

RESEARCH SEQUENCE

The research sequence teaches a wide range of knowledge, values and skills. Courses develop skills in scientific and critical thinking, in conducting and interpreting both qualitative and quantitative research, in understanding multiple, diverse, perspectives on research methods, in addressing value and ethical issues related to doing and reporting research and in professional writing. Learn more about research requirements and practicum (<https://ssw.smith.edu/msw/curriculum/research-sequence/research-requirements-practicum/>).

Core Courses

SOCW 540 Principles of Social Work Research (2 Quarter Hours)

Coordinating Sequence: Research

Fulfills: SSW Core Course

Social work practice requires clinicians to employ evidence to inform their clinical practice, and to use their practice expertise to inform new research. This course introduces key conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and empirical concepts at the foundation of social work research. Students will engage with these concepts as both consumers and producers of clinically relevant social work research.

Summer 2 - SSW

SOCW 648 Research for Clinical Social Work Practice (2 Quarter Hours)

Coordinating Sequence: Research

Fulfills: SSW Core Course

This course focuses on social work research within our clinical specialization. In particular, this course generates skills for clinical social work practitioners to engage critically and employ existing research in their clinical practice as well as to use their clinical practice experience to inform new social work research. General social work research principles will be applied to clinical practice, and additional theoretical / conceptual, and methodological ideas specific to clinical research will be introduced. Students will engage in clinical case examples as a starting point to identify and appraise research that could inform their practice within a given case example and to generate clinical practice-informed questions based on this case material for further research.

Summer 1 - SSW

Elective Courses

SOCW 698 Research Rotating Topics Elective (2 Quarter Hours)

Coordinating Sequence: Research

Fulfills: Research Sequence Elective

Topics not included in the regular curriculum, but within the Research sequence. Specific title and description information will be posted in the registration portal for the term offered.

Summer 1 - SSW, Summer 2 - SSW, Variable

SOCW 776 Clinical Social Work Practice Evaluation (2 Quarter Hours)

Coordinating Sequence: Research

Fulfills: Research Sequence Elective

Practice evaluation is a core component of social work practice as stated in the NASW Code of Ethics (section 5.02) and in the CSWE EPAS accreditation standards (Competency 9). It is an ethical imperative to evaluate the effectiveness of one's practice, and to alter practices that are ineffective, to best serve clients. This course will examine two widely used approaches to clinical social work practice evaluation: case studies and single case designs. Problem definitions, research designs, data collection methods including standardized and self-anchored measures, and data analysis procedures will be explored. The merits and limitations of each practice evaluation method will be critically examined and ethical issues investigated. How evaluative procedures, measures and approaches can support diverse clients are examined. Exemplar studies will be used to consider how practice evaluation can simultaneously serve client, administrative and knowledge development purposes.

Summer 1 - SSW, Summer 2 - SSW, Variable

SOCW 777 Introduction to Program Evaluation (2 Quarter Hours)

Coordinating Sequence: Research

Fulfills: Research Sequence Elective

Evaluation is a valuable skill for social work practice. At the micro-level, the evaluation of individual clinical practice is a vital tool for all clinicians. At the macro-level, the ability to understand, contribute to, and implement evaluations of social sector programs is a hallmark of social work leaders. This course is designed to introduce students to the theory, methods, and practice of program evaluation. There will be an explicit focus on purpose, context, and intended use: What are the most pressing questions about a given program? What do we understand about the underlying mechanisms of an intervention? Whose voices will be heard and highlighted in an evaluation? How are the findings to be used? The course structure will facilitate the systematic examination and exploration of these questions in a social work context, with the goal of improving quality of care at the level of the individual, program, and organization.

Summer 1 - SSW, Summer 2 - SSW, Variable

SOCW 780 Research Practicum (2 Quarter Hours)

Coordinating Sequence: Research

Fulfills: Research Sequence Elective

The Research Practicum is a two credit (or a single course equivalent) specialization level research elective option intended to allow learning opportunities for students addressing CSWE EPAS and SSW objectives. Practicum learning centers on participation in an ongoing research project developed and led by a Smith College SSW resident faculty member. The faculty member identifies the research question and methods as well as identifying multiple student roles in the project. The practicum is a faculty designed and mentored project; it is not an independent project designed by the student. The faculty member is responsible for completing and documenting appropriate IRB approval where required for research involving human subjects or for use of secondary data involving human subjects. The research practicum requires at least 64 hours of work for credit, with the different tasks and their weighting for grading determined by the faculty advisor and specified in the written research practicum application.

Winter

SOCW 798 Research Rotating Topics Elective (2 Quarter Hours)

Coordinating Sequence: Research

Fulfills: Research Sequence Elective

Topics not included in the regular curriculum, but within the research sequence. Specific title and description information will be posted in the registration portal for the term offered.

Summer 1 - SSW, Summer 2 - SSW, Variable