

SOCIAL WELFARE (SOCW)

SOCW 6300 Quantitative Reasoning/Social Statistics

The primary goals of this course are (1) to provide students with a solid understanding of the logic of social science research as well as (2) to provide students with an introduction to a broad range of statistical methods commonly used in social science research. The first portion of the semester concentrates on defining research problems, research design (including sampling, measurement, and causal inference), and assessing research quality. The latter portion of the semester focuses upon data analysis including descriptive statistics, measures of association for categorical and continuous variables, introduction to t-tests, ANOVA and regression, and the language of data analysis. Students will learn how to choose and apply statistical tools to data sources, how to interpret quantitative studies, and will gain experience using SPSS - a statistical software package.

Fall

Also Offered As: MSSP 6300

1 Course Unit

SOCW 6680 Economics for Social Policy

Economics allows us to determine the costs and benefits of social policies like cash benefits, unemployment insurance, health insurance, pensions, education, etc. Policies typically affect the behavior of agents like individuals, families and firms, and we have to take these reactions into account when analyzing policy. Economics allows us to predict how policy is likely to affect behavior by understanding how the policy changes individuals' decisions, and what collective outcomes these myriad individual decisions bring about. For example, a universal basic income allows individuals to sustain themselves and their families when they are not working. At the same time, such guaranteed income has the potential to discourage people from looking for a job. If enough people are discouraged from looking for a job, employment in the economy will decrease, leading to lower production and lower tax revenues for the government. Policy makers have to take these phenomena into account in order to design a good income support system.

Fall, Spring, and Summer Terms

Also Offered As: MSSP 6680, SWRK 6680

1 Course Unit

SOCW 8030 Advanced History and Philosophy of Social Welfare

This seminar traces the evolution of social welfare from ancient to modern times focusing on its implications for the development of contemporary social welfare in the United States. The course examines the development of social welfare systems and the underlying philosophies in the context of the social, economic, political, and cultural environments in which they emerged. Topics include the evolution of modern conceptions of the "welfare state," the role of public, private and voluntary sectors in the social services, trends in social and family history and their relationship to social welfare, the professionalization of social work, and methods of historical and social policy analysis.

Spring

1 Course Unit

SOCW 8110 Social Theory

Course reading consists of the original works of theorists who offer classical, contemporary and postmodern perspectives on social thought, social interaction and issues germane to social welfare. Through intensive examination of multiple theoretical frameworks, students are expected to increase their analytical and critical orientation to theory. This more nuanced understanding about epistemology, underlying assumptions, and theory construction can then be used to inform the student's substantive field of study and methodological orientation to research. This course is conducted in mixed lecture-seminar format. Students have the opportunity to practice pedagogical techniques and exercise class leadership.

Spring

1 Course Unit

SOCW 8520 Social Welfare Research Methods

This is the foundation course in social work research. It deals with the nature of scientific inquiry; theory and its relation to research design and hypothesis testing; and various models of data collection, sampling, and analysis of research and is supported in following personal interests within the structure of ethical scientific research. Each student prepares an original study which demonstrates integration of the semester's work. Students learn to work on their own. Students completing this class are prepared for more advanced coursework in research. Completion of concurrent enrollment in a course on introductory Social Statistics is required.

Fall

1 Course Unit

SOCW 8550 Advanced Social Welfare Research Methods

The methodology of accountability research in human service programs is studied. Emphasis is placed on social program evaluation, idiographic research, and secondary data analysis in policy research as specialized methods of social work research. Students undertake a laboratory experience in an ongoing program evaluation project.

Spring

Prerequisite: SOCW 8520

1 Course Unit

SOCW 8610 Advanced Policy Analysis Research Methods

This course examines how policy research methods are applied to the study of contemporary social issues. The course is intended for students with a basic knowledge of regression, and will be especially useful for students with practical experience in a policy setting who want to learn about advanced research methods. The course begins by exploring policy analysis frameworks, and the contexts of social policy and social policy research. The remainder of the course explores a variety of common approaches to the conduct of social policy research by looking at the types of questions social policy analysts most frequently ask, and the types of answers that they are most often able to provide. The policy analysis approaches we will examine include: needs assessment methodologies (e.g. the “epidemiology” of social problems); analyses of client-level service utilization patterns (e.g. creating “typologies”); modeling trends in demand for services over time (e.g. forecasting); locational and other spatial factors associated with need, service use, and resource allocation decisions (e.g. block grant formula funding); machine learning (e.g. predictive analytics); the roles of qualitative research methods in policy research; comparative research on social welfare policy; performance management applications of administrative data; and longitudinal, multisectoral research using integrated administrative data systems. The application of these various methods is illustrated with studies of mental health, homelessness, criminal justice, child welfare, housing and segregation, welfare reform, income inequality and social service planning. Students participate as discussants of weekly readings, and as presenters of an assigned paper.

Fall
Also Offered As: MSSP 8610
1 Course Unit

SOCW 8970 Applied Linear Modeling

This course deals with the underlying assumptions and applications of the general linear model with social science, education, and social policy related questions/data. The first half of the course begins by covering simple linear regression and the assumptions of the general linear model, assumption diagnostics, consequences of violation, and how to correct for violated assumptions. This will also include methods of incomplete case analysis (i.e. missing data analysis). Then various aspects of regression analysis with multiple independent variables will be covered including categorical explanatory variables (e.g. to estimate group differences), interaction effects, mediating effects (e.g. to estimate the indirect effect of social processes), and non-linear effects. The course will then cover some of the applications of the general(ized) linear model including logistic regression, some elements of path modeling (structural equation modeling), multilevel analysis (hierarchical linear modeling), and longitudinal modeling (growth modeling). The course will be taught using SAS, but students are welcome to use any statistical package of comfort. Introductory Graduate Statistics is a prerequisite.

Fall
Also Offered As: MSSP 8970
1 Course Unit

SOCW 9010 Proseminar

This course is a weekly, 90-minute (.5 course unit) proseminar. The course contains two main components: a research seminar (i.e., faculty and student presentations of their in-progress research) and skills training (e.g., how to write an abstract, software demonstrations). The two are interwoven throughout the academic year (e.g., 2 weeks of the month devoted to the research seminar and 2 weeks of the month devoted to skills training). The proseminar is required of all students until they successfully defend their dissertation proposal. Course is offered in fall and spring terms.
Fall, Spring, and Summer Terms
0.5 Course Units

SOCW 9950 Dissertation Status

All students on dissertation status are registered for year-long dissertation status courses. These courses will receive a temporary mark of PR in the fall to indicate the course is in progress and a permanent mark of S (satisfactory progress) or U (unsatisfactory) at the end of the spring semester (or fall semester if that is the student's last enrolled term). The mark will be a reflection of the evaluation by the Graduate Group of the student's progress based, in part, on the student's Annual Progress Report.
Fall, Spring, and Summer Terms
0 Course Units