SSA’s Master of Arts program in Social Work, Social Policy, and Social Administration (SW) prepares you to be a leader in the fields of clinical social work and social administration practice. The comprehensive and interdisciplinary nature of our two-year AM degree (equivalent to an MSW) translates into greater opportunities and choices in your future career. Our curriculum is flexible. In addition to the core and required courses in the clinical social work and social work administration concentrations, students take electives. Sixty percent of our students design their own elective coursework and field placements in areas not specified through one of our Programs of Study. Examples include, but are not limited to:

**CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH**
Courses in child and adolescent mental health provide students with skills in differentiating pathology from normal development, recognition of resources and resiliencies, and knowledge about the biopsychosocial factors that are associated with the various mental health conditions in youth. Students are also trained in diagnostic and assessment procedures and treatment strategies that can be applied in a variety of work situations such as residential facilities, hospital-based programs, school settings, and outpatient mental health clinics.

**FAMILY AND CHILD WELFARE**
Child welfare services are intended to respond to the needs of children who have experienced abuse and neglect, and their families. Courses examine the causes and consequences of child maltreatment, child welfare policy, the effectiveness of child welfare services, and social work practice in child welfare settings.

**GROUP WORK**
Groups and group work courses provide theoretical and historical information about the evolution of group work. Students will acquire skills in developing, leading, and evaluating groups across a variety of populations and service settings. Most group courses also provide students with an experiential component that allows students to more clearly understand the benefits and challenges of being both a participant and a leader. Groups courses highlight the increasing need to engage clients more quickly and efficiently, and the unique ways groups and group work provide this opportunity.
LGBTQIA+ CLIENTS
Courses in social work with LGBTQIA+ clients involve an affirming perspective. Working with a provider who affirms one’s sexual and gender identity, offering services in a safe milieu without fear of judgment from the provider, and having foundational knowledge of some of the unique challenges facing LGBTQIA+ individuals are central to this work. The knowledge base includes the coming-out process, the impact of homophobia and heterosexism, and the limiting effects of internalized homophobia and internalized heterosexism.

LOW-WAGE JOBS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
“Work” has become central to social work practice; whether one is doing economic development with communities, workforce development with individuals, or policy development at the state and federal levels. These courses provide students with an in-depth knowledge of the labor market; work and family policy across nations; everyday work conditions in low-level jobs; and options for improving employer practices and public policies to support disadvantaged workers, families, and communities.

MENTAL HEALTH
Mental health courses provide students with the knowledge and skills to provide clinical services to adults with a variety of problems related to mental illness and psychological distress. Students may learn a wide range of clinical skills in assessment, diagnosis, treatment, case management, and rehabilitation. Students may apply these skills in a variety of settings, including outpatient and community mental health, inpatient and residential, employee assistance, and medical.

Field Placement
The field placement is a critical component of the curriculum. Students work in a variety of urban and suburban settings and have opportunities to develop relationships with individuals, families, and the community. It is in the field that they expand core and advanced competencies, apply practice behaviors, and are guided by practitioners who teach best practices while providing services. Through the field experience, students develop a social work professional identity. Field placements are available for each of the areas described in this brochure.

Career Opportunities
SSA alumni are at the forefront of social work. With strong problem solving, multidisciplinary, and interpersonal skills, SSA alumni are recognized far and wide for their first-rate professional acumen and training; they often quickly assume leadership roles, given who they are and where they have trained. Our alumni work in a variety of practice and policy settings, including government, research centers, schools, hospitals, and nonprofit agencies and programs. SSA alumni have access to a network of over 8,000 alumni in all 50 states and in 38 countries.

“BECAUSE OF WHO THEY ARE AND WHAT THEY’VE EXPERIENCED, MANY OF OUR STUDENTS END UP TEACHING EACH OTHER IN CLASS. THEIR DIVERSE EXPERIENCES WITH CLIENTS OF DIFFERENT AGES, GENDERS, RACES, ETHNICITIES, AND SEXUALITIES REALLY ADD A LOT OF RICHNESS TO THE CLASSROOM.”

Yoonsun Choi, Professor

“WE PRIDE OURSELVES ON CRITICAL THINKING—AND THAT’S CONSISTENT WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO—DEVELOPING TOOLS FOR THINKING AND CRITICAL MODELS FOR SEEING THE WORLD FOR USE ACROSS POPULATIONS, RATHER THAN A SET OF PRACTICES THAT ONE ADHERES TO. WE PREPARE PROFESSIONALS, RATHER THAN JUST TECHNICIANS. WE EXPECT OUR GRADUATES TO BE ABLE TO APPLY THEORY AND CONCEPTS ACROSS A BROAD RANGE OF SITUATIONS.”

Mark Courtney, Samuel Deutsch Professor

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