

**The Social Work Program  
Department of Sociology and Social Work  
Social Sciences Element**

**General Education Program  
Pacific Lutheran University**

**Framing Language and Program Goals**

Social work as a discipline and a program of professional education uses the ecological and strengths perspectives to advance its core values of social justice, service, the importance of human relationships, integrity, competence, and the dignity and worth of all persons. Social Work professionals work with individuals, groups, families, communities, and organizations to enhance their interpersonal competence and social functioning. The study of social work includes methods for working with diverse populations, theories of human behavior, policy, practice methods, ethics, research and evaluation for work in a global society.

**General Education Element Description**

**Investigating Human Behavior, Culture, and Institutions**

The social sciences investigate individual and collective human behavior, and the history, development and variation of human culture and institutions. To assure exposure to a wide variety of social science concepts, theories, and methods, students must select at least two courses chosen from different disciplines.

*Social Work: studies the relationships among individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations to facilitate change and promote social justice.*

As a Bachelor's level program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, we educate caring skillful generalists to be ethical agents for change. Social Work education is grounded in the liberal arts, socializes students to the profession of Social Work and equips them with the competence, knowledge, values and skills to work with client systems of all sizes in a global society.

**General Education Element Learning Outcomes**

The student will:

- identify the roles of a professional social worker;
- apply ethical principles in discussions of practice;
- use critical thinking in practice cases;
- incorporate diversity in understanding practice;
- develop advocacy stances about human rights and social and economic justice;
- experience and describe human behavior in the social environment; and,
- engage, assess, intervene and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, communities or organizations.

**Particular course outcomes**

While most students will select SOCW 101/190 or SOCW 175, a few students will explore the discipline by taking SOCW 245 or 250.

SOCW 101/190: Introduction to Social Work

Students will:

- identify the roles, skills, knowledge and values of a professional social worker;
- think critically about social inequalities, social policies, social problems, and diversity;
- know social work methods and apply them in case contexts; and,

- develop awareness of service, helping systems, and how agencies and governments work with vulnerable populations.

SOCW 175: January term on the Hilltop

Students will:

- identify the role of service in their lives, in the lives of social workers and others who help professionally, as well as in the lives of local officials and volunteers;
- think critically about social inequalities, social policies, social problems, and diversity; and,
- develop awareness of service, helping systems, and how agencies and governments work with vulnerable populations.

SOCW 245: Human Behavior in the Social Environment

Students will:

- build awareness of ethical principles in practice;
- use critical thinking in practice;
- incorporate diversity in practice;
- understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination;
- use research evidence to inform practice;
- utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the process of assessment;
- apply knowledge to understand person and environment; and,
- respond to context that shape practice.

SOCW 250: Social Policy I

Students will:

- recognize and manage personal values;
- use critical thinking in practice;
- gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups;
- understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination;
- analyze policies that advance social well-being; and,
- appreciate the historical development of the social work profession and the evolution of helping systems in America and in the world.

Alignment to the ILOs

**Critical reflection.** Critical thinking is part of all social work courses.

- Evaluate assumptions and consequences of different perspectives in assessing possible solutions to problems
- Understand and explain divergent viewpoints (such as those based upon political ideology, class, gender, diversity) and shape one's own position.
- Consider culturally appropriate practices

**Valuing.** In addition to personal values, students explore social work values, and the values of the various groups represented by their client systems.

- Articulate and critically assess one's own values, with an awareness of the communities and traditions that have helped to shape them.
- Recognize how others have arrived at values different from one's own, and consider their view charitably and with an appreciation for the context in which they emerged.
- Approach moral, spiritual and intellectual development as a life long process.

**Multiple Frameworks.** Generalist social work practice (ALL bachelor's level practice) relies on multiple methods and multiple systems levels, is pro-diversity, and grounded in ethics.

- Identify issues and problems facing people in every culture, seeking constructive strategies for addressing them.
- Cultivate respect for diverse cultures, practices and traditions.

