

REGULATIONS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK (MSW)

(See also General Regulations)

Any publication based on work approved for a higher degree should contain a reference to the effect that the work was submitted to the University of Hong Kong for the award of the degree.

Admission requirements

MSW 1. To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Social Work, candidates

- (a) shall comply with the General Regulations;
- (b) shall hold
 - (i) a Bachelor's degree with honours of this University; or
 - (ii) another qualification of equivalent standard from this University or from another University or comparable institution accepted for this purpose; and
- (c) shall satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination if required.

MSW 2. Candidates who do not hold a Bachelor's degree with honours of this University or another qualification of equivalent standard may in exceptional circumstances be permitted to register if they demonstrate adequate preparation for studies at this level and satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination.

Qualifying examination

MSW 3.

- (a) A qualifying examination may be set to test a candidate's formal academic ability or the candidate's ability to follow the courses of study prescribed. It shall consist of one or more written papers or their equivalent.
 - (b) Candidates who are required to satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination shall not be permitted to register until they have satisfied the examiners in the examination.
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Award of degree

MSW 4. To be eligible for the award of the degree of Master of Social Work, candidates shall

- (a) comply with the General Regulations; and
 - (b) complete the curriculum as prescribed in the syllabuses and satisfy the examiners in accordance with the regulations as set out below.
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Length of curriculum

MSW 5.

- (a) The curriculum shall extend over
 - (i) two academic years of full-time study; or
 - (ii) three academic years of part-time study
- (b) Candidates may be granted exemption of up to one core/specialized course in recognition of studies completed in related areas. Exemption will only be considered in special circumstances and each application for exemption will be considered on its own merit. The exempted course should be replaced by an additional elective course to meet the degree requirements.

Completion of curriculum

MSW 6. To complete the curriculum, candidates shall follow courses of instruction and complete satisfactorily all prescribed assignments and assessments of:

- (a) 10 core courses;
- (b) at least 2 electives from the Electives in Practice Domain;
- (c) 900 hours of field placement; and
- (d) a dissertation in accordance with MSW7 and MSW7.1.

as prescribed in the syllabuses.

Dissertation

MSW 7. Subject to the provision of Regulation MSW6(d), candidates shall submit the title of dissertation for approval by March 31 of the final academic year of study and shall submit the dissertation by not later than August 31 of the final academic year of study. The dissertation should not exceed 25,000 words. Candidates shall submit a statement that the dissertation represents their own work undertaken after registration as candidates for the degree.

MSW 7.1. Candidates who prefer not to complete a dissertation shall apply for approval from the Head of Department to complete alternative assignments as prescribed in the syllabuses. The application must be made by a date to be specified for the purpose.

Assessment

MSW 8.

- (a) Where so prescribed in the syllabuses, coursework, a dissertation or other assignments shall constitute part or whole of the examination for one or more courses.
- (b) Assessment of candidates' coursework during their studies may be taken into account in determining their result in each written examination paper; or, where so prescribed in the syllabuses, may constitute the examination of one or more courses.

MSW 9. Candidates who have failed to satisfy the examiners at their first attempt, whether by means of written examination papers or coursework assessment, may be permitted to present themselves for re-examination in the course or courses of failure.

MSW10. Candidates who have not satisfactorily completed any prescribed field placement may be permitted to undertake a supplementary period of field placement to be specified by the Head of the Department. Candidates who are not permitted to undertake the supplementary period of field placement or have failed to satisfy the examiners at their second attempt may be required to discontinue their studies.

MSW 11. Subject to the provision of Regulation MSW7, candidates who have failed to present a satisfactory dissertation may be permitted to submit a new or revised dissertation within an approved specified period.

MSW 12. Candidates who are unable because of illness to be present for one or more papers in any written examination may apply for permission to present themselves at a supplementary examination to be held before the beginning of the following academic year. Any such application shall be made on a form prescribed within two weeks of the first day of the candidates' absence from the examination.

MSW 13. Candidates who

- (a) have failed in half or more of the number of written papers or courses in any one examination; or

- (b) are not permitted to present themselves for re-examination in any written paper or any course examined by means of coursework assessment in which they have failed to satisfy the examiners under Regulation MSW 9; or
- (c) have failed to satisfy the examiners in any written paper or any course examined by means of coursework assessment at a second attempt; or
- (d) are not permitted to submit a new or revised dissertation under the provision of Regulation MSW 11;

may be required to repeat the year of study or discontinue their studies.

Assessment results

MSW 14. A list of candidates who have successfully completed all the degree requirements and are to be awarded the Master of Social Work shall be published. Candidates who have shown exceptional merit in the whole examination may be awarded a mark of distinction, and this mark shall be recorded in the candidates' degree diplomas.

SYLLABUSES FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

A. PURPOSE

The degree is designed to provide a up-to-date and comprehensive professional training in the theory and practice of social work for those who intend to make this their career or who are already in the profession.

B. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

- (a) The programme is offered in full-time, and/or part-time modes, and extends over two academic years or equivalent.
- (b) The programme covers 10 core courses, 2 elective courses from the Electives in Practice Domain, 900 hours of supervised field placement and a dissertation. For exemption from courses or completing alternative assignments from a dissertation, formal approval shall be obtained from the Department in accordance with the conditions set out in the Degree Regulations.
- (c) The 10 core courses shall include

SOWK6002	Social policy and administration
SOWK6003	Social work research
SOWK6004	Theory and practice of social work
SOWK6233	Law and social work
SOWK7001	Human behaviour and the social environment
SOWK7002	Social science theories for social work
SOWK6241	Abnormal psychology
SOWK6242	Communication, information technology and professional writing
SOWK6243	Social services management
SOWK6244	Introduction to communication and helping skills

- (d) The minimum of 2 elective courses shall be chosen from the Electives in Practice Domain.
- (e) Field placement (compulsory)
 SOWK6225 Field placement I
 SOWK6231 Field placement II
- (f) Dissertation
 A candidate shall be required to present a satisfactory dissertation or two additional elective courses in accordance with MSW7 and MSW7.1.
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C. ASSESSMENT

Ongoing assessment will be conducted to appraise the candidates' individual performance and will be designed according to learning objectives. They may include essays, portfolios, oral presentations, learning journals or others prepared individually or in groups, as coursework or examinations.

D. SYLLABUSES

Core Courses

SOWK6002. Social policy and administration

This course focuses on the basic concepts of social policy and the evaluation of policy development. The contents of the course includes: the definition, scope and content of social policy; the formation and development of social policy; the evolution of aims and principles in relation to the growth of social welfare, and the role of government in the field of social welfare; concepts of need and social welfare; the assessment of the effects of the social services and social policies on individual and social need; and the contributions made by political, professional and charitable bodies to the development of collective action to promote social welfare.

SOWK6003. Social work research

Emphasis is given to the need for, and practical application of, research in the social welfare field. To illustrate the major concepts, methods and goals of social work research, this course is designed to provide a basic grounding in research methodology. The course syllabus will include: measurement and explanation in social work research; problem definition and the formation of hypotheses; techniques of data collection; observation, interviews, use of service records and documentary materials; data analysis and report presentation. Evaluation of social work methods and social welfare programmes will also be discussed, using selected research studies in the field of social work, social policy and social administration.

SOWK6004. Theory and practice of social work

This course introduces social work values and ethics, and the helping process of social work. Current trends and perspectives in theory and practice, and methods of social work are compared and discussed. Selected models and approaches of each method, and a critical study of social work intervention theories and their application in the local context are examined. Important issues including human diversity, multicultural competence, and evidence-based practice are emphasized.

SOWK6233. Law and social work

On a practice level, the course aims to pass on legal analytical skills and knowledge to future front liners and administrators of welfare and human services so that clients (be it families in dissolution, children juvenile needing care protection and rehabilitation, labourers, the mentally ill and underdeveloped, those suffering under discrimination, public housing tenants, residents in urban renewal, consumers etc.) may be better served. On social policy level, the course aims to examine broad general social policy and human rights issues above mentioned and more (eg. the criminal justice system, privacy, bill of rights, the legal system and the Basic Law etc.) so that candidates may commit to improving the various systems including the legal system.

SOWK7001. Human behaviour and the social environment

This course provides a framework for understanding human behaviour in relation to the social environment. The life-span development of human beings and the interactions between individuals, systems and the environment will be emphasized. Core contents of the course cover: normal patterns of growth and psycho-social development; healthy personality and adjustment; life stresses and coping failures; psychological and socio-cultural influences in human behaviour; and the implications for social workers.

SOWK7002. Social science theories for social work

Social workers have to work with people from various walks of life, having multifarious problems of different nature. The problems faced by the social work clients are basically rooted from personal as well as societal causes. This course covers a multitude of social science knowledge, such as sociology, social welfare, political science or economics that provide analytical frameworks for social work candidates to understand the possible factors leading to the emergence of problems faced by people in society. Candidates can then analyze problems against the context at the global, society and community levels, that can enable them to devise more appropriate intervention in their future practice.

SOWK6241. Abnormal psychology

This course introduces the bases of clinical psychology through a broad survey of human abnormal behavior. The multiple causes of abnormal behavior will be viewed from a variety of theoretical perspectives. Current trends and research in the fields of mental health and psychopathology will be examined. Assessment, treatment and prevention will be discussed in the social work context.

SOWK6242. Communication, information technology and professional writing

This course aims 1) to enhance candidates' capacities in communicating effectively in English and Chinese with stakeholders from various backgrounds; 2) develop candidates' abilities in writing professional documents and communications in English and Chinese clearly; 3) introduce candidates to the use of information and communication technology especially for learning, academic writing, and practice purposes. Areas of study include identifying and correcting common errors, learning jargon, orally presenting opinions/arguments, writing professional documents. Topics in information technology include practical experience in using computer applications especially those available in the HKU computing and library system, and appreciation of how computers can be used to solve problems, organize and manage information. Assignments include short essays and speeches, role plays, mock case reports and project proposals, searching, organizing and presentation exercises.

SOWK6243. Social services management

The aim of this course is to enable candidates to understand the management concepts, theories and practice in managing services and people in human service organizations. It discusses the dynamics of quality improvements, strategic planning, monitoring and control, management information system, performance appraisal, supervision, stress management, teamwork, financial management and change. Special reference is made to the recent reforms in social service sector and its management implications.

SOWK6244. Introduction to communication and helping skills

This course focuses on the development of basic communication and helping skills used in direct social work practice. It emphasizes the theory and skills needed to conduct a successful interview and group session in a helping situation. The course demands self-reflection, active experimentation, and the integration of theory into practice. Candidates will learn basic concepts, skills and methods in the conscious, disciplined use of self within a purposeful intervention framework.

Field Placement**SOWK6225. Field placement I**

The field placement shall provide candidates with opportunities to learn, integrate and apply their practice skills. During such supervised practice candidates will carry out prescribed work in selected social agencies or institutions.

SOWK6231. Field placement II

The field placement shall provide candidates with opportunities to learn, integrate and apply their practice skills. During such supervised practice candidates will carry out prescribed work in selected social agencies or institutions.

Dissertation**SOWK6021. Dissertation**

Candidates shall present a dissertation on an approved topic which shall be either an account of empirical research or a critical exposition of existing knowledge. The title of the dissertation shall be presented for approval by March 31 of the final academic year of study and the dissertation shall be presented not later than August 31 of the final academic year of study. Candidates shall submit a statement that the dissertation represents their own work undertaken after registration as a candidate for the degree. The length of their dissertation should not exceed 25,000 words.

Electives in Practice Domain**SOWK6013. Aspects of handicap and rehabilitation**

This course will consider selected aspects of handicap and rehabilitation and will cover such areas as: the nature of handicap; the experience of handicap; the handicapped person within the family;

community attitudes and the problem of stigma; specific problems of handicapped people at different stages in the life cycle. The process of rehabilitation, its physical, social, psychological, educational and vocational aspects; habilitation versus rehabilitation; the holistic approach and the role of the social worker.

SOWK6022. Emotion-focused interventions: theory and practice

Social work practice recognizes the importance of the role of emotions in therapeutic change. This course will begin with a review of current theories and research on emotion-focused interventions before focusing on the application of these theories in the local setting. This is followed by an examination of the awareness, the arousal, and reorganization of the emotions in counselling and psychotherapy. Commonly encountered emotions in casework and group work practice like anger, fear, guilt, shame, sadness and grief will be examined. Moreover, the course aims to enhance candidates' self-awareness and competence in handling critical incidents in clinical practice.

SOWK6025. Family social work

This course helps the candidate to evolve a frame of reference for work within family situations. Various schools of thought for working in areas of parent-child, marital, and intergenerational exchanges are critically examined for their applicability to the local setting. The focus is on family structure and transactional processes. The course provides a working approach to the family's communicative, affective, relationship and role systems. Issues arising out of the course of the family life cycle as well as from family crises will be considered.

SOWK6035. Oncology, palliative and hospice care

Professionals in the field of medical and health settings are expected to be competent in oncology care, palliative and hospice care. The candidates will learn about the medical, psychological, social, spiritual and policy aspects of care for cancer patients and persons with terminal illness. Cultural, sociological and traditional approaches to death and dying as well as bereavement will be explored through candidate projects.

SOWK6037. Personal development and interpersonal communication

This course aims to help candidates discover and appreciate the individual uniqueness of every person. Through enhanced self-awareness and sensitivity, candidates can cultivate their personal strengths and learn to harness their own potentials. The course uses structured experiences, mini-lectures and group support to help the candidates acquire knowledge and skills facilitative of interpersonal communication.

SOWK6054. Social work with the mentally ill

The course would cover different theoretical orientations towards mental illness and its definition(s); the relationships between mental illness and environmental conditions; current models of service provision for persons with mental illness; the concept of professional 'teamwork' with particular relation to the mentally ill; the professional role and necessary skills for the social worker working with mentally ill people and their families.

SOWK6055. Special topics in social work - A

Any specific topics in social work that reflect current topical and changing needs in the community.

SOWK6056. Special topics in social work - B

Any specific topics in social work that reflect current topical and changing needs in the community.

SOWK6057. Special topics in social work - C

Any specific topics in social work that reflect current topical and changing needs in the community.

SOWK6062. The Satir model and family reconstruction

Human behaviour is heavily influenced by family upbringing and socialization. This course, based on a marathon experiential training mode, aims to help students to achieve an understanding of their family. Virginia Satir's concepts of family rules, communication patterns, family mapping and self-esteem will be used to guide students through a process of self-discovery. Active participation will be essential.

SOWK6065. Working with youth at risk and juvenile offenders

This course will focus on the various approaches in working with delinquents and young people experiencing emotional or behavioral problems. To facilitate skills development, emphasis will be placed on experiential learning through the use of simulated exercises, games and role-play. Throughout the course, case and group examples will be drawn from a variety of local practice settings-probation, residential facilities for juvenile offenders, correctional services, outreach work and school social work.

SOWK6066. Young people in the juvenile justice system

This course will begin with a critical review of the current state of theory and research on youth problems and delinquency. It will then go on to evaluate existing policies and services directed at youth at risk and juvenile offenders in indigenous context. Finally it will explore current issues in the field of youth policy and juvenile justice, particularly the development overseas of new programme initiatives. Special emphasis will be given to the relevance of these issues and programmes within the local context.

SOWK6069. Aging and society

Hong Kong society, like other developed countries, has been facing the challenge of an aging population. The elderly people are having special needs in health care, financial arrangement, housing, social recreation, consumption, etc. The society should devise appropriate policies, practices, facilities, etc. accordingly to meet with the challenge of an expanding elderly population. This course provides analytical frameworks for candidates to understand the multifarious needs of the elderly and the relevant practice models in the various policy domains, to enable candidates to engage in related fields of practice in various professions.

SOWK6078. Family as a resource: an intellectual and a personal examination

Socrates said “know thyself”; we say “know thy family”. Based on theories of family systems and social studies on family roles and gender politics, this course examines the powerful forces of family and society in shaping our personality, value orientations, life goals, expectations about interpersonal relationships, and aspirations about future families. Through intellectual understanding of these dynamics and personal reflections, candidates will reexamine the impact of their families on them, to shape and reshape their current and future family life to their greater satisfaction, and to unlock the treasure of this great resource, which has become the first and the last emotional refuge in modern living.

SOWK6079. Financial development and management for social service organizations

This course introduces and examines concepts and practices critical to good financial management of social service organizations. The focus is on preparing candidates to understand the financial activities and reports essential to management and to analyze and use financial information in planning, budgeting and measuring results to promote the organization’s mission and goals. Fund-raising will also be discussed.

SOWK6084. Intervention in health care settings

Social intervention approaches used in health care such as crisis intervention, grief work, self-help group, art therapy, community education skills, hospice, and home care will be examined. Candidates will be provided with experiential training on skills/techniques in working with patients in hospitals and in the community.

SOWK6087. Managing people in human services

This course introduces concepts for the understanding of organization behaviour and emphasizes on the application of these concepts and the skills in managing people in non-profit making organizations. This course is particularly suitable for candidates who have not taken any management courses before but will be soon required to take up people management responsibility as a team leader or supervisor in the course of their own professional career development. The topics will include basic concepts on management functions, purposes of a managerial position and the roles of a manager; and skills in managing subordinates including motivation, morale, leadership, coaching, performance management and disciplinary actions.

SOWK6097. Social skills training for human service personnel

This course will consider the theoretical foundation of social skills training. The relevance of social skills training to different areas of human service practice including teamwork and staff training will be discussed. Skills in working with individuals and groups in human service settings will be practiced. The course will be run in form of lectures, demonstrations, class discussion and exercises.

SOWK6101. Understanding and working with young people

This course examines the developmental characteristics and needs of young people and their actualization in the local context. Special focus is put on understanding the contemporary local youth culture and how it reveals the needs of the young people. Major models and concepts in youth work are introduced. Working skills with young people implied from these models and concepts are also introduced. This course is especially suitable for candidates who intend to join the fields that work with young people.

SOWK6102. Violence in intimate relationships

The issue of violence in intimate relationships (e.g. domestic violence & violence in dating) is examined through multi-lenses. The course introduces the nature of the different kinds of violence in intimate relationships. The knowledge and skills necessary to understand the dynamics of violent behavior are taught. How to assess violence, how to identify appropriate intervention strategies, and how to apply such related skills are examined. A particular emphasis is given to the relationship between violence and gender issues.

SOWK6126. Group treatment

This course will examine the use of small group to provide professional service to client populations manifesting various behavioral or relationship difficulties. Selected treatment approaches and their relevance will be examined in the context of candidates' work situations.

SOWK6136. Adventure-Based Counselling: theory and practice

Adventure-Based Counselling (ABC) is a popular contemporary approach employed to work with people in order to assist their building and/or promoting of a positive self-concept, improve their interpersonal relationship and enhance their problem-solving abilities. Although it is especially popular among working with young people, it can also be used in working with different age groups, families and couples. This course aims to introduce the basic theories and practices of ABC. Besides introducing the theoretical base of the approach, how to design and run sessions of ABC will also be taught. Some micro skills in conducting ABC sessions will be introduced. Last, but not least, the quality of an ABC facilitator and the ethical considerations in employing ABC to work with people will be discussed in the course. The format of the course includes lectures, seminars and ABC workshops for candidates to participate and experience the process.

SOWK6172. Human service development, promotion, and evaluation

As society increasingly emphasizes accountability of human services, the organizations providing such services have to develop, improve and deliver these services in a more cost-effective and cost-efficient way to satisfy the changing needs of the citizens. This course examines the roles of social marketing and market research in the human services through application of the principles and practices learned. This course provides candidates with some essentials - values, knowledge and skills - in human service development, promotion, distribution and evaluation. The candidates will have the opportunity to develop and apply decision-making and analytical skills relevant to the functions of social marketing and market research within the human services.

SOWK6202. Systemic approach to marital therapy

This course utilizes a system perspective in the introduction of marital therapy, divorce therapy and mediation services in working with couples. An effective marital counsellor relies on a solid integration of knowledge, skills, philosophical reflection of the issues in intimacy and genuine human compassion. This course will cover the basic theoretical framework of marital therapy, divorce therapy and mediation services in working with couples in the local context. Simultaneously, the candidates will be stimulated to exercise active reflection on one's own values, personal experiences and philosophical stance in the treatment of marital problems. A synthesis of clinical wisdom in practice will be emphasized.

SOWK6234. Bullying, aggression and resilience

The issue of bullying and aggression in adolescents and adulthood is examined through multiple perspectives. An introduction to the prevalence of bullying, current theories and research on the etiology of bullying and aggression in school and workplace will be discussed. A model of resilience is adopted to rebuild the vocabulary of strengths and the culture of support. Candidates will be trained to equip risk assessment and management, crisis intervention, counseling skills, group therapy and institutional management in handling bullying. Particular emphasis is given to gender issues.

SOWK6235. Separation, divorce and remarriage

This course aims at enhancing candidate's understanding of (1) the psychological and social implications of separation, divorce and remarriage; (2) the separation/ divorce/ remarriage decision making process and the considerations involved; (3) legal issues related to separation, divorce and remarriage (grounds for divorce, custody and maintenance, adoption, etc.); (4) the characteristics, dynamics and needs of single parent families and stepfamilies; and (5) intervention approaches relevant to working with divorced and remarried families.

SOWK6237. Use of creative arts in social work practice

Arts is a natural form of communication that offers a way to express feelings and thoughts in a manner that is less threatening than strictly verbal means. Creative arts have powerful healing potentials in self-discovery, expression of feelings, insight stimulation, relaxation and communication. Creative arts can be utilized as effective medium in social work intervention to develop people in a holistic connection of body, mind and spirit. This course will provide an opportunity for the candidates to experience the use of creative arts for personal growth and inner exploration. Theory will be introduced in lecture and then integrated with practice through experiential exercises and sharing of reflections. The application of creative arts in individual counseling and group work will be shared through case studies, life demonstration and video analysis. Different art media will be introduced in this course e.g. visual art, craft work, music, dramatic exercises, and body movement.

SOWK6238. Cognitive-behavioral therapies for people with mental illness

This course introduces the cognitive-behavioral perspectives in understanding the major types of mental illness such as depression, anxiety disorders and schizophrenia. The candidates will also learn about the process and cognitive-behavioral strategies for treating people with such illnesses. A process approach will be adopted which implies that candidates will have to work with a client using the cognitive-behavioral treatment process taught in the class and share their experiences concerning the progress of the treatment sessions.

SOWK6245. Working with ethnically diverse communities in Hong Kong

The 2006 Population By-census found (by way of self-identification) that there were about 342,000 non-Chinese people in Hong Kong, or about 5% of the population. Historically, people arrived in the territory from across the globe as colonisers, merchants, soldiers, low paid manual workers, domestic workers, professionals or for family reunion thus starting at different rungs of the social ladder. This gave rise to its multicultural flavour and justifiably becoming 'Asia's world city'. However, not all migrants have benefited from this miraculous growth. Some were pushed to the margins, excluded or made invisible. This course will benefit those who work with members of ethnic minority communities, intending to do so or who are curious about racial discrimination and multiculturalism in Hong Kong. Topics discussed include stigma, discrimination and prejudice in the context of history, gender, culture and religion of members of ethnic minority communities, new arrivals or immigrant families. Lectures, group and panel discussions as well as field visits will constitute the learning process.

SOWK6246. Working with people with disabilities

Social workers who work with people with disabilities nowadays should have critical mind and self-reflective attitudes to meet the challenges from the changing field of disabilities. To enhance quality of life of people with disabilities, social workers should have sensitivity to understand situations of individuals with disabilities, and have substantial knowledge of intervening in different levels of environments. Providing candidates an insightful learning process, this course uses interactive and experiential activities besides traditional one-way lectures. Guests, including friends with intellectual disabilities, friends with physical handicap, their carers and social workers, will be invited to come to the class to share their life experience. This course introduces candidates the paradigm shift in the field, the evolution of services affecting people with disabilities, and contemporary approaches to provide services to people with disabilities.

SOWK6247. Counselling for older adults and their families

This is a practice course for candidates who are interested in gaining knowledge and skills of counseling older people and their families. A multidimensional framework including the bio-psychosocial, developmental, family, ecological and spiritual perspectives will be adopted for assessment and intervention. The challenges and coping of the individual older adults and their families in face of the common 3Ds – depression, dementia and death will be examined in the context of care giving. Concepts about intimacy and connectedness in the dynamics of aged couples and also those between the adult children and their aged parents will be discussed.

Electives in Analytical Domain

SOWK6016. Comparative social administration

The course is designed to introduce the comparative study of social policy in selected countries in the world, and to examine the provision of social development programmes and social services for analysis and evaluation in cross-country case studies.

SOWK6029. Human sexuality

Why is sex so fascinating and yet so difficult to talk about? To what extent is 'sex' a 'natural' drive? What does 'sex' have to do with 'love'? What makes a 'good' lover? How do ideas about gender, class, religion and ethnicity affect our decisions about who we should and should not have sex with? Why are there so many 'problems' with sex? And for whom are they 'problems'? What's the problem with being 'promiscuous', being 'gay', being 'top' or 'bottom'? Why are there so many moral and legal prohibitions on something so 'private'?

This course introduces students to different approaches of understanding sexuality from evolutionary theory to post-structuralism. It draws on current studies in anthropology, sociology, political philosophy, and cultural studies on sexuality to examine the changing meanings of sexuality in our society.

SOWK6034. Medical knowledge for social sciences students

Chronic illness, pain, accidents, and terminal illness are a major source of stress in contemporary society. It is important for students to be knowledgeable about the human body and its common illnesses. The objectives of this course include: to familiarize students with the disease patterns in local context, to study common diseases which present major health hazards, and to acquire a basic understanding of the medical language. No prior knowledge in medicine is required. A basic understanding of human biology will be an advantage.

SOWK6048. Social welfare in China

This course facilitates students to understand the nature and seriousness of current social problems in China such as aging population, widening income disparities, floating population, persistent poverty, women status, family breakdown, and unemployment, in the context of rapid market-oriented economic reforms. The course also provides an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing social welfare system.

SOWK6058. Special topics in social work - D

Any specific topics in social work that reflect current topical and changing needs in the community.

SOWK6059. Special topics in social work - E

Any specific topics in social work that reflect current topical and changing needs in the community.

SOWK6076. Evaluation of social services

This course will introduce students to a variety of approaches used to evaluate social services. Students will learn how evaluation techniques can help social service personnel respond to the growing demand for accountability, given that appropriate measures have been taken to collect and analyze data in order to inform decision making. These techniques include: evaluability assessment, designing goals and objectives, choosing an evaluation approach and developing process and outcome measures. Through the course materials, students come to understand the necessity of grounding evaluation approaches within an organization context and the practical issues that arise while implementing an evaluation and using evaluation results.

SOWK6134. Current social policy issues

This course will examine the issues of current social policy including privatization of welfare services, the impact of ideology of welfare on welfare development, the issue of equity and equality in welfare provision, community care and service needs of the migrant population. Different theories of welfare will be discussed in relation to local welfare issues.

SOWK6157. Government and policies of social services

This course explores alternative approaches to understanding the political, economic, and social dynamics that influence social policy and the implications of these dynamics for social reform. The formation of political responses to human problems and the impact of such responses on social policy will be discussed with reference to the local context.

SOWK6185. Qualitative research methods

This course is designed for candidates with an interest in understanding all aspects of social life and social relations especially those who will undertake a dissertation study. Starting with the question “what is reality?”, the course begins with an introduction to different perspectives on approaching reality, followed by an assessment of the general strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research in comparison with other conventions such as quantitative surveys. The lectures will focus on introducing the general process of ethnographic research and the variety of methods for data collection and analysis including ethnography, grounded theory, observation, interviewing, focus groups and narrative analysis, etc. Various cases will be used to demonstrate how qualitative research helps make meaningful policy and social work practice. Seminars will be organized around practical methodological issues with the objective of helping candidates proceed with their own research projects. Hands-on experience of a range of research techniques will also be provided.

SOWK6236. Medical aspect of psychiatric illness

This is an introductory course on the medical aspect of psychiatric illness. The course covers an understanding of the various bio-medical models on the causes and treatments of different types of mental illnesses and mental health problems. It will also introduce to candidates the current mental health services in Hong Kong. A critical review of the strengths and limitations of the bio-medical models will be carried out as well.

SOWK6248. Addictive behavior

This course introduces the growing body of knowledge on pathological addictive behaviours. Topics to be covered include drug abuse, alcoholism, computer addiction, and compulsive buying. Various models on the biological, psychological, and social factors related to the course of addiction will be explored. Assessment, treatment, and prevention strategies will also be discussed.

Not all elective courses will necessarily be offered in a given year.
