

# **MSW STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**School of Social Work  
Morrison Family College of Health**

**2025-2026**



# ***MSW Student Handbook***

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University of St. Thomas  
Morrison Family College of Health  
School of Social Work

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Updated September 2025

Dear MSW Student:

Welcome to the Master of Social Work (MSW) Program in the Morrison Family College of Health (MFCOH) at the University of St. Thomas! We are pleased to present you with this edition of the MSW Student Handbook. This handbook is intended to help you understand the program, its mission, philosophy, goals, requirements and policies.

In addition to program information, your rights, as well as your obligations, as a student, are outlined. Please read this handbook carefully and note the schedules and sequencing that need to be followed in order to plan for and maximize your educational experience with us. Updates to policies and procedures are posted in the online version and represent the current policy. Students are accountable to the most current version online on the [MSW OneStThomas website](#).

Advising is an important component of your MSW education. We urge you to contact your academic advisor at least once per semester and more often if issues arise. Your advisor is there to assist you in submitting any changes to your program plan, identifying your clinical focus, selecting electives, resolving professional issues and considering career paths.

The companion documents to this handbook are the MSW Field Education Manual, the University of St. Thomas [Graduate Student Policy](#) website, the [NASW Code of Ethics](#), the [Minnesota Board of Social Work Code of Ethics/Ethical Standards](#), and the [APA Manual](#). These documents should be used along with this handbook. We hope that these documents will answer many of your questions. For unanswered questions, please contact your academic advisor, the MSW Program Director, or the MSW Program Manager.

Best wishes for a wonderful year and a successful educational experience.

Sincerely,

The MSW Program Faculty

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## Welcome & History of the College

The Morrison Family College of Health gets its name from John and Sue Morrison. The naming gift to the Morrison Family College of Health marks the family's latest in their legacy of impact at St. Thomas. Their support for the university has included co-chairing the Opening Doors campaign from 2007-2012 that raised more than \$500 million for St. Thomas.

The Morrison Family College of Health is striving to address the shortage of culturally responsive health professionals who practice with social ingenuity and clinical excellence to improve health and community well-being while proactively advancing health equity and social justice.

We promise that we will educate students from diverse backgrounds to use and integrate knowledge from different professions and fields to improve health at the individual, family, community, and systems levels.

We believe that the most relevant and sustainable solutions to advance healthy communities and people is when those most impacted by inequities are also a part of the solution.

The Morrison Family College of Health is guided by the University of St. Thomas' mission to educate morally responsible leaders who think critically, act wisely, and work skillfully to advance the common good.

## Vision, Mission, and Values

**Vision** Informed by Catholic social teaching, the University of St. Thomas Morrison Family College of Health educates health providers and leaders to skillfully, compassionately, and collaboratively advance the physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being of individuals, families and communities.

**Mission Statement** We prepare highly skilled and caring professionals who are culturally responsive, practice with ingenuity, and proactively advance health equity and social justice.

### Core Values

Innovation

Equity

Collaboration

## Guiding Principles

**Whole Person Care** Students focus on addressing the needs of the mind, body, spirit, and the community through programs in health and exercise science, nursing, counseling psychology and social work.

**Social Ingenuity and Innovation** The Morrison Family College of Health is focused on discovering new and more effective ways of delivering and promoting health and well-being to expand access and affordability for all people, families, and communities.

**Excellence Using Science and Humanities** College of Health students benefit from a strong

liberal arts foundation, with rigor in the science and humanities and exceptional applied learning experiences in the community so they graduate ready to embrace complex health challenges.

**Advocacy** The Morrison Family College of Health is focused on dismantling systemic health inequities by addressing root causes such as racism and poverty. Students, faculty, alumni, and staff are dedicated to reducing the barriers that prevent people and families from flourishing.

## **Diversity, Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Disability Services and Access**

### **Student Diversity & Inclusion Services**

The Student Diversity & Inclusion Services office exists to enhance the campus climate and holds deep commitment in developing and sustaining a diverse campus community in the broadest sense including differences in gender, race, ethnicity, generational history, culture, socioeconomic class, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship status, political perspectives, geographic origin, and physical ability, through programs and initiatives aimed at UST students. Our work is based on four pillars: education, leadership, advocacy, and community.

For more information, please call (651) 962-6460 or visit [Student Diversity and Inclusion Services](#).

### **Equal Opportunity Statement & Notice of Non-Discrimination**

The University of St. Thomas is committed to the principles of equal employment opportunity and equal educational opportunity. St. Thomas does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, family status, disability, age, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. The university's policy of nondiscrimination extends to all aspects of its operations, including but not limited to, employment, educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs and all other educational programs and activities. Contact information for the [persons designated to handle inquiries can be found here](#). For more information visit the [Office of General Counsel](#).

### **Title IX Coordinator (for inquiries related to sex discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence):**

Julie Thornton, Title IX Coordinator, ASC 247, (651) 962-6882, [title-ix@stthomas.edu](mailto:title-ix@stthomas.edu)

### **ADA/Section 504 Coordinator (for inquiries related to disability discrimination):**

Julie Thornton, ADA Coordinator, ASC 247 or AQU 213, (651) 962-6886, [title-ix@stthomas.edu](mailto:title-ix@stthomas.edu)

### **Discrimination Inquiries Generally:**

For questions about other types of discrimination, please see the reporting information in

Appendix A of the [University's Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy](#).

For further information on non-discrimination, visit the [Office for Civil Rights Complaint System](#) for the address and phone number of the Department of Education office that serves your area or call 1-800-421-3481.

### ***Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Policy***

The MSW program follows the Sexual Misconduct Policy as outlined by the University of St. Thomas.

The University of St. Thomas mission and convictions embody the University's commitment to promote and protect the personal dignity and well-being of every member of the St. Thomas community.

Sexual harassment, sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct are antithetical to that commitment. Moreover, they constitute unlawful sex discrimination. All forms of sexual misconduct are prohibited by St. Thomas.

The St. Thomas mission and convictions also embody the University's strong commitment to academic freedom, rigorous thinking and the free and full pursuit of knowledge and truth by every member of the St. Thomas community. The prohibition on sexual misconduct is critical to and consistent with these commitments. St. Thomas cannot achieve its educational objectives in an environment in which sexual harassment or other forms of sexual misconduct are tolerated.

Both federal and state law require colleges and universities to provide students with education on how to prevent sexual misconduct and information on policies and resources. Upon admission, the university requires an online education program on sexual misconduct for all enrolled students. Students will receive instructions on how to complete the required online education program from the Dean of Students office and are required to have it completed by the 10<sup>th</sup> business day of their first semester of enrollment. This training meets requirements for the Violence Against Women Act and the Minnesota Statute on Campus Sexual Assault.

For more information, go to the [Sexual Misconduct Policies and Procedures page](#).

### ***Disability Resources***

Academic accommodations will be provided for qualified students with documented disabilities including but not limited to mental health diagnoses, learning disabilities, Attention Deficit Disorder, chronic medical conditions, visual, mobility, and hearing disabilities. Students are invited to contact the Disability Resources office about accommodations early in the semester. Appointments can be made by calling 651-962-6315 or in person in Murray Herrick, room 110. For further information, you can locate the [Disability Resources office on the web](#).

Disability Resources does not automatically notify professors that students have a disability just

because they have submitted documentation to the Enhancement Program. It is students' responsibility to disclose their membership in the Enhancement Program to their professors if they wish to request accommodations for their courses.

## **Expectations for Student Conduct: Professional and Student Conduct**

### ***Rules of Conduct for Graduate Students***

The University of St. Thomas is a private, Catholic, liberal arts university. As such, they expect all members of its community, regardless of age, to act reasonably, maturely and appropriately at all times both on and off campus. Students are subject to disciplinary sanctions for conduct that occurs on or off campus when that conduct is detrimental or disruptive to the purposes and/or goals of the universities. More information can be found at the [Dean of Students, Student Policies webpage](#).

The Master of Social Work program reserves the right to advance any conduct incident to the Dean of Students Office. The Assistant Dean of Students and the Associate Dean of the MFCOH will investigate the student conduct incident together. If an incident is advanced to the Dean of Students Office, the Assistant Dean of Students and the Associate Dean of the MFCOH will notify the student of the investigation and the intended process and timeline for resolution. As a result of the investigation, and in consultation with the academic program, a student may be sanctioned, suspended or dismissed from a program if found in violation of university policies.

### ***Compliance with other Policies, Laws and Regulations***

Institutional policies of the University of St. Thomas define student misconduct as student behavior that is in violation of regulations established by the Boards of Trustees, of university regulations and of rules governing residence on university property. Students as citizens are subject to all federal and state laws in addition to all university regulations governing student conduct and responsibility. A student may be suspended or terminated from the MSW program for violating said laws, rules or regulations. Social work students may also be suspended or dismissed from the program for violations of the NASW Code of Ethics.

Students who are placed on probationary status, suspended or terminated may use the institutional grievance policy and procedures of the University of St. Thomas to appeal that decision. See *the Grievance Appeal Procedure* section in this handbook. This MSW policy does not supersede or replace any applicable University-wide process or policy. There may be circumstances that warrant immediate discipline including termination from the program. At all times, the School of Social Work has the right to discipline or terminate a student during the course of or in lieu of the process described herein.

## **What You Can Expect from Faculty**

We are committed to the mission, values, and convictions of the University of St. Thomas. We comply with university policies, such as the faculty handbook, and actively participate in university shared governance processes for improving our institution. As a diverse college with many academic units from different disciplines, we adhere to expectations set forth by the

University, as well as the professional codes of ethics and licensure requirements specific to our respective fields. We are committed to making decisions that first considers what is best for our students in all aspects of the college. We strive to create a community that facilitates learner-centered development. We support, teach, and engage students with respect and support, and will work to develop an inclusive climate which embraces the diversity of their lived experiences.

## **Pandemic Policy**

The University of St. Thomas is committed to the health and well-being of our community.

In general, we support The Centers for Disease Control's (CDC's) following recommendation: students, faculty, or staff with influenza-like illness (temperature of 100.0 or greater, plus a cough or sore throat) are directed to self-isolate for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine. In the event that students are unable to attend classes due to this self-isolation, they should notify their processors of their absence. It is the expectation that students conduct themselves ethically and that illness-related accommodations are not abused.

As of May 2023, the university lifted its COVID-19 vaccination requirement for all students, faculty and staff. St. Thomas is still strongly recommending for community members to be vaccinated against COVID-19; the university will continue to work with any employees who need accommodations due to health conditions that make them particularly vulnerable to the virus. For more information about our COVID-19 support for students, visit the [COVID-19 Protocols | University of St. Thomas - Minnesota \(stthomas.edu\)](https://www.stthomas.edu/COVID-19-protocols)

## **Student Feedback on Handbook**

If students have student feedback on the MSW Student Handbook, please contact the MSW Program Director.

## **History of the School of Social Work & MSW Program**

From the 1930's until 1969, the Sociology Department of the Colleges of St. Catherine and St. Thomas maintained courses in Sociology with an emphasis in Social Work. In the fall of 1969, a Social Work major was established for the first time in the Sociology Department at the College of St. Catherine. In the spring of 1974, a combined major in Social Work was established by the Colleges of St. Catherine and St. Thomas. Social Work changed from a major at the College of St. Catherine and from an emphasis at the College of St. Thomas to a joint department of the Colleges of St. Catherine and St. Thomas in the fall of 1976.

In the fall of 1990, the College of St. Catherine and the University of St. Thomas (formerly the College of St. Thomas) implemented the Master of Social Work program with an emphasis in clinical social work practice. The Department of Social Work became the School of Social Work in 1996. In May 2018, the University of St. Thomas and St. Catherine University announced the end of their formal collaboration on their joint social work programs effective August 23, 2019.

The University of St. Thomas began their independent social work programs during fall semester 2019 under the administrative structure of the Morrison Family College of Health.

## **Administrative Structure of the MSW Program**

The MSW Program Director, appointed by the Director of Social Work, is charged with responsibility for coordinating curriculum development, addressing student needs and supporting/facilitating faculty development. Although formal open meetings with students may be scheduled, the MSW Program Director maintains an open door policy to encourage students to voice their ideas, feedback and concerns. The MSW Program Committee consists of the MSW Program Director, MSW Program Manager, and all faculty teaching in the MSW program.

The St. Thomas MSW Program has adopted the core competencies and definitions set forth by the Council on Social Work Education to articulate its foundation curriculum. The competencies and associated practice behaviors are threaded throughout the foundation curriculum. The advanced curriculum is based directly on the ten competencies defined for advanced clinical social work practice and set forth in the Standards of Clinical Social Work Practice by the Council on Social Work Education. Practice behaviors operationalize our MSW advanced clinical social work curriculum and form the basis for the assessment of students' progress throughout the curriculum. Curriculum development occurs through five curriculum areas: Human Behavior and the Social Environment, Social Work Field Education, Social Work Practice, Social Work Policy, and Social Work Research.

## **Accreditation Status**

The joint social work program at St. Catherine's and St. Thomas received its first accreditation in 1975 from the Council on Social Work Education. Since that time, the School of Social Work successfully obtained reaffirmation of accreditation through 2019. After the dissolution of the joint program, the St. Thomas BSW and MSW programs earned independent accreditation in 2019 and reaffirmation in 2024. For more information on this organization check the Web at [www.cswe.org](http://www.cswe.org).

The University of St. Thomas is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and are members of the North Central Association.

## **MOHE Statement**

The University of St. Thomas is registered with the Minnesota Office of Higher Education pursuant to sections 136A.61 to 136A.71. Registration is not an endorsement of the institution. Credits earned at the institution may not transfer to all other institutions. Contact information for the Minnesota Office of Higher Education is:

1450 Energy Park Drive, Suite 350

St. Paul, MN 55108-5227

Phone: (651) 642-0567

Toll Free: (800) 657-3866

Fax: (651) 642-0675

## Social Work for Social Justice

*“Social justice means loving people so much that I work to change structures that violate their dignity.”*

-Peter Henriot S.J.

### *Philosophy Statement*

The *NASW Code of Ethics* identifies the profession’s core values as service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity and competence. The *Code* goes on to discuss numerous specific ethical principles and standards in the context of the service function. It provides, however, far less detail related to the justice function. The *Code* states that “social workers challenge social injustice” as follows:

*Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers’ social change efforts are focused primarily on issue of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, service and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision-making for all people. ([NASW Code of Ethics](#))*

Out of its firm commitment to social justice and by virtue of the Catholic mission of our sponsor, the University of St. Thomas, the social work faculty has looked to Catholic Social Teaching as a rich resource to inform and further specify social justice goals of social work education and practice. Catholic Social Teaching (CST) represents a “tradition of ethics” derived from papal encyclicals, scripture and other major church documents. It is important to distinguish Church *Social Teaching* from Church doctrine which relates, instead, to morality and theological belief. Catholic Social Teaching which is primarily concerned with the challenges of economic and political life, defines standards that universally apply to *all* human beings and provides guidance as to how people should interact and treat one another within the economic and political spheres of our communities and world. As such, these social teachings provide direction on how to live out the Judeo Christian mandate to ‘love one another.’ Thus, Catholic Social Teaching is relevant to all people, not just Catholics. In the words of Brian Rusche, Executive Director of Minnesota’s Joint Religious Legislative Coalition (JLRC):

*Catholic Social Teaching is the most systematic and thorough attempt by a religious faith to articulate its positions on social policy. For JRLC’s interfaith work, it provides a first lens to look at nearly every social justice issue and seriously influences all our position statements. Catholic Social Teaching is a gift to the world and people of all faiths.*

Through careful analysis and extensive discussion, the social work faculty has examined the

convergence between the NASW Code of Ethics and Catholic Social Teaching. This exercise has led to the development of *Social Work for Social Justice: Ten Principles*. The integration of these principles into the curriculum recognizes and acknowledges the universality of these principles across other faith traditions. As social work educators, we are bound by the *NASW Code of Ethics* and therefore responsible to teach our students to become professionals dedicated to service and justice. *Social Work for Social Justice: Ten Principles* provides a framework for strengthening the way in which we educate for justice and prepare students for competent and ethical social work practice dedicated to both service and justice.

## Social Work for Social Justice: Ten Principles

Sources: (1) NASW Code of Ethics; (2) U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Office of Social Justice - Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Human Dignity</b></p> <p><i>Dignity of the human person is the ethical foundation of a moral society. The measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person. Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of all individuals. Social workers treat each person in a caring, respectful manner mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities and social institutions to individuals' needs and social problems. Social workers act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person or group on any basis.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers</b></p> <p><i>In a marketplace where profit often takes precedence over the dignity and rights of workers, it is important to recognize that the economy must serve the people, not the other way around. If the dignity of work is to be protected, the basic rights of workers must be respected - the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to organize and join unions, to private property and to economic initiative. Social workers challenge injustice related to unemployment, workers' right and inhumane labor practices. Social workers engage in organized action, including the formation of and participation in labor unions, to improve services to clients and working conditions.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Community and the Common Good</b></p> <p><i>All individuals by virtue of their human nature have social needs. Human relationships enable people to meet their needs and provide an important vehicle for change. The family, in all its diverse forms, is the central social institution that must be supported and strengthened. The way in which society is organized -- in education, economics, politics, government -- directly affects human dignity and the common good. Social workers promote the general welfare and development of individuals, families and communities. Social Workers seek to strengthen relationships among people at all levels to promote the well-being of all.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Solidarity</b></p> <p><i>We are our brother's and sister's keeper. We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. An ethic of care acknowledging our interdependence belongs in every dimension of human experience -- including the family, community, society and global dimension. Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process and seek to strengthen relationships among people to promote well-being at all levels.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Rights and Responsibilities</b></p> <p><i>People have a right and a responsibility to participate in society and to work together toward the common good. Human dignity is protected and healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Accordingly, every person has a fundamental right to things necessary for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are responsibilities - to family, community and society. Social workers, mindful of individual differences and diversity, respect and promote the right of all individuals to self-determination and personal growth and development. Social workers provide education and advocacy to protect human rights, and to end oppression. Social workers empower individuals/groups to function as effectively as possible.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Stewardship</b></p> <p><i>It is incumbent upon us to recognize and protect the value of all people and all resources on our planet. While rights to personal property are recognized, these rights are not unconditional and are secondary to the best interest of the common good especially in relation to the right of all individuals to meet their basic needs. Stewardship of resources is important at all levels/settings: family, community, agency, community and society. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation for all people. Social workers promote the general welfare of people and their environments.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Priority for the Poor and Vulnerable</b></p> <p><i>A basic moral test of any community or society is the way in which the most vulnerable members are faring. In a society characterized by deepening divisions between rich and poor, the needs of those most at risk should be considered a priority. Social workers advocate for living conditions conducive to the fulfillment of basic human needs and to promote social, economic, political, and cultural values and institutions that are compatible with the realization of social justice. Social workers pursue change with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups to: address poverty, unemployment, discrimination and other forms of social injustice; and to expand choice and opportunity.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Governance/Principle of Subsidiarity</b></p> <p><i>Governance structures in all levels/settings have an imperative to promote human dignity, protect human rights, and build the common good. While the principle of subsidiarity calls for the functions of government to be performed at the lowest level possible in order to insure for self-determination and empowerment, higher levels of government have the responsibility to provide leadership and set policy in the best interest of the common good. Social workers engage in social and political action in order to promote equality, challenge injustice, expand opportunity and empower individuals, families and groups to participate in governance structures at all levels.</i></p>

**Participation**

*All people have a right to participate in the economic, political and cultural life of society. Social justice and human dignity require that all people be assured a minimum level of participation in the community. It is the ultimate injustice for a person or a group to be excluded unfairly.* Social workers strive to ensure access to equal opportunity and meaningful participation for all. Social workers empower individuals and groups to influence social policies and institutions and promote social justice. Social workers advocate for change to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources and opportunities required to meet basic needs and develop fully.

**Promotion of Peace**

In light of the human dignity and worth of all and the ethical imperatives of solidarity and stewardship, we are called to promote peace and non-violence at all levels -within families, communities, society and globally. *Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon the respect and cooperation between peoples and nations.* Social workers promote the general welfare of society from local to global levels.

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## **MSW Program Characteristics**

The Master of Social Work provides advanced professional study in social work. The program prepares social work practitioners for clinical social work practice and leadership. The regular standing graduate program requires 56 semester credits, including 1,000 hours of field practice. Advanced standing admission (requiring 38 credits) is available for students with an undergraduate degree in social work from a CSWE accredited program. Foundation and advanced courses include study in human behavior and the social environment, social policy and services, research, generalist and clinical social work practice, and fieldwork. Courses are offered in the late afternoon and evening format and a Saturday hybrid format to accommodate graduate students who are working professionals.

The MSW program emphasizes the development of the individual student. Its focus on clinical social work practice with individuals, small groups and families, deals with problems including poverty, discrimination, mental illness, developmental disabilities and oppression. The MSW curriculum emphasizes demonstrated mastery of knowledge and practice skills and is rooted in a philosophy of social responsibility and respect for human rights. The development of areas of expertise can be explored through selection of electives and field placements.

### ***Mission Statement for the Master of Social Work Program***

As a clinically engaged faculty with a passion for social justice, we prepare clinical social workers for culturally responsive, reflective practice and emerging leadership.

### ***MSW Program Goals***

- We prepare students to develop a strong clinical social work identity grounded in social work values and ethics.
- We prepare students to develop skills in actively engaging diverse client populations and adapting their practice to particular groups as needed.
- We prepare students to develop critical thinking, reflective practice skills, and substantive knowledge essential for competent clinical social work practice.
- We prepare students to develop the capacity for leadership and supervision in multiple settings.
- We prepare students to develop the capacity to critically interpret and conduct social work research in order to increase the body of knowledge, assess the effectiveness of clinical interventions and improve social work practice.

## **Who to Contact for General Information**

Within the College, students can contact the [Dean's Office at Contact Us | Morrison Family College of Health | University of St. Thomas \(stthomas.edu\)](#).

For SSW questions, please review the School of Social Work Directory and/or Frequently Called Phone Numbers.

**School of Social Work Directory**

Frequently Called Numbers

<b>Director, School of Social Work Dr. Ande Nesmith - <a href="mailto:nesm3326@stthomas.edu">nesm3326@stthomas.edu</a></b>	(651) 962-5805
<b>MSW Program Director Dr. Ankita Deka - <a href="mailto:deka4813@stthomas.edu">deka4813@stthomas.edu</a></b>	(651) 962-5803
<b>MSW Program Manager Lisa Dalsin - <a href="mailto:imdalsin@stthomas.edu">imdalsin@stthomas.edu</a></b>	(651) 962-5810
<b>School of Social Work Summit Classroom Building (SCB)</b>	(651) 962-5800 phone (651) 962-5819 fax
<b><a href="#">Bookstore</a></b>	(651) 962-6850
<b><a href="#">Business Office</a> (<a href="#">billing related questions</a>)</b>	(651) 962-6600
<b><a href="#">Center for Well-Being</a></b>	(651) 962-6750
<b><a href="#">Counseling and Psychological Services</a></b>	(651) 962-6750
<b><a href="#">Financial Aid Office</a></b>	(651) 962-4053
<b><a href="#">Libraries</a></b>	(651) 962-5400
<b><a href="#">Parking Services</a></b>	651-962-PARK (7275)
<b><a href="#">Public Safety</a></b>	(651) 962-5100 (651) 962-5555 24-hour Emergency

For a complete directory listing of School of Social Work full-time faculty, adjunct faculty and staff, please visit the [Morrison Family College of Health Faculty-Staff Webpage](#).

**MSW Foundation (Core) Curriculum for Generalist Practice**

The MSW curriculum prepares its graduates for advanced clinical social work practice grounded in the competencies and practice behaviors of **generalist** practice. The nine Social Work

Competencies outlined by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) are listed below. As noted in the CSWE 2015 Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) “The EPAS recognizes a holistic view of competence; that is, the demonstration of competence is informed by knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that include the social worker’s critical thinking, affective reactions, and exercise of judgment in regard to unique practice situations. Overall professional competence is multidimensional and composed of interrelated competencies.” ([CSWE EPAS, 2022, p. 7](#)).

***Competency 1: Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior***

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant policies, laws, and regulations that may affect practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand that ethics are informed by principles of human rights and apply them toward realizing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice in their practice. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision making and apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize and manage personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. Social workers understand how their evolving worldview, personal experiences, and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally, understanding that self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Social workers use rights-based, antiracist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the profession’s history, mission, roles, and responsibilities and recognize historical and current contexts of oppression in shaping institutions and social work. Social workers understand the role of other professionals when engaged in interprofessional practice. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure relevant and effective practice. Social workers understand digital technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers:

- a. make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context;
- b. demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- c. use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- d. use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

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

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights. Social workers are knowledgeable about the global intersecting and ongoing injustices throughout history that result in oppression and racism, including social work’s role and response. Social workers critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege in society in order to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice by reducing inequities

and ensuring dignity and respect for all. Social workers advocate for and engage in strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social resources, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. Social workers:

- a. advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels; and
- b. engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

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

Social workers understand how racism and oppression shape human experiences and how these two constructs influence practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community levels and in policy and research. Social workers understand the pervasive impact of White supremacy and privilege and use their knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist practice. Social workers understand how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development and affect equity and inclusion. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that this intersectionality means that a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power. Social workers understand the societal and historical roots of social and racial injustices and the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination. Social workers understand cultural humility and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, racial, technological, and cultural exclusions, may create privilege and power resulting in systemic oppression. Social workers:

- a. demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and
- b. demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and selfregulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.

### ***Competency 4: Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice***

Social workers use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches in conducting research and building knowledge. Social workers use research to inform their practice decision making and articulate how their practice experience informs research and evaluation decisions. Social workers critically evaluate and critique current, empirically sound research to inform decisions pertaining to practice, policy, and programs. Social workers understand the inherent bias in research and evaluate design, analysis, and interpretation using an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. Social workers know how to access, critique, and synthesize the current literature to develop appropriate research questions and hypotheses.

Social workers demonstrate knowledge and skills regarding qualitative and quantitative research methods and analysis, and they interpret data derived from these methods. Social workers demonstrate knowledge about methods to assess reliability and validity in social work research. Social workers can articulate and share research findings in ways that are usable to a variety of clients and constituencies. Social workers understand the value of evidence derived from interprofessional and diverse research methods, approaches, and sources. Social workers:

- a. apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs; and
- b. identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work.

***Competency 5: Engage in policy practice***

Social workers identify social policy at the local, state, federal, and global level that affects wellbeing, human rights and justice, service delivery, and access to social services. Social workers recognize the historical, social, racial, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. Social workers understand and critique the history and current structures of social policies and services and the role of policy in service delivery through rights based, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lenses. Social workers influence policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation within their practice settings with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers actively engage in and advocate for anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice to effect change in those settings. Social workers:

- a. use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services; and
- b. apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

***Competency 6: Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities***

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, and privilege as well as their personal values and personal experiences may affect their ability to engage effectively with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers use the principles of interprofessional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate. Social workers:

- a. apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as

- interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- b. use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with clients and constituencies.

***Competency 7: Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities***

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in culturally responsive assessment with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Assessment involves a collaborative process of defining presenting challenges and identifying strengths with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to develop a mutually agreed-upon plan. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and use interprofessional collaboration in this process. Social workers are selfreflective and understand how bias, power, privilege, and their personal values and experiences may affect their assessment and decision making. Social workers:

- a. apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies; and
- b. demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.

***Competency 8: Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities***

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior, person-in-environment, and other interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in selecting culturally responsive interventions with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed interventions and participate in interprofessional collaboration to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers facilitate effective transitions and endings. Social workers:

- a. engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals; and
- b. incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies.

***Competency 9: Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities***

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers evaluate processes and outcomes to increase practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers apply anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers use qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness. Social workers:

- a. select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes; and
- b. critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Adopted by the MSW program faculty according to the Council on Social Work Education (2022) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards.

### ***MSW Specialized (Advanced) Curriculum for Clinical Social Work Practice***

Clinical social work practice is grounded in the values of the profession: service, social justice, the dignity and worth of the person, the importance of human relationships, integrity, competence, human rights, and scientific inquiry.

Reflecting the MSW framework for clinical social work practice and the mission and goals of the MSW program, the competencies listed below “identify the specialized knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, and behaviors that extend and enhance the nine Social Work Competencies and prepare students for practice in the area of specialization” ([CSWE EPAS, 2015, p. 12](#)). These practice competencies and component behaviors form the basis for the assessment of students’ progress throughout the curriculum of the MSW program.

#### ***Clinical competency 1: Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior***

Clinical social workers recognize the importance of the therapeutic relationship, the person-in-environment and strengths perspectives, the professional use of self with clients, and adherence to ethical guidelines of professional behavior. Clinical social workers are knowledgeable about ethical issues, legal parameters, and shifting societal mores that affect the therapeutic relationship. They question and reflect on their own assumptions and consider how these affect practice. Clinical social workers recognize opportunities for leadership and influence, understanding the responsibilities that come with the profession to clients, colleagues, the public, and stakeholders. Clinical social workers:

1. demonstrate professional use of self with clients;
2. identify and use knowledge of relationship dynamics, including power differentials;
3. engage in ongoing critical self-reflection to recognize and effectively work through personal biases as they affect the therapeutic relationship;

4. use clinical social work supervision and consultation to strengthen ethical and professional service delivery;
5. clearly articulate professional judgments to other social workers and to professionals from other disciplines, in both written and verbal formats; and
6. demonstrate awareness of the professional responsibility to influence decision-making and affect change.

### ***Clinical competency 2: Engage diversity and difference in practice***

Clinical social workers are knowledgeable about how diversity and difference influence the ways they engage clients in therapeutic relationships as well as how they and their clients understand presenting issues. This knowledge provides them with a context for responding sensitively and respectfully to differences of perspective and experience. Clinical social workers are aware, for example, of how dimensions of diversity impact *their* own explanations of problems, and how help seeking behaviors and healing practices vary cross culturally. Clinical social workers are keenly aware of how their cultural lenses impact the choices they make, and are sensitive to how client choices are also connected to clients' cultures. Clinical social workers:

1. use self-awareness of bias to be less reactive and fearful of difference while authentically forming therapeutic alliances with clients;
2. create culturally sensitive and culturally- responsive relationships with clients;
3. engage in reflective practice to inform clinical assumptions, assessments, treatment planning and evaluations as it relates to human diversity at all levels of practice;
4. practice cultural humility with an understanding of the complexities and intersectionality of diversity; and
5. advocate in partnership with clients facing oppression and marginalization.

### ***Clinical competency 3: Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice***

Clinical social workers intervene in ways that help their clients claim and embody their fundamental human rights and their democratic citizenship rights in practice. Clinical social workers understand their client situations within an ecological and historic perspective and a framework of social justice. Clinical social workers understand the stigma and shame associated with disorders, diagnoses, and seeking help across diverse populations. Clinical social workers recognize the impact of oppression, discrimination, and historical trauma on the bio- psycho-social-spiritual functioning of individuals, groups, families, and communities to guide assessment, treatment planning and interventions. Clinical social workers:

1. are knowledgeable about how relational, organizational, and community systems impact clients;
2. are aware of and adapt social work practice to meet the ever-changing context, including cultural, technological, geographic, political, legal, economic, and environmental contexts that impact clients; and
3. advocate at multiple levels for policy change that improves the overall mental health of clients and communities.

### ***Clinical competency 4: Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice***

Clinical social workers are adept at identifying and utilizing quantitative and qualitative research relevant to their area of practice. Clinical social workers:

1. identify and utilize research from relevant disciplines;
2. use evidence-based interventions and best practices in assessment and intervention; and
3. critically evaluate and discern ongoing needs at the macro, mezzo, and micro levels for improving service delivery.

***Clinical competency 5: Engage in policy practice***

Clinical social workers have knowledge about factors that influence the development of legislation, policies, program services, and funding at all system levels. Social workers have skills identifying and researching social problems, evaluating the effectiveness of current policy, assessing the political environment, and formulating improved policy. Clinical social workers engage in policy practices that recognize the connection between clients, practice, and both public and organizational policy. Clinical social workers:

1. use evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies and programs that advance the social and economic well-being of clients;
2. communicate to stakeholders the implication of policies and policy change in the lives of clients; and
3. advocate with and inform administrators and legislators to influence policies and programs that impact clients and services.

***Clinical competency 6: Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities***

Clinical social work practice involves the dynamic, interactive, and reciprocal process of therapeutic engagement. Clinical social workers use theoretically informed knowledge so as to effectively engage individuals, families, and groups. Clinical practice knowledge includes understanding and implementing practice theories (models, meta-perspectives, strategies, techniques, and approaches) as well as the differential use of self to construct and sustain empowering relationships, enhance therapeutic alliance, and collaboratively define the direction for action. Clinical social workers:

1. apply evidence-based best practices in engagement to develop therapeutic relationship as an empowering professional partnership;
2. prepare for effective practice action collaboratively through accurate understanding of client system needs, strengths, motivation, and expected outcomes; and
3. select a mutually agreed upon purpose or preliminary goals tailored to the client system culture, resources, strengths, and desired outcome.

***Clinical competency 7: Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities***

Clinical social work practice involves multidimensional assessment that is both a process that is dynamic, interactive and reciprocal and occurs at multiple levels. To help them work in a therapeutically informed manner, clinical social workers develop knowledge that facilitates effective assessment of individuals, families and groups. Understanding and differentiating

between strengths and limitations of multiple practice theories and methods, including differential diagnosis, further supports the development of assessment skills. Clinical social workers also deconstruct theories and evaluate methods as they impact the assessment process of clients and client systems within their environmental context. Clinical social workers:

1. use multidimensional bio-psycho-social-spiritual assessment tools;
2. assess clients' readiness for change;
3. assess clients' coping strategies to reinforce and improve adaptation to life situations, circumstances and events;
4. use continuous clinical assessment to select and modify appropriate intervention strategies;
5. demonstrate the use of differential diagnosis;
6. evaluate, select and implement appropriate assessment and diagnostic tools;
7. evaluate the strengths and limitations of multiple theoretical perspectives by deconstructing and differentially applying them to client situations;
8. identify and articulate clients' strengths and vulnerabilities; and
9. apply these skills in different ways dependent on assessment of clients' presenting concerns and therapeutic needs (e.g., use self differently with different clients).

***Clinical competency 8: Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities***

Clinical social work practice involves the dynamic, interactive, and reciprocal process of therapeutic engagement, multidimensional assessment, clinical intervention, and practice evaluation at multiple levels. Clinical social workers use knowledge to inform their interventions with individuals, families, and groups. Clinical practice knowledge includes understanding theories, practice models, and meta-perspectives. Clinical social workers are skilled in applying strategies, techniques, and approaches informed by these sources of knowledge. Skilled practice is delivered with ethical consideration. Research is valued as a critical component of ethical practice and takes the form of both practice and program evaluation. Clinical social workers:

1. critically evaluate, select, and apply best practice interventions;
2. apply theory, clinical approaches, and techniques for a range of presenting concerns identified in the assessment, including crisis intervention strategies;
3. collaborate with other professionals to coordinate treatment interventions;
4. consult with other professionals, as needed, to facilitate assessment, diagnosis, and treatment; and
5. evaluate the strengths and limitations of multiple theoretical perspectives, by deconstructing and differentially applying them to clients.

***Clinical competency 9: Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities***

Clinical social workers effectively utilize practice and/or program evaluation as a fundamental component of service delivery. They are able to critically evaluate relevant clinical practice

theories as they apply to the diverse populations with which they engage and collaborate. Clinical social workers:

1. use clinical evaluation of the process and/or outcomes to develop best practice interventions for a range of bio-psycho-social-spiritual conditions; and
2. utilize supervision and team consultation to evaluate and modify practice.

Adopted by the MSW program faculty, May, 2018, including adaption of the Council on Social Work Education (2015) [\*Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards\*](#).

## Chapter 2: Advising and Student Support Services

### **Graduate Student Services**

#### **Academic Advising**

Each student is assigned an academic advisor from among the full-time faculty at new student orientation. Advisors assist students in selecting appropriate elective courses and reviewing requests for changes in program tracks. Advisors also assist in developing a greater understanding of the program and the profession, and in providing consultation about other issues that may arise related to students' participation in the program. Advisors also serve as student advocates. The MSW Program does not require students to obtain academic advising as a condition of registration, but students are strongly encouraged to contact their advisors at least once a semester. Students may request a change of academic advisor by petitioning the MSW Program Director.

#### **Student Involvement in Hiring Social Work Faculty**

When faculty positions become available, social work students may participate in the hiring process. Students may participate in one of two ways. Candidates for full-time positions are often asked to present to a student audience. Students then provide an evaluation of the candidate's teaching style and presentation of content. Students may also have opportunities to meet with the candidate to discuss qualifications, teaching experience, motivation, teaching practices, etc. Students then provide faculty with feedback and their impressions of the candidate. Following the interview process, the search committee considers the student feedback when making a recommendation to university administrators for hiring.

#### **Student Input for Curriculum Committees**

Curriculum committees review and monitor the curriculum in each area of the program for compliance with accreditation standards and consistency with program mission and goals. The curriculum areas include Human Behavior and the Social Environment/Social Work Practice, Social Work Field Education, Social Work Policy, and Social Work Research. Student input is invited and reviewed in a variety of ways, such as open meetings with the MSW Program Director, and faculty representatives from each of the curriculum areas. The purpose of each curriculum area and the designated courses in each are listed below.

## *Human Behavior and the Social Environment/Social Work Practice*

### *Human Behavior and the Social Environment*

Purpose of Curriculum Area:

The courses in this content area are designed to provide theories and knowledge of bio-psycho-social spiritual development, social systems and the interaction between biological, psychological, social, spiritual, family, group, cultural, organizational and community variables as they affect and are affected by human behavior. This curriculum area emphasizes 1) critical evaluation of theories, their values and ethical components, 2) the understanding of significant issues and influences such as social and economic justice that impact health, well-being and functioning with a special focus on populations at-risk and diverse populations, and 3) application of theory to client situations.

### Foundation (Core) Course

GRSW 540 - Human Behavior and the Social Environment

### Specialized (Advanced) Practice Course

GRSW 645 - Assessment and Differential Diagnosis

### *Social Work Practice*

Purpose of Curriculum Area:

The courses in the social work practice content area are designed to provide the knowledge, values, skills and theoretical frameworks necessary for clinical practice with individuals, families, groups and organizations in a manner that is sensitive to diverse client populations, including those at-risk of discrimination, economic deprivation, and/or oppression.

In a year-long two course sequence, the foundation practice curriculum provides student with the knowledge and skills needed for generalist social work practice. Students develop an understanding of the generalist and integrative models of practice, social work values and ethics, the strengths and person-in-environment perspectives, empowerment principles and basic principles of ethical reasoning. Student self-awareness and self-assessment are especially important since they facilitate the development of an authentic style of practice.

In a year-long two course sequence students are grounded in the philosophy and theoretical constructs of approaches to clinical social work practice and to the application of those approaches in working with clients from various cultural, ethnic and class backgrounds. Emphasis is placed on differential aspects of assessment and diagnosis of clients of all ages, the formulation of a treatment plan, the therapeutic relationship and the process of treatment, and the evaluation of practice outcomes. Students continue their development of self-

awareness and self-assessment skills in their understanding of and attunement to the development of the clinical therapeutic relationship.

Foundation (Core) Courses

GRSW 501 - Theory and Practice of Social Work I

GRSW 502 - Theory and Practice of Social Work II

Specialized (Advanced) Practice Courses

GRSW 603 - Methods of Clinical Social Work I

GRSW 604 - Methods of Clinical Social Work II

*Social Work Field Education*

Purpose of Curriculum Area:

The foundation field practicum provides a field experience in a social work agency, institution and/or department, which allows for practice of generalist skills under the supervision of a licensed MSW field instructor and faculty liaison. The experience is intended to complement the academic work by allowing students opportunities to apply generalist knowledge and theory to actual social work situations.

The clinical field practicum supports the clinical level curriculum by providing advanced learning and practice in a variety of settings conducive to clinical social work practice under the supervision of a licensed social worker and a faculty liaison. The purpose of the clinical practicum is to provide a clinical experience with individuals, families, and/or groups in which clinical theory and knowledge is applied.

Foundation (Core) Courses

GRSW 505 - Field Practicum and Seminar I

GRSW 506 - Field Practicum and Seminar II

Specialized (Advanced) Practice Courses

GRSW 607 - Field Practicum and Seminar III

GRSW 608 - Field Practicum and Seminar IV

*Social Work Policy*

Purpose of Curriculum Area:

The core and advanced courses of the social work policy curriculum area offer a critical perspective to the study of social work history, clinical supervision and program management, and social policy and planning. At the core level, students are provided with an historical and philosophical context for professional clinical practice, including an understanding of the historical legacy of leadership in the profession as well as current and future leadership challenges facing practitioners. The dimensions of social and organization change efforts are explored in terms of the interconnectedness of policy and practice. Students are introduced to concepts of ethics, values, diversity, social and

economic justice, and populations-at-risk at both the foundation and the concentration levels. The advanced courses focus on critical analysis and skill development in social welfare policy practice, supervision, planning and program management from a clinical social work perspective.

#### Foundation (Core) Course

GRSW 500 - History and Philosophy of Social Work (taken by all MSW students)

#### Specialized (Advanced) Practice Courses

GRSW 650 - Clinical Supervision and Program Management

GRSW 625 - Social Policy

#### *Social Work Research*

Purpose of Curriculum Area:

The purpose of this curriculum area is to assist students in developing requisite research knowledge and skills and the ability to evaluate research literature with relevance to social work practice. Students gain understanding and skills in applying methods for evaluating practice interventions and program goals. Students are expected to gain knowledge and skills in qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and all aspects of the research process including problem formulation, research design, data collection, data analysis and dissemination of research findings.

#### Foundation (Core) Course

GRSW 580 - Foundations of Social Work Research

#### Specialized (Advanced) Practice Courses

GRSW 681 - Social Work Practice Research

## **Student Organizations**

The MSW Student Association (MSWA) and the BIPOC Student Group provide students with opportunities for active engagement through leadership, service and support. MSWSA sponsors several social activities, service projects and career development events throughout the year. If you are interested in being involved in the MSW Student Association, please contact them directly at [mwsa@stthomas.edu](mailto:mwsa@stthomas.edu). If you are interested in the BIPOC Student Group, please contact the faculty advisor, Bao Moua, at [moua8745@stthomas.edu](mailto:moua8745@stthomas.edu).

## **Athletic Facilities**

The athletic facilities available to students at the Anderson Athletic and Recreation Complex (AARC) are a weight room, swimming pool, racquetball courts, squash courts and field house- which includes volleyball, badminton, tennis, basketball, a jogging track, cardio equipment and fitness classes. Graduate students are charged a membership fee to use the AARC. For more information call 651-962-5900 or check out [the AARC website](#).

## **Books**

Students are required to purchase the APA Publication manual for use in all classes.

The bookstore is located on the lower level of Murray-Herrick Campus Center. In addition to books needed for classes, the bookstore carries a wide variety of office supplies, clothing, cards and gifts, as well as magazines and best-selling novels. For hours of operation call: 651-962-6850 or check the Web at [the Campus Store](#) and click on Course Materials.

Students are able to charge purchases on their St. Thomas ID card at the bookstore. To do so, students must open an “eXpress Account” at St. Thomas which works similar to a debit card and bills your student account. eXpress Account information is available at the ID card office, Anderson Student Center, room 253 or online at [Card Office](#).

## **Career Services**

For assistance with resumes, cover letters, interviewing skills or additional job search resources, contact the University of St. Thomas Career Services Office at 651-962-6761 or check the Web at [Career Services for Graduate Students](#). Career Services is located in Murray-Herrick Campus Center, Room 123.

The School of Social Work posts job opportunities on our website from agencies interested in reaching our School of Social Work students and alumni directly. This site has links for both job seekers and employers. In addition to our internal job site, it includes links to Career Services at the University of St. Thomas as well as outside job boards.

## **Computer Labs/Tech Help**

A computer lab is located on second floor of McNeely Hall and in the libraries on campus. Labs vary in the equipment they offer and the hours they are open. For hours of computer labs, call the Tech Desk at 651-962-6230. You can also check the [Web at ITS](#) for further information.

## **Center for Well-Being**

The Center for Well-Being is an integrated health care model partnering the following service areas:

- Health Services
- Counseling and Psychological Services
- Health Promotion, Resilience, and Violence Prevention

By integrating our services, we can better support students, faculty and staff from a single location. The Center for Well-Being provides compassionate care, expertise and resources to help members of our community thrive in and out of the classroom.

Please call (651) 962-6750 or check their webpage at [Center for Well-Being](#).

## Financial Aid

The Graduate Financial Aid Office at the University of St. Thomas offers federal and private student loans to assist with your education-related expenses. To receive federal student loans you will need to file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) which you may complete online at [Federal Student Aid](#) (the University of St. Thomas school code is 002345). Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loans may be awarded for up to \$20,500 per academic year. In addition, there is the Federal Direct Graduate PLUS Loan as well as private student loan options that may be available to help meet your needs. For more information about financial aid options visit their web site at [St. Thomas Graduate Financial Aid](#).

If you have specific questions about financing your education, you may contact Becky Stevenson, Assistant Director of Financial Aid, at 651-962-4053, toll free at 800-328-6819 (extension 24053), or by e-mail at [becky.stevenson@stthomas.edu](mailto:becky.stevenson@stthomas.edu).

## ID Cards

Upon enrollment, MSW students are required to obtain a photo ID cards at the Card Office, Room 253, Anderson Student Center. This ID card is required for libraries, athletic facilities, purchasing parking permits, check cashing, and any shuttles. For hours of operation, please call 651-962-6069.

Your St. Thomas ID number is a randomly generated nine-digit number that appears on the front of your ID card. The number listed on the back of your ID card is your library identifier.

## International Student Services

Office of International Student Services (OISS) provides high quality services to international students and scholars to support them in pursuit of their educational, career, and personal goals, and to promote their full functioning in the US and integration into the University. OISS provides programs and training to foster intercultural awareness among all faculty, students and staff and work with related departments to promote the internationalization of the University. OISS is located at room 218 in Anderson Student Center. For more information, please call 651-962-6650 or check the Web at [International Graduate Requirements](#).

## Libraries

The locations of the campus libraries are as follows:

- *O'Shaughnessy-Frey Library Center*, St. Paul, main campus  
651-962-5494 (circulation), 651-962-5001 (reference), 651-962-5400 (hours)
- *Charles J. Keefer Library*, Minneapolis campus  
651-962-4642 (circulation), 651-962-4664 (reference), (651) 962-4640 (hours)
- *Archbishop Ireland Memorial Library*, St. Paul, south campus 651-962-5450

For assistance in searching electronic databases and for further information regarding services

available, please consult the social work reference librarian, Merrie Davidson ([davi0635@stthomas.edu](mailto:davi0635@stthomas.edu)) or 651-962-5007. The St. Thomas libraries are accessible on the web at [Social Work Library Resources](#).

for further information.

Students should be aware of the City of St. Paul residential permit regulations in the neighborhoods surrounding campus if they choose to forego a permit and park on St. Paul city streets.

## Printing Quotas

Every student at St. Thomas is automatically given a quota of \$32 for each semester for printing and copying on campus. The allotment is the equivalent of about 400 grayscale prints. Any printing done beyond this allotment will be charged a per-page fee at the current printing rates charged to their student account billed through the Business Office after the end of the semester. The \$32 allotment is reset at the beginning of each semester as defined below:

Fall: August 18 - January 1

J-Term & Spring: January 2 - May 19

Summer: May 20- August 17

Unused balances will not carry over each semester. There is no cash value to the allotment; therefore, no cash payment will be made for any unused balances. Go to [Print, Scan, and Fax](#) for more information.

## Public Safety

Students can contact Public Safety by calling 651-962-5100, or stop by their office on the first floor of Morrison Hall. Public Safety is open 24 hours, 365 days a year. For emergencies call 651-962-5555. For additional information go to [the Public Safety Webpage](#).

Additionally, safety and security personnel provide the following services:

**Emergencies and First Aid:** A security officer will be dispatched to all emergency situations. All security officers are trained in First Aid and CPR and can administer aid until further help arrives. The security dispatcher will call 911 to summon police, fire and ambulance as needed. Emergency call boxes are located throughout campus and are denoted by a tall blue light on top of the call box. You are encouraged to use the call boxes in times of emergency. A security officer will respond immediately to a call from any of these locations. For calling in an emergency from a cell phone on campus, dial 651-962-5555.

**Escorts:** Escorts are provided upon request for students and employees on campus or to an adjacent street during the hours of darkness.

**Car Starting/Unlocking:** A security officer will assist in the starting or unlocking of cars which are registered with the university under a student or faculty/staff parking permit. The requester must sign a waiver of liability before this assistance will be provided.

**Emergency Notification System:** Students are urged to register their cell phone numbers with St. Thomas's Emergency Notification system. This system will only be used by the public safety to notify the community during weather closings or extreme cases involving the safety of the University community.

To register your cell phone with the St. Thomas notification system, log on to Murphy online and under the Personal Information menu, select Add/Update Emergency Notification System.

## **Student Diversity & Inclusion Services**

The Student Diversity & Inclusion Services (SDIS) office exists to enhance the campus climate and holds deep commitment in developing and sustaining a diverse campus community in the broadest sense including differences in gender, race, ethnicity, generational history, culture, socioeconomic class, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship status, political perspectives, geographic origin, and physical ability, through programs and initiatives aimed at UST students. Our work is based on four pillars: education, leadership, advocacy, and community.

SDIS is located in room 224 of Anderson Student Center. For more information please call 651-962-6460 or check the Web at [Student Diversity and Inclusion Services](#).

## **Veteran Resource Center**

The University of St. Thomas salutes veterans and military-affiliated families as we work to be the most military-friendly university in the Upper Midwest. While here, veterans get the resources they need to succeed academically – and the career support needed to thrive after graduation. The [Veterans Resource Center](#) serves as a one-stop shop where veterans can find information about resources available to them, obtain academic and career services, connect with a counselor, and meet with other veterans.

The center also provides guidance and support for students who are called to active military service or whose spouses are called into active military service and to students who are veterans with a service-connected disability.

## **Writing Assistance and Support**

The Morrison Family College of Health offers a writing assistance and support service to current graduate students of the School of Social Work and Graduate School of Professional Psychology. Our Graduate Writing Assistant (GWA) will consult on a one-to-one basis with you by providing student support and confidence building related to writing ability, learning to find

your own voice and to interpret assignments, apply rubric evaluation tools, and self-reflect upon overall writing within the context of coursework, banded dissertation and broader graduate studies. For more information and to schedule an appointment, visit our [COH OneStthomas Graduate Writing Support](#) page.

## Chapter 3: Getting Started

### **Technology and Equipment Expectations, Email, Use of Canvas**

A student registering for hybrid courses and/or participating in synchronous online class sessions is expected to have access to a computer with the required hardware, software, internet connection speed, and the ability to control settings on the computer. Therefore, the use of computers in your workplace, at public libraries, or other locations where you have no control over computer settings, firewall settings, etc., is not recommended.

In addition to having up-to-date computer access, MSW students are expected to participate actively in the online classroom setting (Canvas). For synchronous sessions this includes, but is not limited to the following: sitting in a distraction-free, private space (when possible), maintaining an online physical presence with video on, and planning to be fully present throughout the entire duration of class (e.g. no driving or multi-tasking while class is in session). The importance of being fully present cannot be understated - faculty are responsible for evaluating your ability to demonstrate accreditation related competencies within each class session, and being able to see and engage with you and your classmates is a large part of this process.

The School of Social Work can assume no responsibility for the inability of computers to connect to St. Thomas websites or course delivery sites. Students are responsible for keeping computers in good working order and notifying instructor(s) when any computer issue interferes with their ability to participate fully in course activities. The student must address these participation issues promptly to maintain active status in the program.

#### **Computer Checklist**

Registering for hybrid or online courses implies that a student has access to a computer with the recommended hardware, software, and internet connection speed. Refer to the Tommie Tech for Grad Students Canvas site (<https://stthomas.instructure.com/courses/29636>) for system requirements and setup.

#### **Computer Requirements**

Please review the comprehensive list of computer requirements for any online course. This comprehensive checklist should help make sure you are ready for online learning and have the

appropriate software, computer memory and media players to be successful in the course.

Be in touch with ITS at (651) 962-6230 or [techdesk@stthomas.edu](mailto:techdesk@stthomas.edu) if you have technical difficulty with any of the activities.

## **E-mail**

MSW students must activate and use their St. Thomas e-mail account upon admission to and throughout the program. The MSW program uses e-mail as an official method of communication and students are expected to respond and communicate through their St. Thomas account. The program expects students to monitor their St. Thomas email and respond to emails within a timely fashion (within one business day).

Activating your account allows you to access Canvas, Murphy online, and to receive required e-mail correspondence from the School of Social Work and the university. For more information on St. Thomas email, refer to [the Email FAQ article](#). Communication in Canvas does not eliminate the expectation to monitor your St. Thomas email.

All codes of conduct, including those related to plagiarism and harassment, apply also to all technology resources including student email. These policies are based on respect for the work and privacy of other St. Thomas community members.

## **Information Technology Services (ITS)**

The St. Thomas ITS department offers a myriad of services and support for students, including tutorial videos. The School of Social Work encourages you to thoroughly read their [website](#) and [Tommy Tech for Grad Students](#) to learn more about what is available to you.

- ITS posts any news and alerts pertaining to University-wide systems to their website at [the ITS webpage](#).
- If you experience an issue, FIRST check the IRT site for the most recent news in addition to reporting the issue to [techdesk@stthomas.edu](mailto:techdesk@stthomas.edu). This is good practice for tracking issues and concerns.
- Notify your instructor and the MSW program about extenuating circumstances that may affect your participation.

## **Learning Management System (Canvas)**

The MSW program uses Canvas for online assignments and to communicate updates, reminders, changes, and web links to journal articles. Helpful information about our version of Canvas and how to access Canvas from a mobile device is provided on the [ITS site](#). As a student, if you are new to Canvas, you may be interested some tutorials to help you get started with how to use various features in the course, like submitting assignments, checking your grades, taking a quiz or using the discussion board.

## Social Media & Netiquette Guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is to highlight the importance of attention to conscientious use of social media; it is not intended to be comprehensive, since the definition of social media is ever evolving. Students in the MSW program are expected to comply with all social media policies of our sponsoring institution and the profession (*NASW Code of Ethics*, the *Minnesota Board of Social Work Code of Ethics/Ethical Standards*). Compliance is grounded in the basic principles of ethical practice in the use of social media. Universal principles include honesty, transparency, thoughtful consideration of what you do and say online, and respect for the law and professional relationships. Likewise several basic assumptions need to be kept in mind: assume nothing stays private, assume everything is permanent and that you can be held responsible for what is said and done.

In addition to these basic principles, as a social work student you have responsibilities related to your professional identity and status as a social worker. It is important to keep in mind your professional social work role when posting or communicating anything through social media. In the social media world, your personal and professional identities are likely to intersect. Guidelines from professional organizations and agencies continue to evolve; students are expected to adhere to those relevant to their status.

Students are expected to use common courtesy and standards for professional behavior whenever emailing, posting on discussion boards, or chatting online. The following etiquette rules apply for online learning (Netiquette).

- Follow the same guidelines for respect and dignity as you would in a face-to-face classroom.
- Recognize that conveying meaning through words is important since online communication lacks the visual cues of seeing someone's facial expression, hand gestures, tone, and other forms of nonverbal communication. Emoticons can convey some of the nonverbal, but not all.
- Use common sense and good manners at all times.
- Remember that humor is OK if it is respectful and not excessive.
- Realize that chat rooms and discussion boards are not anonymous. The faculty has access to all chat rooms and discussion boards, even those set up for specific groups.

Reference Virginia Shea's [\*"The Core Rules of Netiquette"\*](#)

## Syllabi

All course syllabi are posted on their respective course Canvas sites generally two weeks prior to the first class.

## Orientation to the Program

MSW Orientation takes place prior to students starting classes. The orientation is required as an essential part of the MSW curriculum. This orientation provides opportunities to learn more

about the MSW program overview, advising, policies, time management and graduate education.

Resources are shared with students about essential aspects of preparing for and making your way through your MSW education.

## **Tuition and Fees**

Effective Summer 2025-Spring 2026

Tuition cost per credit.....\$875/credit

*Technology Fee*- students who take six or more credits will be assessed a \$135 technology fee each term.

*Health Fee* -students who take six or more credits will be assessed a \$82 health fee each term.

*Writing Fee*-MSW students will be charged a \$15 writing fee per semester in addition to the tech fee and health fee.

*Field Experience Fee* - \$159 each term you are enrolled in a field seminar class (505/506, 607/608)

## **Business Office - Tuition payments and refunds**

Questions about the student payment agreement for the MSW program should be directed to the Business Office (Murray Herrick, 105), at the University of St. Thomas. Refunds are made on a pro-rated basis, depending upon the date on which a course is dropped. Complete information for MSW students on refunds and deadlines are noted on the refund schedule available in the Business Office or the registration policies each semester. Particular attention should be paid to deadlines and procedures. For more information, please call 651-962-6600 or check the Web at <https://www.stthomas.edu/about/departments/business-office/index.html>.

## **Refund Schedule**

In the event that you drop a course or withdraw officially from the program after the term begins, the tuition and fees refund will be calculated according to the tuition refund schedule set by the Business Office for fall/spring courses. The refund schedule for summer courses is set by the program.

The effective date of your tuition refund will be the date of your Murphy transaction or the date you notified the MSW Program Manager of your change of registration in writing. If you have questions about the refund schedule, please contact your advisor or the MSW Program Manager.

## **Research Assistantships and Student Employment**

The MSW program has a limited number of research assistant positions available each year. Questions about the application process can be directed to the MSW Program Manager. The

application is typically available in July for an assistantship the following academic year.

Research assistantships and other campus employment opportunities are listed here: [Student Employment](#)

## **Parking Permits**

Parking permits may be purchased from the Parking Services office and the online portal at [online portal](#). Permits for the academic year are available in late-August. Students can call Parking Services at 651-962-5100 or visit the [Parking and Transportation website](#).

## **Campus Maps**

You can find [a campus map and directions for the St. Paul campus here](#).

# Chapter 4: Ethics, Health, and Safety

## **The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, prohibits postsecondary educational institutions from disclosing the education records of students to most third parties without the students' written consent. The following link has further information:

[FERPA - Records Privacy Information](#)

## **Licensure in Minnesota**

Licensure is required for the practice of social work in Minnesota. Our MSW graduates are academically prepared for social work practice and are eligible to apply for the licensed graduate social work (LGSW) examination in Minnesota.

For specific information regarding social work licensure in Minnesota, contact the Minnesota Board of Social Work by

-mail: 2829 University Ave. SE, Suite #340, Minneapolis, MN 55414-3239

-phone: [\(612\) 617-2100](#) (main), [\(888\) 234-1320](#) (toll free), [\(800\) 627-3529](#) (TTY)

-fax: [\(612\) 617-2103](#) (fax)

-website: [Minnesota Board of Social Work](#).

In 2007, Minnesota State Legislature passed a law, effective August 1, 2011, requiring 360 hours of clinical coursework in six clinical knowledge areas, in addition to required continuing education hours during 2+ years of post-MSW supervised practice in a clinical setting, for everyone applying for LICSW licensure. An analysis of our MSW curriculum identifies the clock hours for each clinical knowledge area covered in each required and elective MSW course. For a current copy of this Clinical Content Grid, please request by sending an email to

[maw@stthomas.edu](mailto:maw@stthomas.edu). Graduates will use this grid to record how they have covered the required clinical knowledge content through the courses taken in the MSW program. If you have questions about the grid for this program, please contact your academic advisor or the MSW Program Director.

Each state has its own process and requirements for licensure/certification to practice of social work. Graduates have found the documentation provided about clinical knowledge areas helpful in their documentation for states outside of Minnesota.

Effective July 1990, an individual who desires to practice as a school social worker must also be licensed by the Minnesota Department of Education. For more information regarding school social work licensure, contact: [Minnesota Department of Education](http://www.mn.gov), 1500 Hwy 36 West, Roseville, MN 55113-4266.

## **Minnesota Board of Social Work Standards of Practice & Compliance Laws**

The following rules constitute standards of practice and ethical conduct. Violation of the rules is grounds for disciplinary or corrective action as a violation of a "rule enforced by a board." The most recent standards can be found under [the Ethical Practice menu of the Minnesota Board of Social Work website](#).

## **Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW)**

Approved by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly and revised by the NASW Delegate Assembly on February 19, 2021, and November 6, 2020.

### ***Preamble***

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's dual focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

Social workers promote social justice and social change with and on behalf of clients. "Clients" is used inclusively to refer to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice. These activities may be in the form of direct practice, community organizing, supervision, consultation, administration, advocacy, social and political action, policy development and implementation, education, and research and evaluation. Social workers seek to enhance the capacity of people to address their own needs. Social workers also seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities,

and other social institutions to individuals' needs and social problems.

The mission of the social work profession is rooted in a set of core values. These core values, embraced by social workers throughout the profession's history, are the foundation of social work's unique purpose and perspective:

- service
- social justice
- dignity and worth of the person
- importance of human relationships
- integrity
- competence.

This constellation of core values reflects what is unique to the social work profession. Core values, and the principles that flow from them, must be balanced within the context and complexity of the human experience.

### ***Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics***

Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession has an obligation to articulate its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. The NASW Code of Ethics sets forth these values, principles, and standards to guide social workers' conduct. The Code is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve.

The most recent and complete edition of the code is available on the [NASW website](#).

## **Mandated Reporting**

### **Bias-Motivated Incidents**

The University of St. Thomas continually strives to meet the highest standards of respect and civility that are both implicit and explicit in its vision, mission and convictions. It is the university's goal that no member of the University community shall be subject to any physical or verbal harassment, abuse or violence based on the individual's race, color, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin, religion or physical or mental disability. The value placed upon human dignity and diversity should be interpreted as augmenting, not infringing upon "freedom of expression" or "academic freedom." As a result, the university has adopted a policy that is designed to investigate and resolve such claims in a direct and thorough manner while respecting the rights of all parties involved.

St. Thomas is committed to providing an inclusive living, learning and working environment that supports the well-being of each member and respects the dignity of each person. Incidents of hate and bias are inconsistent with the St. Thomas mission and convictions and have no place

here. If you are a student who has experienced or witnessed a bias or hate incident, we want to address the incident and provide you with resources.

You can file an online report below or contact any of our [campus resources](#) for support.

Watch an [introductory video](#) that explains how the Bias Incident toolkit aims to provide a single source to help members of the University community understand the Bias reporting process and resources.

## **Discrimination Position Statement - MSW Program**

Value Statement/Program Philosophy:

The School of Social Work is committed to creating a climate which supports and encourages the personal and professional development of each student, with particular sensitivity to the diverse needs of students in the program.

The overall objective of the social work program is preparation of students for practice with diverse populations. For example, a major goal of the MSW program is to “prepare students to develop skills actively engaging diverse client populations and adapting their practice to particular groups as needed.” The School of Social Work has a strong commitment to the development of competency in the engagement of diversity and difference both in relation to curriculum development and in relation to the needs of social work students.

The School of Social Work is committed to making extensive efforts to address ethnic, racial, cultural, gender and lifestyle diversity issues in each course. Major objectives include: recognizing, respecting, and understanding cultural, racial, ethnic, lifestyle and gender diversity, understanding the patterns and consequences of discrimination and oppression, and integrating these values and knowledge in the practice of social work.

In all aspects of its program, the School of Social Work is committed to:

- understanding the implications of living in a diverse society;
- developing self-awareness of all actors in the educational program of their own attitudes and prejudices;
- promoting the role of the social worker in working for social justice and resolving social problems

Definitions:

Concerns of the School of Social Work which are addressed in this position statement are based on the following definitions:

**RACISM, SEXISM, AGEISM, AND OTHER -ISMS:** Any attitude, action or institutional structure which subordinates a person or group because of an ideological belief in the superiority of some groups over others. The beliefs upon which domination is based may be conscious or unconscious and practices may be expressed overtly or covertly in interactions between individuals or groups.

PREJUDICE: an unfavorable opinion or feeling toward a group or its individual members that is formed beforehand without knowledge, thought or reason. It is a negative attitude that grows out of the above belief system.

Stereotyping is one prejudicial attitude that superimposes on a total race, sex, age, religious or other group a generalization about behavioral characteristics. Within the context of racism, stereotyping is negative in order to explain minorities as inferior or defective. Within the context of sexism, negative stereotyping explains females as inferior or defective. The same stereotyping process operates with people who are elderly, disabled, homosexual, of a certain religion, ethnic group, etc.

DISCRIMINATION: a behavioral response, based on an ideological belief and prejudicial attitude that is unfavorable to members of an "out-group."

Position Statement:

The School of Social Work does not accept nor condone any ideological beliefs that purport the dominance of one group over another as defined above. The School of Social Work does not condone or accept any PREJUDICIAL ATTITUDES in regard to any person because of that person's membership in a particular group. Consistent with the School's commitment to diversity and social justice, the development of the self-awareness of all actors in the educational program about their own attitudes and prejudices will be promoted.

In relation to DISCRIMINATORY BEHAVIORS, on the other hand, more specific procedures and actions will be taken. The School of Social Work fully supports and adheres to the non-discrimination policies of the University of St. Thomas as outlined in the policy section: **Non-Discrimination Statements - University.**

The School of Social Work reaffirms its commitment to non-discrimination in the following statement:

The School of Social Work conducts all aspects of its educational program without discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, age, creed, ethnic or national origin, disability, or political or sexual orientation.

## **Incident Reports**

Students who experience an incident during an in-person or online course, or any other situation in which an incident occurred should work with MSW Program Director and the Dean's office for reporting purposes.

## **Disability Statement**

Students requesting accommodation need to register with the disability resource office at St.

Thomas. The disability office does not automatically notify professors that students have a disability just because they have submitted documentation for accommodation. It is students' responsibility to disclose their accommodation needs to their professors if they wish to request accommodations for their courses. Faculty are unable to provide accommodations until the student notifies them. In consultation with disability resources, the student and faculty together will determine reasonable accommodation for the course.

Academic accommodations will be provided for qualified students with documented disabilities including but not limited to mental health diagnoses, learning disabilities, Attention Deficit Disorder, Autism, chronic medical conditions, visual, mobility, and hearing disabilities. Students are invited to contact the Disability Resources office about accommodations early in the semester.

Appointments can be made by calling 651-962-6315 or in person in Murray Herrick, room 110. For further information, go to [the Disability Resources webpage](#).

## **Background Policy**

Students should familiarize themselves with the University of St. Thomas [Background Check Policy \(stthomas.edu\)](#)

## **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPPA)**

For information related to HIPPA, please contact the [Center for Well-Being | University of St. Thomas - Minnesota \(stthomas.edu\)](#)

[Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 \(HIPAA\) | CDC](#)

## **Weather Closings**

**Inclement weather policy:** In the case of inclement weather (severe snowstorm, tornado), and or public health emergencies such as a pandemic, the MSW program can decide to temporarily move all MSW classes to synchronous online learning (Zoom) for a day or for the duration of the event. This decision will be made at the program level for all courses. Individual faculty will not make decisions for their courses. (Refer to Netiquette policy pg 30 MSW Handbook). If the university decides to close down operations because of weather, MSW program will follow university guidance, and no classes will be held.

It is to be noted that students with Title IX and disability accommodations will work with the course instructor, program director and university service liaison to determine exceptions to the attendance policies.

## **Health Information and COVID-19 Protocols**

The University of St. Thomas is committed to the health and well-being of our community.

In general, we support The Centers for Disease Control's (CDC's) following recommendation: students, faculty, or staff with influenza-like illness (temperature of 100.0 or greater, plus a cough or sore throat) are directed to self-isolate for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine. In the event that students are unable to attend classes due to this self-isolation, they should notify their processors of their absence. It is the expectation that students conduct themselves ethically and that illness-related accommodations are not abused.

As of May 2023, the university lifted its COVID-19 vaccination requirement for all students, faculty and staff. St. Thomas is still strongly recommending for community members to be vaccinated against COVID-19; the university will continue to work with any employees who need accommodations due to health conditions that make them particularly vulnerable to the virus. For more information about our COVID-19 support for students, visit the [COVID-19 Protocols | University of St. Thomas - Minnesota \(stthomas.edu\)](https://www.stthomas.edu/COVID-19-protocols)

## Safety and Security

Students can contact Public Safety by calling (651) 962-5100 or stop by their office on the first floor of Morrison Hall. Public Safety is open 24 hours, 365 days a year. For emergencies call (651) 962-5555. For additional information go to [the Public Safety webpage](#).

Additionally, safety and security personnel provide the following services:

**Emergencies and First Aid:** A security officer will be dispatched to all emergency situations. All security officers are trained in First Aid and CPR and can administer aid until further help arrives. The security dispatcher will call 911 to summon police, fire and ambulance as needed. Emergency call boxes are located throughout campus and are denoted by a tall blue light on top of the call box. You are encouraged to use the call boxes in times of emergency. A security officer will respond immediately to a call from any of these locations. For calling in an emergency from a cell phone on campus, dial (651) 962-5555.

**Escort Service:** Escorts are provided upon request for students and employees on campus or to an adjacent street during the hours of darkness.

Students are urged to register their cell phone numbers with the St. Thomas's Emergency Notification system. This system will only be used by the department of public safety to notify the community during weather closings or extreme cases involving the safety of the University community. To learn more and how to setup your cell phone, visit the [Emergency Notification System webpage](#).

The security of the campus and the safety of its residents and daily visitors is a responsibility shared by the entire community. In addition to creating safety programs and emergency guides, we closely track and report on all campus safety incidents via ongoing notices and an Annual Security and Fire Report. We believe this transparency helps keep our campus community

informed and aware and better able to maintain their own security and personal safety on campus.

If you are the victim of a crime or have witnessed one, call Public Safety immediately:

- Emergency: 651-962-5555
- Non-emergency: 651-962-5100
- Report a Crime (non-emergency)

## Chapter 5: Academic Policies

### Academic Integrity & Plagiarism

Opportunities for learning at the School of Social Work include students' rights to express their views and to take reasoned exception to the view of the faculty, to examine all questions felt to be appropriate to a course of study, to be protected from improper disclosure of their views and beliefs, to be examined in a fair and impartial manner and to be treated with dignity and respect. Students are responsible, however, for learning the content of any course of study outlined by their instructors, regardless of any views or judgments privately held, and for demonstrating their attainment in an honest manner.

Students who compromise the integrity of the class are subject to disciplinary action on the part of the graduate faculty. Violations of classroom standards include:

- Cheating in any form, whether in formal examinations or elsewhere;
- Plagiarism, using the work of others as one's own without assigning proper credit to the source;
- Misrepresentation of any work done in the classroom or in preparation for class;
- Falsification, forgery or alteration of any documents pertaining to academic records;
- Disruptive behavior in a course of study or abusiveness toward faculty or fellow students;
- Unauthorized copying of computer software.
- Inappropriate use of artificial intelligence (AI) software.

A standard of honesty, fairly applied to all students, is essential to a learning environment. Students violating such standards must accept the consequences. Penalties are assessed by appropriate classroom instructors, the advisor, the MSW faculty and the MSW Program Director. Serious cases may result in discipline at the school or university level and may result in automatic failure of the class, suspension and/or dismissal. Students accused of violating a standard of honesty may protect themselves through established appeal procedures and are assured of due process and the right of appeal to address accusations or penalties felt to be unjust.

## **Plagiarism**

The MSW program follows the definition of plagiarism from Hefferman and Lincoln (1982).

Plagiarism is the dishonest act of presenting the words or thoughts of another writer as if they were your own. You commit plagiarism whenever you use a source in any way without indicating that you have used it. If you quote anything at all, even a phrase, you must put quotation marks around it, or set it off from your text; if you summarize or paraphrase an author's words, you must clearly indicate where the summary or paraphrase begins and ends; if you use an author's idea you must say that you are doing so. In every instance, you must also formally acknowledge the written source from which you took the material. (Reprinted from "Writing: A College Handbook" by James A.W.Hefferman and John E. Lincoln. By Permission W.W. Norton & Co. Inc., Copyright 1982 by W.W. Norton & Co. Inc.)

You can avoid plagiarizing if you are careful to follow these guidelines from the Writing Resource Center (1997):

Put the words of an author in quotation marks; record them accurately; and follow the quotation with a citation that indicates your source. Use quotation marks even when you borrow a phrase or a single, special word from another person. Follow the APA style of citation.

Write a summary or paraphrase in your own words and sentence patterns. Follow it with a citation. Just changing some words does not make a paraphrase; the ideas must be digested, understood, and written in your own words.

In addition, it is wise to lead into your quotation or paraphrase by using the author's name. For example, you can write, "According to Tanner," followed by a quotation from Tanner or your paraphrase or summary of Tanner's ideas.

Be careful not to plagiarize your teacher or colleagues, as well. If you borrow words or ideas from anyone...be sure to give them credit by quoting and citing them, or paraphrasing and citing. They will thank you for it.

And a final note concerning plagiarism and the Internet: to avoid plagiarism, cite the source of anything that you borrow from the Internet, including material from Web pages, e-mail, and newsgroups. These materials are the words and ideas of people who deserve to be given credit. (Copyright 1997, Bemidji State University, Writing Resource Center. May be used freely for non-profit educational use as long as credit is given for source.)

Students are required to use the most current APA Publication manual in all classes. Along with our Universities, the MSW Program takes academic integrity seriously and documented incidents of plagiarism will be addressed and are subject to disciplinary action as noted above.

## Admission to the MSW Program

The School of Social Work is committed to the selection of a student body which is culturally, racially and ethnically diverse as the best teaching and learning mix and the best potential leadership group for social work in the future. The MSW Admissions Committee aims to recruit, screen and admit those individuals with the greatest potential for clinical social work practice and who represent the diversity of population groups within the Minneapolis-St. Paul area and the region.

The objectives identified to achieve these goals are:

- Develop a pool of applicants valued because they bring diverse understandings to the program by virtue of cultural, ethnic and racial backgrounds and varying levels of skills.
- Facilitate the enrollment and retention of students described above.
- Support the achievement of excellence and the successful completion of the program by all students admitted to the MSW program.

Admission requirements for the MSW program:

- A completed bachelor's degree from an institution that is accredited by a nationally recognized, regional accrediting association;
- An undergraduate cumulative grade-point average (GPA) of 3.0 (B) or better on a 4.0 scale. If the applicant's GPA is less than 3.0, an explanatory statement should be included with the application.
- Letters of recommendation - applicants must submit two complete (required form/checklist and letter from each recommender) recommendations
- Personal statement - applicants must submit a personal statement addressing the specific questions listed on the application form.
- Fieldwork evaluation - advanced standing applicants only. A copy of your final evaluation from your senior field practicum will be reviewed.

The admission process is based on a holistic review of all materials submitted.

The priority deadline for completed applications is January 10<sup>th</sup>, for the following academic year.

## Academic Standing

There are six categories of academic standing, one related to admission status and five that are assigned at the end of each grading period.

At Admission:

- **Provisional Admission** - A student is considered a provisional admit if the student 1) has unmet prerequisites; or 2) was admitted with an undergraduate cumulative GPA below 3.0. A student may move off of provisional status by 1) completing the required

prerequisite coursework; or 2) earning a 3.0 or higher GPA in the first 12 credits of the MSW program.

After each semester and final grading period:

- **Good Standing** - To maintain good standing in the MSW program a student must achieve a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher and successfully complete all field practicum requirements.
- **Probation (academic or disciplinary)** - A student who is not maintaining the requirements of Good Standing will be placed on academic probation. Disciplinary probation may be assigned for conduct or other non-academic related behaviors.
- **Suspension** - A student on academic probation for more than two semesters may be placed on suspension. A student who earns more than one grade of "C" or lower may be suspended from the program. A suspended student is not allowed to register for future terms or seek field placement until the conditions of the suspension have been addressed in a satisfactory manner.
- **Academic Dismissal (termination)** - Any student who fails a required course twice or receives more than one "F" and/or "R" on their transcript may be terminated from the MSW program.
- **Non-Academic Dismissal (termination)** - Any student who fails to meet the non-academic standards as addressed in this handbook may be terminated from the MSW program.

Terms for readmission to the program after suspension or dismissal are outlined in the *Retention in the MSW Program* policy section and communicated, along with specific conditions, to the affected student in the academic standing notification letter.

## Credit Hour Policy

A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that reasonably approximates: (1) one hour (50 minutes) of classroom of faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or (2) at least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other activities as established by the institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, and other academic work leading toward the award of credit hours.

## Grading and Change of Grade

All courses in the MSW program are taken on a letter-grade basis, except the field practica and seminars. These courses are graded on a "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory" (S/R) basis and do not affect the student's cumulative GPA. Below are the grade scale and GPA calculation as they

appear on the back of the University of St. Thomas transcript and as implemented in the Banner student record system.

Grading System			
A	4.0 quality points	C	2.0 quality points
A-	3.7 quality points	C-	1.7 quality points
B+	3.3 quality points	D+	1.3 quality points
B	3.0 quality points	D	1.0 quality points
B-	2.7 quality points	D-	0.7 quality points
C+	2.3 quality points	F	0.0 quality points

I = Incomplete                      IP = In progress  
W = Withdrawal                      NR = Not reported  
R = Registered, no credit        AU = Audit, no credit  
S = Satisfactory

GPA: The quality point total is the sum of quality points multiplied by total credits. The grade point average (GPA) is determined by dividing the quality point total by the number of courses assigned quality points. Marks of 'W', 'I', 'R' and 'S' are not assigned quality points and are not calculated in the GPA.

A final grading deadline is established by the University of St. Thomas academic calendar set by the University Registrar. Grade changes after that deadline, for that term, must be submitted on the Official Change of Grade Form and signed by the Program Director and instructor and sent to the Registrar's Office. An instructor may change a grade if there has been an error in the computation, transcription, or reporting of the grade. The mark of I is not to be used to allow a student to improve a grade by additional work over and above that ordinarily expected for the course or by repetition of work already submitted to the instructor.

Students must earn a grade of C- or better in each social work course. Students must also maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 (B). Students who have a cumulative GPA less than 3.0 will automatically be placed on academic probation.

## Class Attendance

Attendance and participation are considered critical for successfully completing a course in the MSW program. We approach attendance as a joint commitment between instructors and students. Our attendance policy reflects our commitment to the social work profession, our accreditation standards, and to our goal of training competent and ethical social workers. An important part of learning also occurs via active engagement with the diverse perspectives of our classmates, instructors, and future colleagues; class attendance is essential to fostering dialogue on the important and often difficult issues confronting our clients and our communities.

In alignment with our goals, students are required to attend all in-person class sessions as well as complete all online assignments and asynchronous work by the deadlines specified in each course syllabus. Additional details about MSW program attendance are as follows.

For the **weekday MSW courses**, students may miss up to two class sessions in CONTENT courses without deductions from course grade. A third absence may be allowed under exceptional circumstances (family emergency, health emergency). Missing more than three classes will result in an automatic failing grade in the class. For all **MSW Field seminar courses** which currently meet every other week, students may miss one class session. A second absence may be allowed in field seminar under exceptional circumstances (family emergency, health emergency). Missing more than two classes in field courses will result in an automatic failing grade.

If a student misses a class during a scheduled presentation day and or on a day when a graded in-person class assignment is due, while they will be exempted by the attendance policy, they will miss points for the assignment itself. Instructors are not expected to create make-up assignments for students who miss class. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure to communicate and follow-up on missed class time and learning. It is also the responsibility of the student to communicate class absences to instructors in a timely manner.

**For the MSW Hybrid cohort**, which meets only three times on-campus, per semester, attendance is **mandatory** for all in-person class sessions, for both content and field courses. An absence may be allowed under exceptional circumstances (family emergency, health emergency). Additionally, all online asynchronous work needs to be completed by the deadlines specified in the course. Missing asynchronous is analogous to missing in-person class, therefore missing asynchronous work and or submitting late work routinely will also result in a failing grade in the class. It is the responsibility of the student to communicate with the instructor about missed deadlines or outstanding asynchronous work.

**No Zoom for in-person class policy:** We offer two modalities in our MSW program which have been accredited through Council on Social Work Education (CSWE); a weeknight in-person modality, and a hybrid modality with synchronous in-person meetings and asynchronous online learning. We do NOT offer a hi-flex modality and therefore there will be no Zoom alternative offered in place of in-person attendance to any student in any MSW course. If a student cannot attend class in-person, it will be considered an absence. There will be **no instructor discretion** in this policy, as we need to be consistent with our accreditation standards.

## Class Times

**Weekday program** - Classes are generally offered in late afternoon and evening (4:40-7:05 PM or 7:20-9:45 PM). A limited number of classes may be offered 1:35-4:00 PM. In planning your schedule, please note that not all classes are offered in each time slot and class sizes are limited.

Methods classes (GRSW 501/502 and GRSW 603/604) and field seminars (GRSW 505/506 and GRSW 607/608) are yearlong courses. **Please keep this in mind. When registering for fall courses, these courses will be on the same day/time for the entire year. You will not be allowed to change sections due to scheduling conflicts. All elective courses are scheduled on Tuesdays or Thursdays from 4:40-7:05 p.m.**

Please see the Registration section for policies regarding summer classes.

**Hybrid program** - Classes meet three times each semester on Saturdays (9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 – 5:30 p.m.). In addition, based on the limited amount of “in-class” time, weekly assignments are considered an essential component of class attendance and must be completed within that stated timeline on Canvas. There are two required courses every fall, spring and summer term. You must be accepted into the hybrid track or have special program approval to take Saturday hybrid courses. Attendance is mandatory at each class.

## **Auditing a Course**

MSW graduates and MSW level practitioners can petition to audit courses on a space available basis. Students who are eligible for admission to a credit-bearing course can petition the program to audit the course and will be charged an audit fee equal to the cost of one credit. Students who audit graduate courses in social work will not be expected to complete class assignments. If the instructor deems attendance to be satisfactory, the course will appear on the student’s transcript with a notation indicating that the student was registered as an auditor with a grade of AU. If attendance is not satisfactory, no notation of the course will appear on the transcript.

In no case can students subsequently receive credit for courses audited in the MSW program. Auditor status cannot be changed to “credit” status after the last day to add the class. Current MSW students may not audit a course required for completion of the program. SSW Fieldwork instructors with 5 years of experience with St. Thomas can audit one course per academic year without cost, on a space available basis.

## **Non-Degree Student Enrollment: Credit limitations**

Non-matriculated students with a Baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited school may request to take certain foundation-level MSW courses if there is space available after student registration has occurred for the term. Non-degree students are enrolled on a space available basis. A maximum of 6 credits for the MSW program can be taken as a non-degree student and later applied to the MSW program if the student has been admitted as degree-seeking. Students admitted as non-degree may take only 500-level foundation social work courses and electives. Upon completion of the course, a standard letter grade is assigned and documented on an official transcript.

Non-degree students are not eligible to receive financial aid for the courses they enroll in. Only individuals who have an MSW degree can register for advanced clinical practice courses or electives on a space available basis. Social work field practicum courses are open only to students matriculated in the MSW Program.

An individual who wishes to enroll in a graduate level course as a non-degree student may do so by contacting the MSW Program Manager.

## **Curriculum and Degree Requirements**

The design of the curriculum for the MSW program is consistent with the curriculum guidelines of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The program is based on the view of social work as a profession that builds on social science knowledge and educates for increased development of practice knowledge and competence. The model upon which this program is built proposes that education for social work practice is conducted at three distinct levels: undergraduate (entry-level practice), masters (advanced practice) and doctoral (research oriented). All social work education is based upon a foundation of liberal arts education. Professional practice at all three levels is unified by a common core of values, knowledge, and skills.

The MSW program at the University of St. Thomas is built upon the base of the existing generalist baccalaureate program. The BSW program has been in place since the 1970s and accredited since 1974. The MSW Program accepted its first students in 1990, and was granted accreditation retroactively for all graduating students.

The MSW program has a single concentration of clinical social work practice. All students in the program will graduate with a clinical social work degree. The total number of credits required for completion of the program is 56 semester credits for regular standing students. Graduates of undergraduate social work programs accredited by the CSWE will be considered for advanced standing and will be required to complete a minimum of 38 semester credits to receive the MSW degree. Full time students admitted to the advanced standing one-year program in the weekday format take four courses during the summer sessions and graduate the following May after two semesters of full-time study.

For regular standing students who do not have an undergraduate degree in Social Work, the MSW degree can be completed in the weekday format in a two-year, four-semester program. This two-year MSW program will allow regular standing students who carry 15 credits per semester in year one and 13 credits each semester in year two to complete the 56 credits required for graduation.

The MSW program also offers an extended-time curriculum for those students who do not enroll on a full-time basis. In the weekday format, regular standing students can apply to complete the program on extended-time status through either a three-year or four-year plan. Advanced

standing students can apply to complete the program on extended-time status, through a two-year or three-year plan. The degree requirements are the same as the full-time programs.

The MSW program is also offered in a regular standing and advanced standing hybrid formats, where students come to the St. Paul campus three Saturdays each semester for classes during the academic year and summer term. The regular standing hybrid is designed to be completed in three years. The advanced standing hybrid program is designed to be completed in two years. The degree requirements are the same as the full-time programs.

A program outline for each program sequence can be found in Appendix B of this handbook.

The MSW program must be completed within a four-year time span. Students focus their program within the clinical social work concentration through use of nine elective credits and their clinical field practicum. Students are expected to maintain a 3.0 (B) GPA and must have this as a cumulative GPA in order to graduate. The program may change curriculum requirements at any time.

Students must complete all graduation requirements before the degree can be certified and posted to university records. A degree cannot be awarded until the student completes all work that might affect his/her qualifications for the degree.

## **Curricular Practical Training (CPT)**

In addition to the eligibility standards set forth by the Office of International Students & Scholars (OISS), MSW students requesting CPT approval must first consult the MSW Program Director to discuss if the opportunity is directly related to your field of study and is determined to be an integral part of the established curriculum. CPT is approved only for international students who are placed in paid internship opportunities that are a required component of the MSW field curriculum. Any additional internships or employment opportunities that are not directly tied to degree completion or required coursework within the MSW program will not be eligible for CPT approval.

## **Dual Degree Program - JD/MSW**

The dual degree program in social work and law is designed to provide you with both a social and legal perspective to meet the social work and legal challenges in many areas of professional practice, such as child welfare, education, mental health, individual and family practice, family mediation, services to elders and people with disabilities, legal aid, criminal and juvenile justice, consumer protection, advocacy, employment, housing, community development, human rights, immigration, and the evaluation of social service programs.

This program was developed to reinforce and support a professional perspective that serves the multiple and complex needs of clients. Once accepted into each program, students develop a plan for completing both degrees with the support of an advisor from each program. Upon

completion, students will have two degrees.

The dual degree program with the University of St. Thomas Law School is designated as a dual degree program on the student record and the dual degree is awarded when the requirements for both degrees are satisfied.

## **Transfer of Credit**

Students may request transfer of credits for courses taken at another CSWE accredited graduate program. Only courses with a letter grade of "B" (3.0) or better will be accepted, assuming that they meet criteria of the program for relevancy. No credits taken on an ungraded basis (S/N) may be transferred. Only one elective course may be taken outside the School of Social Work and transferred in; it will typically be transferred in as a foundation level elective. Undergraduate courses, continuing education or extension courses may not be transferred.

For credits completed prior to admission to the MSW program, it should be understood that courses to be transferred will be applicable to the MSW degree only if they have been completed within the four-year period normally allowed for the completion of the degree (see Transfer Admissions Policy).

- Instructions for Transfer of Credit:
  - Complete & submit Petition for Transfer of Graduate Credit form, official transcript, and course syllabus for each course you are requesting to transfer
    - If requesting credit for field experience, please include copies of final field evaluations.
  - Send all of the above to the MSW Program Director for approval.

The review process can take up to 30-45 days. An email is sent to the student's St. Thomas email address informing them of the outcome.

## **Transfer/Waiver of Credit for Life Experience**

The MSW program does not grant course credit for life experience or previous work experience in accord with CSWE's *Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards*: The program has a written policy indicating that it does not grant social work course credit for life experience or previous work experience.

## **Credit by Examination**

The School of Social Work does not grant credit by examination for the Master of Social Work program.

## **Transfer Admissions**

Admitted students may request transfer credits for courses taken at another CSWE accredited

graduate program. After this request has been made, all course syllabi completed within a 4-year time period of the application (to be submitted by admitted student) will be reviewed by the MSW Program Director and/or faculty designee.

Admitted students will then receive a determination letter which outlines the previously completed course credits that will transfer into our program, along with the remaining requirements to be completed to earn their degree.

In order to earn a MSW degree through St. Thomas, admitted students must complete at least 50% of their credits and their clinical field placement through our social work program.

In addition, all courses must meet criteria outlined in the (above) Transfer Credit Policy.

## **University Credit Transfer**

The University of St. Thomas is registered as a private institution with the Minnesota Office of Higher Education pursuant to sections 136A.61 to 136A.71. Registration is not an endorsement of the institution. Credits earned at the institution may not transfer to all other institutions.

## **Elective Courses**

The MSW program requires all students to take nine elective credits. One course (three credits) may be taken outside the School of Social Work in a related discipline and approved by their academic advisor. In certain circumstances, such as grant requirements for a specific concentration, all electives (9 credits) may be taken outside the School of Social Work per approval from the MSW Program Director. See Transfer of Credit policy section in this handbook for further information.

Students are not guaranteed registration in a particular elective as part of their program. Registration is first-come, first-serve and once elective courses are filled, students must choose a different elective. We do not offer every elective, every term. There is a rotation of electives depending on the size of class that needs an elective in any given term and the availability of faculty to teach them. In general, students in the weekday tracks may only take electives offered weekday evenings; only students in hybrid may take electives offered on weekends. Exceptions are noted in each term's registration policies email.

For hybrid program electives, students admitted into this track have priority to be registered in these electives.

## **Field Practicum Protocols**

Social Work, as an applied discipline and profession, requires emphasis upon planned field experience as a vital component of the educational process. Field education is at the heart of social work as its signature pedagogy, and supports the professional development of students, as they integrate and apply the knowledge, values and skills learned in academic courses to actual social work situations. Through this integration and application, students develop the competencies identified for generalist (foundation/core) and clinical (advanced) practice.

Details of the field placement process, policies, procedures and curriculum are contained in the MSW Field Education Manual.

*Foundation practicum:*

Regular standing students are required to complete a 400-hour foundation practicum. Students who are granted advanced standing admission are not required to complete the foundation field practicum. The foundation practicum is taken concurrently with or subsequent to Theory and Practice of Social Work I and Theory and Practice of Social Work II (GRSW 501 and GRSW 502) and must meet the established guidelines for a foundation placement.

*Clinical practicum:*

All students are required to complete a 600-hour clinical field practicum. The clinical practicum is taken concurrently with or subsequent to Methods of Clinical Social Work I and Methods of Clinical Social Work II (GRSW 603 and GRSW 604) and must meet the established guidelines for a clinical practicum.

Foundation and clinical practica are taken in conjunction with an integrative field seminar. These two components (agency-based field work and the concurrent seminar) together make up the Field Practicum and Seminar course.

*Placement process:*

The field placement process begins with a mandatory field orientation in spring for placements the following fall. Students should follow closely the guidelines provided in the orientation, the MSW course registration policies, and emails from the field education director. The Director of MSW Field Education arranges partnerships with agencies and qualified field instructors for field placements. Students should not contact any agencies directly until they have received the information provided at orientation, and only in adherence with field policies and guidelines and consultation with the Director of MSW Field Education. In some cases, students may be able to arrange placements at agencies where they are employed ("practicum in place of employment"), or agencies which were not previously listed with the school ("self-initiated"). Students interested in exploring alternative placements should attend the field orientation for complete information and guidelines and consult with the Director of MSW Field Education before contacting any agencies directly.

MSW field placements are available in a part-time, academic year format, beginning in late August/early September and continuing until April, May, or early June. Under certain circumstances, students may also be eligible to complete field in a full-time (block) format held during the summer (late May through August). Block placements must be approved by the Director of MSW Field Education and the student's academic advisor. In all cases, academic year and block placements, students are in concurrent field seminars, which meet every other week on campus.

Students develop an individualized field education plan while in field placements, and written evaluations are completed by the field instructor at the mid-year and end of year. More information about the field education program is available in the MSW Field Education Manual.

## Student Concerns and Complaints

For student concerns and complaints, please see the procedure on this webpage:

<https://www.stthomas.edu/about/consumer-information/student-concerns/index.html>

## Grievance Policy for the MSW Program

The procedure for addressing grievances in any aspect of the social work program will be based on the following criteria:

1. Complaints will be taken seriously and investigated in a matter that provides equal access and responsiveness to all parties with attention to the principles of fairness and equanimity;
2. Respect for all involved parties will be communicated throughout the process, including validation of feelings;
3. A win-win solution will be sought wherever possible; i.e., a solution that provides validation, respect and positive consequences for all parties;
4. Social work values and ethics will be adhered to;
5. Resources outside the school, such as Personal Counseling, may be suggested as appropriate.

### Grievance Procedure

1. The student is asked to speak directly with the person with whom he/she has a grievance;
2. If a satisfactory resolution has not been reached, a meeting is scheduled with the student, faculty person and the student's academic advisor for further discussion;
3. If a satisfactory resolution does not come forth from that meeting, the matter is brought in writing to the MSW Program Director. The MSW Director may request further written documentation or meetings with the involved parties and consultation with the MSW Program Committee as needed.
4. If the issue remains unsettled, a meeting is scheduled with the Director of Social Work in consultation with the Associate Dean of the College of Health for a final decision;
5. If the grievance is concerning an academic matter (classroom or field) and is still unresolved after steps 1-4, the student may see the Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of St. Thomas, who will in turn submit the grievance to the Grievance Committee.
6. If the grievance is non-academic, and it is not satisfactorily resolved in steps 1-4, the student may bring the grievance to the Vice-President for Student Affairs at the University of St. Thomas, who will in turn submit the grievance to the Grievance Committee.

Please refer to the MSW Field Education Manual for the Grievance Procedure Concerning Fieldwork.

## **Grievance Appeal Procedure**

The MSW program follows the Grievance Policy as outlined by the University of St. Thomas. Either interested party (defendant or plaintiff) may appeal a decision of the Grievance and Discipline Committee to the provost of the university within five days from the receipt of the decision. The provost will choose an appeal board of three members. The appeal board will not rehear the case but will consider evidence of a violation of the proper procedures or manifest partiality. The appeal board will bring its recommendation to the provost, whose decision will be final.

Each student can expect fair and reasonable treatment by other members of the university community. Students who believe they have been aggrieved according to the specifications of any [campus student policy](#) should utilize the following process to resolve that grievance.

## **Military Withdrawal Policy**

Students who are called to active duty can reference the military withdrawal policy here: [Military Withdrawal](#).

## **English Language Proficiency**

Applicants whose native language is not English must submit acceptable test scores for proof of English proficiency, as detailed on the UST [International Admissions and Aid Graduate Requirements](#). Completion of an undergraduate or graduate degree at an accredited college or university in the US, English-speaking Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, or New Zealand waives this requirement.

## **Independent Study Courses**

An independent study course provides an opportunity for students who wish to undertake a well-defined research project or clearly outlined and carefully delineated course of study. Independent study courses are restricted to students of proven ability who have sufficient background in the subject and are able to complete their work under the guidance of a faculty member. They conduct the project in an independent manner without attending regular class meetings. Independent study is characterized by a reduction in formal instruction and an increase in the individual student's responsibility and initiative in the learning process.

Approval of an independent study course by the faculty sponsor, MSW Program Director and the Director of Social Work attests to the academic value of the study and to the ability of the student to master a body of knowledge with minimal faculty guidance. Field practicum experiences may not be taken as independent study. Independent studies may not substitute for an elective course offered in the School of Social Work.

Normally, independent studies are offered for three credits. However, independent studies are also offered for less than three credits in cases where a student is one or two credits short because of transfer of courses from another institution. Approval for an independent study is not complete until the faculty sponsor, MSW Program Director and the Director of Social Work have signed and approved the form.

An Independent Study Form may be obtained from the MSW Program Manager. Registration for an independent study course is done through the MSW Program Manager. The MSW Program Manager maintains a copy of the completed contract.

## **Withdrawal from Classes/Withdrawal from the Program**

Students who wish to drop a course should do so by officially withdrawing from the class in writing through the MSW Program Manager. Grades and refunds for withdrawals will be determined by each semester's refund/withdrawal policy deadlines set in the Academic Calendar and the date the written notification is received.

Students who plan to withdraw from the MSW program should confer with their advisor to assess decision options (change of program, leave of absence, withdrawal, etc.). If the student is withdrawing from the program, they must notify the MSW Program Director and the MSW Program Manager in writing to be considered officially withdrawn from the institution. Once students withdraw, re-entering the MSW program requires re-application.

Withdrawal from a class or from the program has implications for financial aid. Students planning to withdraw from a class or from the program are advised to check with Financial Aid to determine how the withdrawal will impact their financial aid status. It is the responsibility of the student to contact the financial aid office before they request the withdrawal from a class or the program.

## **Student Reports on Teaching - IDEA**

Course evaluations are a vehicle used to elicit student opinions regarding the curriculum and teaching methods. Course evaluations are completed by all students in social work classes at least once a semester (university policy). These opinions are reviewed by the course instructor, the MSW Program Director, and the Director of Social Work. Students are not identifiable on their responses. The comments are seriously assessed and used in policy formulation and curriculum revisions. Students are encouraged to use these vehicles to provide feedback to the instructor and program in a manner that is respectful and meets the principles of Finding Common Ground. Additionally, students are also encouraged to provide informal, on-going feedback to faculty which can contribute to appropriate course modifications while the classes are being offered.

## **IRB Process: Protection of Human Subjects**

The University of St. Thomas has policies safeguarding and respecting the rights and welfare of human subjects in scientific research. Depending upon the research and the degree of risk, there are varying levels of review. Three levels of review have been established: 1) Exempt Review, 2) Expedited Review, and 3) Full Review. All students must address Protection of Human Subjects and are responsible for following approved research design and protocols. The processes and procedures prescribed by the Institutional Review Board at the University of St. Thomas will be followed.

Policies and procedures are designed to meet minimal criteria established by federal law and federal regulations and require separate applications for research approval. Further details about the IRB process and current application forms can be accessed on the [IRB St. Thomas website](#). Be sure to make note of **current** IRB chairs at the university including web-based submission policies and timelines. Individual institutions and agencies involved in the implementation of your research design may require an additional IRB application. Student projects will defer in research methodology and completion of IRB applications and approvals will vary. Students are encouraged to submit IRB applications in the Fall (second year) with a final date of February 1 of the Spring semester (second year). Approvals of IRB applications must be granted by February 15 of the Spring semester (second year).

Please confer with your research advisor about the potential of agreements between relevant IRBs. Note: due to data privacy regulations, you may also need to address Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliance in your proposal and IRB application.

Students and faculty advisors are required to complete CITI Ethic training prior to submitting applications for review by the St. Thomas IRB. Consult with your BD advisor to determine the currency of your CITI certificate and to assess the required modules for each IRB and the possible CITI requirements of other relevant IRBs.

The IRB application and approval of all relevant institutions must be completed prior to beginning any data collection with human subjects. This applies to external agencies, the student's home campus or agency, and other agencies/organizations as relevant.

Research involving de-identified secondary data may be exempt from IRB review; student must verify this with relevant IRBs.

NOTE: St. Thomas students may not be used as participants due to privacy and considerations related to protection of human subjects such as perceptions of coercion; likewise, St. Thomas School of Social Work faculty may not be used as participants.

**Remember:** Data collection may not begin until students have received approval from the IRB.

## Graduation, Commencement, and Diplomas

The University of St. Thomas holds one ceremony per year in May. Degrees are awarded in the months of May, August, and December.

In some cases, students are eligible to participate in commencement prior to completing all course requirements. Clinical summer block students who have completed all other degree requirements are eligible to participate in the May graduation preceding the summer placement. Also, students with three credits or less left to complete are eligible to participate in the May ceremony. Students are eligible to participate in one commencement ceremony.

Students will receive their MSW diploma when all requirements for the degree are completed, verified and posted to their record, approximately four weeks after the end of the term. Final transcripts are not available until degrees are posted. Official transcripts provided for licensure must be ordered through the Registrar's Office. Any transcripts ordered before the degree posting will not have an award date.

### HLC Statement

The University of St. Thomas is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission ([www.hlcommission.org](http://www.hlcommission.org); 312-263-0456), an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

### Incompletes

In order to be eligible for an incomplete, the student must have completed a minimum of 50% of the required course work and the work must be "B" quality or above. Meeting this minimum requirement does not automatically grant the incomplete, as they are still at the discretion of the individual instructor. Students must request an incomplete from their instructor before the grading deadline. The mark of I is not to be used to allow a student to improve a grade by additional work over and above that ordinarily expected for the course or by repetition of work already submitted to the instructor.

An instructor reporting a mark of I will complete an Assignment of Incomplete form, ask the student to agree by signing, and submit it to the MSW Program Manager. When the student has completed the work, the instructor will submit a Grade Change Form to update the final grade. The incomplete contract is kept on file with the MSW Program Manager until the work is completed.

The student must complete the designated work and submit it to the instructor by May 1 for an I received in fall semester; by December 1 for an I received in spring semester or a summer

session. In either case, an earlier deadline may be required by the instructor. In the absence of a final grade report on or before the deadline, the mark of I will be automatically changed to a grade of F or R as appropriate.

Permission to extend the time allowed to finish the requirements of the incomplete may be granted through the MSW Program Director only in cases of extreme mitigating circumstances. Extension requests must be received by the MSW Program Director two weeks before the incomplete deadline. Students with more than one incomplete must obtain permission of the MSW Program Director before beginning the next semester's courses. Courses in sequence must be completed prior to proceeding. For example, GRSW 580 must be completed before starting GRSW 681; GRSW 501 before GRSW 502; GRSW 645 before GRSW 603, etc.

## **Leave of Absence**

A leave of absence may be granted to a student who wishes to interrupt her/his education temporarily, that is, for no more than one academic year (two semesters excluding summer). An official leave means that the student is kept on the active list and can register without going through a readmission process. Students considering a leave of absence must consult with their academic advisor and submit a formal request accompanied by a clear program of study outlined on the Leave of Absence Request form. A leave of absence is only effective after the student's written request has been considered and approved by the MSW Program Director. The student must confirm their return date with the program before returning to classes. Failure to notify the program and return to classes after the approved duration of the leave of absence will result in the cancellation of enrollment in the program. Re-entry into the program requires reapplication.

Students are required to make consistent progress toward the completion of their degree. This includes active enrollment in courses and/or an approved Leave of Absence (policy above). Students who fail to register for courses for two consecutive semesters (excluding summer) and are not on an approved leave will be inactivated. The termination status will be effective on the first day of classes of the second semester they are not enrolled. Re-entry into the program after termination requires reapplication.

## **Professional Commitments (see Retention in the MSW Program)**

### **Program Changes**

Students are admitted to a specific structured program track with a required sequence of courses. Any changes to the approved sequence must follow the formal written program change process. It is the expectation that students complete the program sequence as specified. In the unusual event that this is not possible, the student should first consult with their academic advisor. The program sequence must include only classes in the program format -

weekday or hybrid - in which the student is enrolled. Transfers between weekday and hybrid formats are considered only in total. The new program sequence must outline what specific courses have already been taken and the proposed sequence for completion of the program.

The written request for a program change should be submitted to the MSW Program Director, with a copy to the advisor, using the Request for Change in Program Sequence Form. The Program Director, after consultation with the advisor, reviews the impact on course enrollment, as well as on the student, before making a decision. The student, academic advisor, and MSW Program Manager are advised of the decision in writing.

## **Registration and Waitlist Policies**

The registration process follows guidelines and process outlined by the MSW Program Manager. Returning and newly admitted students will receive registration materials two to three weeks prior to registration via email. Complete instructions on how to register for courses are included in the registration materials. Typical registration times are June for fall semester, November for spring semester and April for summer term.

Attending class is prohibited unless the student is officially enrolled in that class; do not attend a class you are only waitlisted for. Admission to a particular section of a class is the sole prerogative of the registration process as administered by the Director of Social Work, MSW Program Director and the MSW Program Manager. All instructors have been notified to admit only those students whose names are on the class roster unless the student has proof of enrollment. Under no circumstances will credit be issued to anyone who attends a class for which they are not officially registered. Undergraduate students are not permitted to take graduate courses, unless the course is cross-listed.

A student must register for a course before attending and will not receive credit unless registered. Class registrations may be cancelled for students who fail to begin the work of the class as evidenced by non-attendance in class or otherwise not undertaking course requirements in a timely fashion. Students should not assume that non-attendance of a class will automatically result in their being dropped from the class. To officially withdraw from a class, the student must notify the MSW Program Manager in writing of the intent to withdraw, on or before the published deadline for withdrawing. Students may also withdraw themselves through Murphy online until the first day of the semester. If no official withdrawal is received after the term begins and registration still exists for the term, the student may be responsible for all billing associated with the course and a notation of F will appear on the academic transcript.

**Registration in field/methods courses-** The section and time you are registered in for fall field seminar (GRSW 505 or GRSW 607) will be the same section you register for in the spring semester (GRSW 506 or GRSW 608). Your theory and methods courses also follow the same pattern (GRSW 501/GRSW 502 and GRSW 603/GRSW 604). You will be expected to register for the same section in spring term. Please keep this in mind when registering for fall courses.

These courses will be the same day/time for the entire year. You will not be allowed to change sections due to scheduling conflicts.

**Summer registration (weekday/evening tracks)-** Registration for electives is first come-first serve with students in their final year of the program given highest priority. Students in the weekday/evening track are eligible for taking a summer elective ONLY if they have completed foundation level field (505/506) or are advanced standing. Registration in any non-elective courses in the summer requires pre-approval by the program.

**University Waitlist Policy-** Many courses have an electronic waitlist accessible through the University's registration system (Murphy Online). Students may add their names to any waitlist during designated registration periods.

- Students registered for a course may waitlist another section of the same course.
- Students may waitlist multiple sections of a course.
- Students may waitlist a maximum of four courses/sections at any given time.
- Registration from waitlists is processed on a first-come, first-served basis.

***Students are notified via St. Thomas email when a seat in the course is available and have 24 hours to register, or they will forfeit their place on the waitlist.***

Murphy will not allow you to register for a course once the maximum enrollment is met. In order to be placed on a waitlist, students must use the Web Waitlist function of Murphy online if a waitlist is permitted for a particular class. Not all classes have waitlists (for example, field sections do not have a waitlist). Class sizes are set by the School of Social Work to accommodate the mission of the MSW program, the academic parameters of the curriculum and pedagogical concerns for student learning. Do not expect to be registered for a course that you have waitlisted as we cannot always accommodate these requests. DO NOT contact the instructor of the section you are waitlisted in. Any waitlist decisions are made by the MSW Program Director and not individual faculty.

You are strongly advised to have more than one option when registering for classes. There are sufficient seats to meet the demand for all courses and multiple sections are offered in different time blocks to accommodate a variety of schedules. Students are moved from a waitlist to registered only if a seat becomes available in the section or the needs for a course are greater than projected and the section is expanded.

## **Retention in the MSW Program**

Approved by the faculty 5/2015

### ***Standards for Continuance and Graduation***

The following standards apply to all MSW students enrolled in the University of St. Thomas School of Social Work. Standards are broader than academic performance due to the nature of

Social Work practice and the expectations of a professional program. In addition to the *MSW Student Handbook*, all MSW students are required to comply with the *MSW Field Education Manual*, each semester's registration policies, the University of St. Thomas *Graduate Student Policies*, the *NASW Code of Ethics*, and the *Minnesota Board of Social work Code of Ethics/Ethical Standards*.

Faculty regularly evaluates professional behavior and scholastic performance in several areas, including but not limited to the demonstration of basic professional practice skills, stress management and emotional self-awareness, professional judgment, and scholastic performance. Along with the relevant competencies and practice behaviors outlined in this handbook, criteria defining each of these four primary areas are identified below.

### Professional Behavior

#### A. Basic Professional Practice Skills:

1. Communication: practices effective oral and written skills; uses existing technologies as appropriate; employs effective interpersonal skills including the ability to take appropriate responsibility for one's own actions and decisions and understands their potential impact on others; and possesses the ability to identify and acknowledge limitations.
2. Ability to Exercise Critical Thinking: demonstrates the ability to plan, monitor and evaluate practice interventions and overall practice; is able to articulate and participate fully in the problem-solving process.
3. Physical Skills: demonstrates sufficient motor, sensory and speech and language skills to actively attend and participate in class and practicum sites with or without accommodations (refer to section with Disability Statements).

#### B. Stress Management and Emotional Self-Awareness:

1. Effective Self Care and Coping Skills: handles stress appropriately by use of self-care techniques and supportive relationships; recognizes personal needs and plans accordingly; renegotiates commitments appropriately and in a timely manner.
2. Emotional Maturity: demonstrates understanding of appropriate self-disclosure; maintains respectful relationships with peers, colleagues, faculty, and others; demonstrates empathic support to peers; and uses assertive problem-solving strategies rather than aggressive or passive actions. Seeks professional help for medical or emotional issues that interfere with professional and scholastic performance.

#### C. Professional Judgment:

1. Comprehension of Ethical Behavior: demonstrates adherence to the *NASW Code of Ethics*, state licensing laws, and practicum site policies and procedures; practices within the competencies and limits of a generalist practitioner in foundation practicum or a

clinical practitioner in clinical practicum.

2. Committed to Professional Learning: takes responsibility for learning and seeks feedback and/or supervision from field instructors, faculty, peers and colleagues; participates in classroom discussions and stays engaged in learning; holds self accountable for work assigned.
3. Self-Awareness: demonstrates awareness of one's own attitudes and beliefs (e.g. economic status, age, ethnicity and lifestyle differences) and their impact on professional practice; acknowledges when personal values interfere with professional practice and client relationships and makes appropriate referrals or takes appropriate action.

#### Scholastic Performance

1. Students must earn a grade of C- or better in each Social work course. Students must also maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 (B). Students who have a cumulative GPA less than 3.0 will automatically be placed on academic probation. If students earn more than one grade of "C" or lower, they may be suspended or asked to withdraw from the program.
2. Fulfills the expectations and standards detailed in the *MSW Field Education Manual*.
  - a. Satisfactory completion of foundation practicum that demonstrates both satisfactory progress and a reasonable expectation of success in a clinical practicum.
  - b. Obtains a mid-year evaluation from the clinical Agency Field Instructor and Faculty Field Liaison that satisfactory progress is being made towards competent, ethical practice; earns a final evaluation in clinical field that affirms the student is adequately prepared to graduate as a beginning clinical social work practitioner. Specific expectations and standards are detailed in the *MSW Field Education Manual*.
3. Adherence to the academic integrity statements at the University of St. Thomas in completion of academic assignments, both individual and group assignments.
4. Any student who fails a required course twice or receives more than one "F" and/or "R" on their transcript may be terminated from the MSW program.

#### Readmission After Extended Absence

1. Extended absences from the program of study for any reason may be addressed with additional requirements to ensure currency of program content and integrity.

#### ***Policies and Procedures for Academic or Disciplinary Probation, Suspension or Dismissal***

All faculty are involved in the formation of students' professional identity and performance and

are responsible for reporting concerns to the MSW Program Director and other faculty as appropriate to assure ethical practice and successful academic achievement, including concerns related to academic integrity. The specific process employed for reporting and reviewing a concern relative to a student's performance will be based on the severity of the issue. Relevant information may be disclosed to the practicum site per the Informed Consent Policy (MSW Field Education Manual) if the concern is field-related or is affecting field performance.

In most situations a faculty member will address concerns directly with a student and establish a plan of action with that student to resolve the concern. Faculty will inform the student's advisor, MSW Program Director, and Director of MSW Field Education of the concerns so that any pattern of behavior or issues is identified and addressed in a timely manner. Any other MSW program faculty may be informed of these concerns on a consultative basis. Documentation of individual meetings, concerns addressed, and plans of action will be completed if appropriate and maintained by the concerned faculty member. As needed, the student's academic advisor and MSW Program Director will be informed and consulted. If the concern is field related, the Faculty Field Liaison may offer to meet with the Agency Field Instructor and the student. The faculty liaison who called the meeting will inform the Director of MSW Field Education of the concerns and may also recommend that the student meet with the academic advisor regarding these concerns.

In the event the concerns are unresolved or are of a more serious nature, a meeting will be conducted with the student, faculty member(s) and/or the academic advisor, and the MSW Program Director. The student will be advised in writing of the performance and/or behavioral concerns to be addressed and will be requested to attend this meeting. Disciplinary action can include:

1. Continuation in the program with no restrictions,
2. Probationary status (academic or disciplinary),
3. Suspension, or
4. Termination from the program with no readmission.

Subsequent to the meeting, a letter will be written by the MSW Program Director documenting the outcome of the meeting and any determination of action. In the event of probationary status or suspension, the student will be advised in writing of the actions they must take to address the concerns and a timeframe for doing so in order to regain active program status. This may include meeting minimal GPA requirements in the next 12 credits of coursework, a specific performance level in field placement, future meetings with their advisor, seeking outside assistance, and/or re-evaluating academic load and readiness for the program.

This letter will be sent to the student, the concerned faculty member, the academic advisor, Director of MSW Field Education and the Director of Social Work as needed. The MSW Program Director will also write a summary of the meeting. This summary letter and any related documentation will be maintained in the student's record.

A student who is suspended is not eligible to register for courses or seek field placement. A suspended student may apply for readmission after the lapse of at least one semester or as specified in the suspension letter. To be readmitted, the student must submit a petition to the MSW Program Director describing why he or she will be successful if readmitted and address any other stipulations included in the suspension. The MSW Program Director may confer with faculty. The student will be informed of the decision in writing.

A readmitted student is automatically placed on probation, and the terms of probation will be provided in writing to the student. A readmitted student must achieve a minimum GPA of 3.0 in the next 12 credits of coursework taken and meet the professional behavior and scholastic performance standards for continuance and graduation. Should the student fail to achieve a 3.0, or meet the professional behavioral performance standards, he/she/they will be terminated from the MSW program with no option for re-admission.

### **Schedule Changes**

The MSW program reserves the right to change the schedule of class offerings at any time during the registration period and reserve the right to cancel any class that has insufficient enrollment.

### **University Graduate Student Policies**

In addition to the policies in this section, please refer to the list of policies which can be found at [Student Policies](#).

## APPENDICES

### A. MSW Course Descriptions

#### ***GRSW 500: History and Philosophy of Social Work***

This course provides a foundation for the graduate social work and includes some texts that will be used across the curriculum. Special emphasis is placed on understanding the history, legacies, philosophy and values of social welfare and social work. This course provides students the opportunity to explore the historical development of the ethics, purposes, and sanctions characteristic of professional social work practice. **3 credits**

#### ***GRSW 501: Theory and Practice of Social Work I***

This course provides the first year MSW student with the knowledge and skills needed for generalist social work practice. Students develop communication and interviewing skills, which are used in work with client systems of all sizes. It is taken concurrently with a field placement, which serves as a practice lab for applying theory and skills learned in the classroom. This first course in a year long sequence (students are expected to stay in the same section both semesters) focuses on understanding the generalist and integrative models of practice, social work values and ethics, the strengths perspective, empowerment principles and basic principles of ethical reasoning. Student self-awareness and self-assessment are especially important since they facilitate the development of an authentic style of practice. **3 credits**

#### ***GRSW 502: Theory and Practice of Social Work II***

This course is a continuation of GRSW 501 and is also taken concurrently with a field placement which serves as a practice lab for theory and skills learned in the classroom. This course focuses on several practice applications: group theory and process (both task and treatment groups), agency change, and understanding the dynamics of unintended discrimination and oppression. As with the first course, student self-awareness and self-assessment are critical to developing a solid foundation for authentic practice. **3 credits**

#### ***GRSW 505: Field Practicum and Seminar I***

#### ***GRSW 506: Field Practicum and Seminar II***

The field practicum is an educationally directed on-site experience under the supervision of an agency-based social work field instructor and a campus based faculty liaison. Students complete a total of 400 hours during the first practicum. On-campus seminars (I and II) taken concurrently with the practicum, assist the student in the integration and application of practice theory to their placement learning activities. The first practicum is taken concurrently with GRSW 501 and GRSW 502: Theory and Practice of Social Work I and II. **3 credits**

#### ***GRSW 540: Human Behavior and the Social Environment***

This foundation course will explore the dynamics of human behavior and prepare a foundation of knowledge on which to build clinical practice skills. Through a study of systems theory, psychodynamic theory and the identification of the biological, psychological and sociological variables influencing development, students will gain a theoretical base for application to the

assessment of client systems. Special emphasis in the course is on the important factors of human diversity (ethnic minorities of color, racism, ethnocentrism, aging, sexism, sexual orientation, and religion/spirituality) as they affect the dynamics of human behavior. **3 credits**

***GRSW 580: Foundation Social Work Research***

This course focuses on learning generalist social work research methods and skills. Students will be introduced to the basic concepts of research, allowing them to be both critical consumers and novice producers of research. Skills emphasized include critiquing and analyzing research literature, searching for relevant scholarly articles, writing literature reviews, developing research design, and understanding quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Discussed in the class are frameworks regarding evidence-based practice, diverse client systems, ethical research practice, and social justice. **3 credits**

***GRSW 590: Topics***

The topics course will vary each semester offered and provide an in-depth study of particular issues, concerns and trends in social work. GRSW 590 is a foundation level elective. **3 credits**

***GRSW 603: Methods of Clinical Social Work I***

This course is part one of a year-long sequence requiring students to keep the same instructor over the academic year. This course provides an overview of theories and intervention methods for social work practice. The course focuses on the clinical interview, both with regard to the philosophy and theoretical constructs of the approaches and to the application of those approaches in work with clients from various cultural, ethnic and class backgrounds. Emphasis is placed on differential aspects of assessment and diagnosis of clients of all ages, the formulation of a treatment plan, the therapeutic relationship and the process of treatment. This course is taken concurrently with GRSW 607. **3 credits**

***GRSW 604: Methods of Clinical Social Work II***

This course is part two of a year-long sequence requiring students to keep the same instructor over the academic year. This course provides an overview of theories and intervention methods for social work practice. It is a continuation of GRSW 603. The course focuses on the clinical interview, both with regard to the philosophy and theoretical constructs of the approaches and to the application of those approaches in work with clients from various ages, cultural and ethnic and class backgrounds. Emphasis is placed on differential aspects of assessment and diagnosis of different age groups throughout the lifespan, the formulation of a treatment plan, the therapeutic relationship and the process of treatment. Emphasis is placed on theories and methods of practice with individuals and groups. This course is taken concurrently with GRSW 608. **3 credits**

***GRSW 607: Field Practicum and Seminar III***

***GRSW 608: Field Practicum and Seminar IV***

This course provides advanced learning and practice in settings conducive to clinical social work practice under the instruction of an agency-based social work supervisor and campus-based

faculty member. Students complete a minimum of 600 hours during the practicum. Campus seminars (III and IV) taken concurrently with the practicum provide guidance for learning, continued application of theory and prior experience, and further refinement of social work skills. The clinical field practicum is taken concurrently with GRSW 603: Methods of Clinical Social Work I and GRSW 604: Methods of Clinical Social Work II. **4 credits**

***GRSW 609: Spiritual Dimension of Social Work Practice***

This course conceptualizes social work practice as consisting of seven interrelated elements: use of theory, goals of practice, context for practice, nature of helping relationship, assessment, intervention and ethical guidelines. These interrelated elements will be explored in the context of religion, spirituality, and various practice settings. Social Work assists people in achieving their full potential within their environmental contexts by adopting a holistic, person-in-environment perspective. Since its inception, the profession has recognized that a holistic perspective requires attending to biological, psychological, sociological, and spiritual human needs. Current trends in social work education support the inclusion of content on religion and spiritual diversity. In accordance with professional policy, this course is an elective that provides an introduction to the spiritual dimension of social work practice. **3 credits**

***GRSW 612: Grief Counseling and Therapy***

The course provides theoretical and applied frameworks for understanding grief and loss as they relate to social work practice. The perspectives and skills taught in the class can be used in recognizing and addressing grief and loss with persons of diverse backgrounds, who are facing a variety of different losses, in a variety of practice settings. The course is designed to be relevant for social work practice in any setting, not just those focused on death and dying. A broad view of the concept of loss will be taken. Students will be able, by the conclusion of the course, to recognize, identify, and respond to losses with those with whom they work. Students will also address matters of self and team care when addressing grief issues with clients. **3 credits**

***GRSW 614: Clinical Practice with Children***

This class will be focused on the normal developmental trajectory from birth through adolescence, with an emphasis on the early formative years. Because pathological development can only be evaluated through the lens of normative development, the first half of the semester will be dedicated to understanding what happens in the normal developmental sequence and what developmental milestones must be reached. The second half of the semester will look at various pathologies found in children with a goal of discovering the causes of these pathologies and the most useful interventions to help development get back on track. During all of the semester we will also be reading clinical stories, including effective interventions when development goes awry. **3 credits**

***GRSW 615: Clinical Practice with Couples and Families***

This course provides an overview of theory and models of social work intervention with couples and families. Students will learn the philosophy and theoretical constructs of a variety of

methods as well as how to apply those methods to clients. In addition, the course will focus on a few common clinical issues which families face, allowing students the opportunity to apply the methods to particular problem areas. Emphasis is placed on both cultural and gender issues, as well as on working with families with both traditional and non-traditional structures. **3 credits**

***GRSW 616: Clinical Practice with Groups***

This theory-based course develops knowledge and skills for the application of research-informed models of clinical social work with groups. It focuses on the therapeutic factors in group process and the tasks and skills of the clinical social worker in composing groups, facilitating group process on behalf of members, and the skills and techniques for responding to group members' special needs. Special emphasis is placed on cultural and gender-sensitive application of the practice models promoting empowerment processes in groups and their application with special populations at risk. Attention is also given to integrating research in the practice of clinical social work with groups. **3 credits**

***GRSW 618: Cognitive Interventions***

This course will introduce students to the effective practice of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). Students will be introduced to and will have the chance to practice techniques from CBT such as activity scheduling, thought records, and guided discovery. Students will learn how to conceptualize and to treat broadly from a cognitive behavioral perspective, with attention to forming a cognitive conceptualization, including concepts such as automatic thoughts, intermediate thoughts, core beliefs, and how to work at each of these levels. Students will also learn how to modify and tailor treatment to specific diagnoses such as mood, anxiety, personality, psychotic, and substance-related disorders. **3 credits**

***GRSW 619: Integrative Psychotherapy***

This course on integrative psychotherapy uses a bio/psycho-social/spiritual perspective applied to clinical social work practice. Based on Mindfulness-based Meditation principles and practices, students will explore the mind-body connection informed by neuroscience research, emotional intelligence and mindfulness-based approaches, body-oriented, and contemplative approaches from other east/west disciplines of study. Integrative psychotherapy draws from a range of expressive/healing arts. Through both theoretical and experiential practices students will learn effective and appropriate applications of integrative processes in clinical work with individuals, couples, families and groups. Integrative therapy with diverse mental health issues and client populations will be taught through case examples, classroom activities, discussion and assignments. A strong ethical foundation for practice and the prevention of compassion fatigue will be established throughout the course. **3 credits**

***GRSW 621: Brief Dynamic Psychotherapy***

This course will focus on teaching the theory and practice techniques of brief psychodynamic psychotherapy. Major emphasis will be on one model of brief dynamic psychotherapy being, "Time Limited Dynamic Psychotherapy." The course will focus on the application of this dynamic theory to clinical social work practice. The course will focus on techniques utilized to effect

change. **3 credits**

***GRSW 622: Clinical Practice with Adolescents***

This course will focus on teaching clinical social work interventions with adolescents emphasizing a developmental, psychodynamic perspective. The course will focus on developing clinical skills that assist adolescents in dealing with derailed development. **3 credits**

***GRSW 623: Clinical Practice with Older Adults***

Emerging from what we learned through the Hartford Geriatric Enrichment Grant, this course has been designed as a graduate level specialty course on the clinical issues of aging. The course is an examination of aging and the interaction of the biological, psychological, emotional, spiritual, and social/economic factors. By focusing on clinical practice and case management with older adults and their families, the course will provide in-depth knowledge about assessment, diagnosis, treatment and evaluation. In counterpoint to the application of various psychological and cognitive measurement tools, students will discuss the clinical and ethical implications in relation to diversity and populations at risk. Theories of aging and models of intervention will be discussed and critiqued. The role of the clinical social worker will be examined in the various settings and agencies serving aged populations. The course is based on the strengths-based perspective and will provide a variety of viewpoints and case examples of best practice with older clients and their families. **3 credits**

***GRSW 625: Social Policy***

This course explores a wide range of dimensions pertaining to social welfare policy. The social problems to which policies respond are analyzed and situated within the political-economic structures that produce them. The content and effects of current social policy are examined, and alternative policies are considered. The connections between social policy and clinical social work practice are explored, as are various strategies for influencing social policy, including advocacy, mobilizing, and organizing. **3 credits**

***GRSW 626: Clinical Practice for the Treatment of Trauma***

This course will focus on an understanding of the psychophysiology of trauma and address clinical work with trauma clients. The course will explore trauma's impact on the organization of the self and its implications for treatment. **3 credits**

***GRSW 627: Clinical Practice in Schools***

This course examines the school as a social institution charged with educating and socializing children into American society (Allen-Mears, Washington & Welsh, 2000); and the role of the social worker in such a host setting. Attention is placed on clinical social work with children and adolescents in a school setting, including differential diagnosis and special education mandates. This course examines specific handicaps to learning and the differences between diagnosis and special education labeling. This course emphasizes roles and tasks of the social workers in helping students, schools and families adjust to and cope with special needs. We will explore the process of integrating social work values into a school setting. Emphasis will be placed on

evaluation of the effectiveness of school social work interventions. **3 credits**

***GRSW 628: Clinical Practice with People of Immigrant and Refugee Backgrounds***

This course provides an in-depth study of issues related to clinical social work practice with people of immigrants and refugees backgrounds. It is set in the macro context of understanding the experiences of migration and resettlement to the U.S. and to engagement with U.S. service delivery systems. intended to serve refugees and immigrants. Specific clinical skills and strategies for engaging and treating immigrant and refugee clients of immigrant and refugee backgrounds in various practice settings are emphasized, along with research findings on service utilization of immigrants and refugees. **3 credits**

***GRSW 629: Clinical Social Work Practice in Integrated Healthcare***

The objective of this course is to educate social work students in the direct practice of integrated behavioral health in primary care. Students will become knowledgeable of the roles of behavioral health providers working in primary care settings, theories and models of care, and cross-cultural issues. They will develop skills in engagement, assessment, intervention planning and implementation, and practice evaluation. Because the populations served in primary care settings span the spectrum of severity in both the physical and behavioral health dimensions, students will develop competencies in engaging and supporting patients across a range of health conditions. This includes the essential practice skills needed to effectively address the challenges of integrating services, care, and support for persons with health, mental health, and substance use problems. **3 credits**

***GRSW 633: Dialectical Behavior Theory***

This course provides a detailed understanding of the theoretical perspectives, empirical foundations, and treatment strategies of Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). DBT is an Empirically Supported Treatment (EST) approach for working with clients who have difficulty managing symptoms associated with Depression, Anxiety, Personality Disorders and Personality Disorder – Trait Specified Disorders (PD-TS), addictions, and dual diagnosis. DBT assists clinicians in expanding their expertise and effectiveness working with and supporting clients with dramatic interpersonal styles, difficulty regulating their reactions to external triggers, suicidal issues, and self-harm potential. It is a therapeutic approach that originated from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). Students will explore the theoretical basis of this approach, specific DBT interventions, and how to effectively with high-risk, complex, multi-need clients. Students will be encouraged and challenged to assess and critique how DBT aligns and conflicts with clinical social work practice and values. **3 credits**

***GRSW 634: Clinical Practice in Military Social Work***

This course assumes that students have a basic understanding of the military, service members, veterans and their families. The focus of the work in this course is the development of clinical competencies and use of professional self in military social work practice. This elective draws on theory and research informed strategies for military social work interventions with service members/veterans, couples, family members, and groups. Throughout the course, students will be expected to address their learning in the context of application to practice and leadership in the field. **3 credits**

**GRSW 645: Assessment and Differential Diagnosis**

This course will explore the dynamics of mental health assessment and differential diagnosis. Considering the biological, psychological, sociological and spiritual variables influencing behavior, students will gain a theoretical foundation for understanding and assessing mental health and mental health diagnoses. The impact of diversity, social justice, and social determinants of health on behavioral and mental health will be explored. Special emphasis in this course will be given to the complexity of mental health, and to the use and practical limitations of diagnostic systems, including the DSM-5.

**3 credits**

**GRSW 650: Clinical Supervision and Program Management**

This course identifies and examines central concepts, theories and models of clinical supervision and program management. Strategies and techniques for establishing, improving and maintaining the supervisory relationship as a mechanism for maximizing service to clients are considered. Special attention is given to organization dynamics and structure, to delineating the management function, and to issues of power and authority. Emphasis is on the dynamics of supervision, ethical and value principles, professional boundaries and supervision as a leadership function. **3 credits**

**GRSW 681: Social Work Practice Research**

This course focuses on developing the knowledge and skills of the student to be an evaluator of social work practice as well as to be an active participant in adding to the knowledge base of social work. Students will propose, carry out, and present research findings for both a quantitative and qualitative research project. Both research projects include writing a literature review, designing and implementing research methods including human subjects review, collecting and analyzing data, and synthesizing and writing research findings. An emphasis is placed on research writing skills, single system design, and practice and program evaluation. Discussed in the class are frameworks regarding evidence-based practice, diverse client systems, ethical research practice, and social justice. **3 credits**

**GRSW 682: Clinical Research Project**

The purpose of the clinical research project is to provide the student with an opportunity to independently conceptualize a research problem, formulate a research design, implement the research, analyze the data, address ethical and cultural considerations, and disseminate the findings. The project is a logical extension of required research courses (GRSW580 and GRSW681) and requires application, integration, and further development of previously acquired knowledge and skills from human behavior and the social environment, policy, and practice curriculum areas. The research must be relevant to clinical social work practice and demonstrate an original and clear contribution to the body of social work knowledge in the student's selected area of focus. The project should demonstrate the student's ability to integrate theory with research findings. **3 credits**

**GRSW 690: Topics**

The topics course will vary each semester offered and provide an in-depth study of particular issues, concerns and trends in social work. GRSW 690 is a clinical level elective. **3 credits**

**B. MSW Program Plans - Course Sequencing, please see**

<https://health.stthomas.edu/media-library/documents/mfcoh-msw-completion-options-2021.pdf>

**C. MSW Framework for Clinical Social Work Practice**

With an emphasis on clinical practice, clinical supervision, program management and practice-based research, the MSW program provides advanced professional study for people in the field of social work. The curriculum's focus on clinical social work practice develops practice skills in working with individuals, small groups and families dealing with problems such as poverty, discrimination, mental illness, developmental disability and oppression.

Grounded in the social work profession students at the advanced level deepen their understanding of social work identity as the lens through which they engage with advanced level theories and conceptual frameworks of human behavior and the social environment, models of multidimensional assessment and multiple frameworks for evidence informed intervention, particularly in the context of the therapeutic relationship.

Our definition of clinical social work articulates this perspective:

Drawing upon the definitions of clinical social work adopted by the National Association of Social Workers and the Council on Social Work Education, we define the practice of clinical social work in the following manner:

Clinical social work is the professional application of advanced social work theory and methods to help restore, maintain, and enhance bio-psycho-social-spiritual functioning in individuals, groups, families, and communities. It is built upon the foundation of generalist social work including respect for diversity, empowerment of client systems, and advocacy of social and economic justice for vulnerable populations. It utilizes the application of clinical knowledge and skills in multidimensional assessment, diagnosis and treatment of emotional, mental and behavioral disorders, conditions, and addictions with special attention devoted to a strengths and person-in-environment perspective.

There are several distinct features of our MSW Program's clinical curriculum:

- Required grounding in history and philosophy of the social work profession – at entry into our program all students take *GRSW 500: History and Philosophy of Social Work*
- Field placements that provide clinical supervision based on collaborative partnerships with a statewide network in clinical social work community settings.
- Clinically-engaged faculty who maintain clinical practice and/or have recognized clinical

expertise.

The content and experiences provided throughout the advanced clinical curriculum (Appendix C: MSW Program Plans) combine with the student's *on-going experience* with critical thinking, values and ethics, diversity and difference, and social justice, *to develop* their professional identities. Put another way, students develop their professional identities in myriad ways while synthesizing course content and integrating it with their personal experiences, classroom experiences and experiences in the field.

This living, dynamic engagement with the course content, reflective integration of knowledge, values and skills, and responsive, ethical interaction with social and individual contexts mirrors the clinical relationship itself, the centerpiece of our framework for advanced clinical practice, illustrated in Figure 1. The clinical relationship is also *alive* and *dynamic*. It requires high levels of self-awareness and authenticity so that clinicians can use *themselves* therapeutically in the process (recognize transference and counter-transference), *while simultaneously* 1) thinking critically and diagnostically, 2) developing and implementing treatment plans, 3) evaluating client outcomes, and 4) integrating macro perspectives in an *alive* and *dynamic* way [see Figure 1].

As they develop consciousness of their own interior structures and how dynamic they are, students' professional social work identities serve as important focal points for developing clinical relationships with a variety of clients across a range of client issues and agency contexts. It is this developmental process that is fostered, guided and nurtured through the advanced clinical curriculum.

Implicit in our definition of clinical practice and our program's operationalization of it is a high level of intellectual rigor and a commitment to the Catholic identities and the emphasis on leadership development by our institution.

Figure 1  
The Clinical Relationship: Core to Advanced Clinical Social Work Practice

