

Stony Brook University
School of Social Welfare
Special Focus Areas in the MSW Program
2016-2017

During the second year curriculum of the MSW program, students in the School of Social Welfare have the opportunity to fulfill the requirements for a Special Focus Area. **You are NOT required to have a special focus area.** For students who entered the MSW program in Fall 2015 and will be 2nd year students in the 2016-2017 academic year (or for Advanced Standing students who enter in Fall 2016), focus area electives will be taken in the Spring 2017 semester. **Students in the Modified programs are unlikely to be able to complete a special focus area due to scheduling limitations, unless they choose to pursue an additional semester or alternative course loads.**

In order to indicate your special focus area intention, you will need to complete an on-line form for which a link will be sent via e-mail to all students. This does not obligate you to complete the focus area.

The special focus areas share a similar structure, with some specific variation within each, and each special focus area has a director who oversees the curriculum for the special focus area.

General special focus area requirements:

- Students are required to do a full year of Field Education placement at a setting related to their special focus area. The placement may take place in the first or second year of the MSW program, with preference for the second year if possible.
- Students are required to take advanced electives related to their special focus area. Each special focus area has a list of required/optional elective courses that qualify for the special focus area (see individual focus area descriptions). Students are required to receive a B grade (3.00) or higher in the special focus area electives.
- Students are required to do their HWC 515 Advanced Social Work Micro Practice I and HWC 516 Advanced Social Work Macro Practice I written assignments on a topic related to their special focus area. A signed Assignment Verification Form from the course instructors needs to be submitted by the student to the school for verification of meeting the requirement. You may download the form from:
(<https://socialwelfare.stonybrookmedicine.edu/sites/default/files/Focus%20Area%20Assignment%20Verification%20Form%202016-17.pdf>)

Students are required to complete all requirements for the MSW Degree, including:

- A total of 64 credits (36 credits for Advanced Standing students), of which at least 6 credits will be the Advanced curriculum courses of the special focus area.
- At least 16 credits of field education, 8 of which are in a setting related to the special focus area. Advanced Standing students must complete their 12 credits of field education in a setting related to the special focus area.

The school offers 5 focus areas:

- Health
- Substance Abuse
- Trauma
- Social Work in Higher Education: Student-Community Development
- Community and Political Social Action

Special Focus Areas

Health

Interim Director: Iris C. Fineberg, Ph.D., M.S.W., OSW-C

This special focus area provides students with theory and practice skills in the analysis, development, implementation, management and evaluation of health programs, policies and practice and how they affect individuals and societal well-being; and prepares students to occupy both independent and interdisciplinary team roles in health promotion, prevention, patient care, research, planning and management. Particular emphasis is placed on dealing with traditionally disadvantaged and disempowered populations in accordance with the School's mission.

Completion of 2 of the following advanced practice electives:

- HWC 579 Special Topics in Social Welfare: Working in Health Care Systems
- HWC 584 Community Analysis and Health Promotion
- HWC 579 Special topics in Social Welfare: Therapeutic Approaches for People with Disabilities in Healthcare Settings
- HWC 579: Special Topics in Social Work: Working Together: Interprofessional Conversations on Cultural Diversity (note: This is an interprofessional Summer Session course offered with other schools from the health sciences in June 2017. It requires paying additional Summer session course fees and will include both in-class and on-line course participation. Enrollment will be limited to 10 students from the School of Social Welfare.)

Substance Abuse

Director: Frances L. Brisbane, Ph.D.

Assistant Director: Stephen Rabeno, Ph.D.

Students enrolled in this special focus area examine the history and development of policies and practice in the field of alcoholism and substance abuse. This focus area addresses the wider implications that relate to program planning and development, public policy and prevention, ethical issues within a substance abuse context and the more specific issues of working with families, individuals, and groups in treatment and

recovery. Particular emphasis is placed on dealing with traditionally disadvantaged and disempowered populations in accordance with the School of Social Welfare's mission.

Completion of the following 2 advanced practice electives:

- HWC 579 Special Topics in Social Welfare: Social Work in Substance Abuse
- HWC 545 Individual and Family Treatment of Alcoholics and Substance Abusers

Trauma

Director: Kathleen Monahan, D.S.W.

This special focus area will provide students with advanced practice knowledge regarding the issues of trauma. The focus area is founded on a strengths based perspective and examines the complex issues regarding the range of traumatic events, long-term negative effect, and evidence-based treatments that provide intervention and support. Other issues that are of particular interest include: cultural issues, legal and legislative mandates, and policy concerns. Posttraumatic growth and countertransference reactions will also be covered in depth.

Completion of the following required advanced practice elective:

- HWC 579 Special Topics in Social Welfare: The Dynamics of Trauma

AND

Completion of 1 of the following advanced practice electives:

- HWC 579 Special Topics in Social Welfare: Therapeutic Interventions for Trauma
- HWC 579 Special Topics in Social Welfare: Social and Political Change – *course assignments must be completed on trauma-related topics*

Social Work in Higher Education: Student Community Development

Director: Richard H. Morgan, Ph.D.

The Social Work in Higher Education: Student-Community Development special focus area offers a unique focus on social work within higher education. This focus expands the arenas of social work practice, community organization and systems development to include the contemporary college campus. Students develop skills in providing direct interventions in response to a range of social issues that currently affect student communities nationwide such as multicultural relations, preventive mental health interventions, safety and strategies that promote student retention and success. The focus area emphasizes organizational and community development, social change and the strengths perspective as vital components of social work practice within various types of higher education learning communities.

Completion of the following required advanced practice elective:

- HWC 579 Special Topics in Social Welfare: Social Work in Higher Education

AND

Completion of 1 of the following advanced practice electives. *For these courses, course assignments must be completed on social work in higher education-related topics:*

- HWC 578 Advanced Social Work with Groups
- HWC 584 Community Analysis and Health Promotion

Community and Political Social Action

Director: Carolyn Peabody, Ph.D.

Rooted in a critical and structural analysis of the causes of social problems, the Community and Political Social Action special focus area builds on Foundation and Advanced Generalist knowledge, values and skills to further deepen students' capacity to work for social change. This focus area enables students to gain a sharper focus on select areas such as community organizing, community development and political social work, which includes political advocacy, activism and advancing social workers as elected officials.

Completion of the following required advanced practice elective:

- HWC 579 Special Topics in Social Welfare: Social and Political Change

AND

Completion of 1 of the following advanced practice electives:

- HWC 556 Proposal Writing in the Health and Human Service Fields - *course assignments must be completed on social action-related topics*
- HWC 527 Social Work in the Political Process – Campaign School
- HWC 584 Community Analysis and Health Promotion - *course assignments must be completed on social action-related topics*