrants on the East End

This course examines the history of the civil rights movement (1954-1965) and the phenomenon and plight of the undocumented immigrants on Eastern Long Island. Undocumented immigrants are a crucial, yet very vulnerable part of the region's workforce and economic base, particularly in the Hamptons. With an estimated 70,000-75,000 undocumented workers in Nassau and Suffolk counties, many face high living costs, fear of deportation and illegal unpaid wages. With no recognition of their civil rights and constant fear of ICE raids, many families have gone into hiding or left the region totally. In addition to their civil rights being attacked, their fundamental human rights under international law and the U.S. Constitutional protection are also ignored. This population is crucial to local industries such as agriculture, landscaping, and construction, often lives in the shadows, experiencing high levels of vulnerability to exploitation, and profound psychological distress.

This course will provide the students with a foundational understanding of the protections of due process and equal protection embodied in the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights, that applies to every person regardless of immigration status. The course will review the U.S. civil rights struggle and its comparison to the plight of the undocumented immigrant. The course will address the rampant fear and social isolation, labor exploitation, wage theft, the targeting of families in residential areas (resulting in the separation of families), inadequate housing and living conditions, vulnerability to violence, impact and well-being of children. There will also be local and regional guest speakers invited to present to the class some of their specific advocacy initiatives and their efforts in addressing the barriers and hardships of this population in the region.

HWC 379/479 Special Topics in Social Welfare: An Introduction to Creative and Expressive Applications in Generalist Social Work Practice

This course is an introduction to creative, expressive applications in social work practice. Students will learn about multiple expressive mediums for communication with clients, including visual images, sound, narrative, and movement-based tools. Students should be prepared for an experiential focus in this course. Students will be introduced to a spectrum of populations that might benefit from creative, expressive approaches, and the intrinsic value of non-verbal communication and connection in a professional, helping relationship. Students will be challenged as well to develop their own methods for self-care from an expressive perspective in generalist social work practice, and to release their own creativity.