

**BOSTON COLLEGE**  
**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

(Updated 3.16.2021)

MSW ELECTIVE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS  
2021-2022

SCWK 7719 Borderlands and Human Mobility: The Challenge of Justice and Care (Group Independent Study)  
(Summer)

SCWK 7701

This course will analyze borderlands dynamics and their impact on international human mobility, different regions' social policies, and social services. Recently, global border regions have taken front and center in discussions of migration and forced migration. Emerging nationalistic sentiments have fostered policies to increase surveillance and control along border regions. Border regions remain lively as local and foreign populations interact and try to navigate the effects of migration controls. This course provides students the opportunity to understand and analyze different contexts in border regions. It also allows students to identify vulnerable populations in these settings and reflect on the impact of social work practice, both in the governmental and non-governmental sectors. This course requires participation in three sessions before departure (one in-person and two online), eight days of immersion in a specific location (Sunday- Sunday), and one additional session upon return.

Note: Due to the current pandemic and the limitations on travel, pending University and BCSSW approval, this course may be offered in Washington, D.C. The days for the immersion will comprise different sessions and encounters with organizations on the ground. An application process will limit the course to 12 students.

SCWK 7724 Neurobiology of Stress Reduction and Resilience (Summer/Spring)

SCWK 7721

This course examines the ways in which stress poses risk to healthy biological, psychological and social development. Using life course perspective and ecological systems theory (micro through macro), the course also highlights the characteristics, relationships, and contexts that increase resilience at each life stage (in utero through end of life). Circumstances relevant to social work (including but not limited to prenatal stress, trauma, bullying, violence, poverty and homelessness) are examined through the dual lenses of stress and resilience. Neuroscientific, genetic and related

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addressed within various stages of development. No background in the biological sciences is required.

SCWK 7727 Substance Use Disorders (Summer/Fall)

SCWK 7721

A course providing an overview of alcohol/drug use, abuse, and addiction. Issues covered include high risk populations, poly-drug abuse, and families with alcohol-related problems. Several models and theories are examined and integrated with relevant treatment techniques and settings.

SCWK 7729 Public Health Social Work (Fall)

SCWK 7721

Public health social work (PHSW) emphasizes health promotion and prevention as well as targeting populations through population-based strategies. The course integrates research on health topics, populations, and settings to learn about the field of PHSW and application of skills to real-world problems. A life course perspective is used to discuss health behaviors and outcomes through all stages of development and across a range of settings. The aim of the course is to provide students a unique perspective on social work from the field of public health by focusing on health promotion, prevention, and reducing disparities at the population-level.

SCWK 7733 Working with LGBTQ Youth, Families and Adults (Summer)

SCWK 7721

This course blends macro and clinical practice in order to service LGBTQ people most effectively. Students will learn about policies, laws and societal narratives that impact LGBTQ people in both positive and negative ways. The course focuses on the integration of macro and clinical issues and best practice that respects all people regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation. Particular attention will focus on developmental models of gender identity and sexual orientation.

SCWK 7735 Social Determinants of Health and Mental Health (Spring)

SCWK 7721

While individual-level health behaviors like diet and physical activity get the most attention as determinants of health (both mental and physical), the majority of a person's health status is determined at a level beyond their direct control. These higher-level risk factors are disproportionately distributed in the population, such that already vulnerable populations are systematically exposed to risks across the life course that create and exacerbate social inequalities in physical and mental health. This course will enhance clinical and macro social work students' understanding of how population-level social factors shape their clients' physical and mental health. The class will provide social workers with tools to a) apply the biopsychosocial approach at a population level to examine the social origins of physical and mental health condit



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placed on clinical interventions for individuals and groups that are supported by current and emerging research

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for their applications to, and usefulness for, social work practice as they reflect particular sets of values and intersect with ethnicity, social class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, and other forms of diversity.

SCWK 8838 Dismantling Organizational Bias through Evidence- Based Practice (Spring)  
SCWK 7721

This advanced skills course will build on the foundation of the first year diversity course. Anticipated outcomes will be to give MSW student's meaningful skill sets in facilitating difficult dialogue, identifying and managing conflict, analyzing and assessing team dynamics, and coaching diverse teams to success. This course is open to both macro and clinical students.

SCWK 8839 HBSE Independent Study (Summer/Fall/Spring)  
SCWK 7721

An opportunity to pursue an in-depth study of some aspect of human behavior theory or knowledge. The study must be designed so that it contributes to the student's understanding of the individual, group, organizational, institutional, or cultural context within which human behavior is expressed and by which it is significantly influenced. The area of investigation must be of clear significance to the contemporary practice of social work. Any student who has successfully completed the foundation course in Human Behavior and the Social Environment is eligible to pursue independent study.

SCWK8840 Climate Change and Environmental Justice: Implications for Social Work (Fall)  
SCWK 8800

One of the key Grand Challenges of Social Work is to explore pathways to "create social responses to a changing environment". Thus, exploring interactions of environment, climate, and communities, and engaging and addressing these inequities for vulnerable poor households is needed more than ever. This course is designed as a seminar to give students an in-depth understanding of environment and climate change and its interface with communities, and its impact on vulnerable populations in North America and the Global South (particularly South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa). Topics discussed in this course will explore current literature and evidence on the interactions between ecological and social systems. Students will learn about the debates and issues foregrounding the need to view ecology and human society as a whole in order to understand and prepare for environmental and climate change.

SCWK 8847 Creating the Inclusive Workplace: Topics in Organizational Justice (Summer)  
: SCWK 7721

Organizational justice is the idea that justice not only should govern the behavior of individuals, but also nonprofit and for profit work environments. This justice is complex and must take into account diversity and its myriad interactions in the workplace. This course is designed to allow students space to explore both the tensions of race, class, gender inequities in the context of creativity and change management. This course will also review how health and wellbeing play a role in employee productivity and organizational effectiveness.

SCWK 8849 Independent Study in Research (Fall)

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### SCWK 8851 Policy Analysis Research for Social Reform (Summer) SCWK 7701

A seminar preparing students for practice-oriented policy analysis research roles. It offers advanced research content of particular use to administrators, planners, advocates, and others interested in participating in policy analysis and development efforts, particularly those related to vulnerable populations. It provides knowledge of and opportunity to apply the following: (1) the logic of inquiry into social policy issues; (2) policy analysis research methods (e.g., population projections, input-output analysis, cost-effectiveness analysis); and (3) writing skills and quantitative reasoning necessary to use data and policy research methods creatively in making effective policy arguments.

### SCWK 8857 Group Therapy for Children and Adolescents (Summer/Spring) SCWK 7762

This course will prepare students to design and facilitate experiential skills-based groups with both children and adolescents. Building on first-year foundational content this course prepares students to learn how to facilitate skills-based group therapy with youth. Several guiding theories, including (CBT, DBT, Solution Focused Therapy, Narrative Therapy and Motivational Interviewing), will be integrated with multiple experiential activities as vehicles for the engagement in the interventions. Most guiding theories dominate a minimum of two weeks in the syllabus to ensure depth of learning and exploration of possibilities for theory into practice. The experiential activities will include music, adventure, bibliotherapy, art therapy, and technology to assist in the engagement of clients in the learning process and will be utilized throughout the course. Assignments challenge students to develop two innovative original experiential group sessions and demonstrate competence in facilitating both of their group sessions.

### SCWK 8858 Clinical Practice in Schools (Spring) SCWK 7762

An advanced clinical course that provides a comprehensive overview of the necessary skills to prepare students for effective communication with teachers and school personnel as well as with diverse families on issues related to assessment, building family partnerships, family-based treatment, and multicultural issues. The course reviews assessment and use of state-of-the-art diagnostic testing instruments. Given the relationship between school social work and special education, students will be exposed to the diverse populations served in schools and learn how to engage in practice with children with a variety of issues, including learning, physical, behavioral, developmental, neurological, and emotional disabilities.

### SCWK 8860 Couples Therapy (Summer/Spring) SCWK 7762

An advanced course examining and analyzing theories, research, and interventions with couples. The use of cognitive, behavioral, emotion-focused, brief treatment, and skills-training approaches are critically evaluated. Research on their empirical bases is examined. Emphases include working with couples from diverse cultural backgrounds, practice with same-sex couples, and special issues such as living with chronic illness, poverty and economic stress, facing divorce, infidelity, interpersonal violence, and sexual dysfunctions. The course will describe how to adapt couple-based assessments and interventions to various settings, such as acute medical, psychiatric, and child-focused settings.

### SCWK 8862 Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (Summer/Fall/Spring) SCWK 7762

An advanced practice course that integrates CBT theory, practical assessment tools, and treatment applications with work with children and adults. Lab skills classes will provide students with the opportunity to practice specific techniques. With an emphasis on the

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with populations at risk confronting issues of age, race/ethnicity, gender, class, religion, sexual orientation, and disability will be addressed.

SCWK 8864 Group Therapy (Summer/Fall)  
SCWK 7721

This course considers many applications of social work group treatment. Through a thoughtful review of selected group therapy literature, analysis of process recordings of group therapy sessions, lectures, class discussion, and role-play exercises, students will develop an appreciation of the unique ways in which group treatment can promote individual psychosocial competence. Students will develop skills in the practice of social work treatment.

SCWK 8865 Family Therapy (Summer /Spring)  
SCWK 7762

An advanced course designed to integrate family therapy theories of practice and intervention techniques. Throughout the course critical issues relative to power, gender, and race will be interwoven with outcome effectiveness, research, and evaluation. Emphasis will be placed on the adaptation of the family process to the stressors of chronic illness, aging, addictions, and interpersonal violence. The strengths and problems of minority families, families living in poverty, blended families, adoptive families, and families of same sex parents will be reviewed.

SCWK 8867 Internal Family Systems Therapy (Fall/Spring)  
SCWK 7762

This advanced clinical course focuses on Internal Family Systems, a non-pathologizing approach to identifying and unburdening the faulty beliefs and patterns of interaction that people carry from childhood trauma and replacing them with self-





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more responsive service delivery system.

### SCWK 8881 School Social Work: Program Development & Educational Policies (Fall) SCWK 8800

An advanced course that provides a comprehensive overview of the history, theory, practice and policy of social work in an educational setting. Beginning with a historical perspective, this course is rooted in school social work principles that emphasize collaborative work with families, school and community personnel, professional standards, and diverse practice roles. This course provides a comprehensive overview of education policy and the legal rights of students and their families. Special issues in school social work practice related to health, child abuse, school safety and violence, trauma, substance abuse, and high risk behavior are addressed.

### SCWK 8884 Strategic Planning for Public & Nonprofit Organizations (Spring) SCWK 8800

Focusing on the strategic trends and issues which impact the public and nonprofit sectors, this course explores the role of strategic planning as a fundamental tool of public and nonprofit institutions to build high performance organizations, maximize organizational strengths, and enhance community problem-solving. Students will acquire practical skills through case study analysis and the development of a strategic plan.

### SCWK 8887 Global Child Protection (Summer) SCWK 8800

This course introduces the systems in which children, families, groups, organizations, and communities thrive and struggle in international settings. In particular the course focuses on child protection in the context of vulnerable international settings and complex humanitarian emergencies including famine, conflict and displacement. The role of social work and allied professions in such settings is explored with emphasis on the principle of 'do no harm'. The International child protection policies of Governments, United Nations agencies and International Non-Government agencies will be presented and analyzed. Strategies for translating these policies into best practice will include identifying child protection concerns and developing rigorous international child protection programs.

### SCWK 8888 Community Organizing and Political Strategies (Summer) SCWK 8800

An examination of community organization and political strategies for mobilizing support for human services and other interventions that enhance social well-being, especially that of vulnerable populations. The course emphasizes skill development in strategies of community organization and policy change, including neighborhood organizing, committee staffing, lobbying, agenda setting, use of media, and points of intervention in bureaucratic rule making.

### ADVANCED FIELD-OF-PRACTICE COURSES: LIMITED ELECTIVE OPTIONS

On a space-available basis, Advanced Practice Field-of-Practice courses may be elective options for students in other Fields-of-Practice

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building sustainable systems. Students will be exposed to “rights-based approaches” to social work practice mainly in countries of the global south. Areas of focus include working with vulnerable populations such as children in a variety of settings, gender issues, migration as well as working with various NGOs, governmental and United Nations systems. Emphasis will be placed on working with diverse client populations in each practice setting.

Fall Semester: Final Year students only

SCWK 8806 Global Policy Issues and Implications (Fall)

SCWK 7701

Required for Global Practice Field-of-Practice; elective for others.

An advanced policy course that introduces approaches, issues, and competencies of global social work policy interventions. This course focuses on policy analysis in the context of world-wide poverty, underdevelopment, and sustainable development. In the context of social justice, equality, universal human rights and international collaboration (partnerships), it perceives global systems and their policies as both a challenge for a sustainable planet and for the growth of its interdependent national/local communities.

SCWK 8823 Practice in Health and Mental Health Settings with Older Adults (Fall)

SCWK 7762 and SCWK 8800

SCWK 9933 or SCW 9943 or permission

Required for Older Adults and Families Field-of-Practice; elective for others.

An advanced course designed

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SCWK 8873 Integration of Behavioral Health and Medical Care Practice (Fall)

SCWK 7762

SCWK 9933 or permission

Required of Clinical Social Work students in the Health Field-of-Practice; elective for others.

An advanced course that utilizes the biopsychosocial model of assessment of individual and family response to illness. In addition, the course will address issues in behavioral and complementary and alternative medicine. The effect of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status on health, health care treatments, and health care availability to diverse populations will also be addressed. Finally, the importance of social work contributions to research in health care will be examined.

SCWK 8874 Adult Psychological Trauma: Assessment and Treatment (Fall)

SCWK 7762

SCWK 9933 or permission

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