

# SOCIAL POLICY

[sesp.northwestern.edu/ugrad/social-policy](https://sesp.northwestern.edu/ugrad/social-policy)

The Social Policy concentration explores how policies function as the guiding principles on which social programs are based. Students interested in public service, public policy, public health, and law typically choose to follow the requirements of the social policy concentration.

Courses analyze how social policies and social institutions influence the course of human lives and how people can influence social policies. Students develop a strong interdisciplinary foundation in the social sciences and gain an understanding of current social policy issues, drawing on research in anthropology, communication studies, economics, ethnic studies, gender studies, history, philosophy, political science, public health, and sociology. Examples of interdisciplinary specializations include education policy and reform, urban issues and policy, health care issues and policy, legal issues, and environmental issues and policy.

Students are encouraged to use elective credits to build specialties in such areas as juvenile justice, advocacy programs, and policy analysis and to develop the oral and written communication skills important to success in law school and public policy positions.

## Program of Study

- Social Policy Major (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/education-social-policy/social-policy/social-policy-major/>)

**SOC\_POL 307-0 Educational Policy (1 Unit)** Conflict between societal imperatives to select and prepare young people for future careers and to offer youths opportunity; how society and schools address this conflict; various approaches to policy reform.

**SOC\_POL 312-0 Social Policymaking and Implementation (1 Unit)** Examines the process by which social policies are made, the process and realities of their implementation, and the attendant politics.

**SOC\_POL 313-0 Race, Inequality, and the Political Analysis of Public Policy (1 Unit)** The purpose of this course is to make you a better political analyst. This course will familiarize you with substantive research on politics that has concrete insights for reformers, political advocates, and other public policy stakeholders. The class will cover substantive issues in politics along with how they intersect with class, race, gender and partisanship. While the main focus of the course is to discuss critical issues, there will also be an emphasis on public policy and political science writing formats, styles and standards. It cannot be emphasized enough how important research, analytic and writing skills are to virtually all careers; nothing is more quickly discrediting of good ideas than bad writing. The first half of class is mainly lecture and discussion. The second half of class has been designed to promote your learning as a writer and thinker in public policy. It will provide students with a designated forum for developing and “work shopping” their written work and discussing issues covered in class. The TA will offer feedback on questions as students write, edit, and revise their papers. We will also frequently practice skills in responding critically to colleagues’ texts. One or more quizzes may be administered as well.

**SOC\_POL 315-0 Global Human Trafficking (1 Unit)** We will examine the context of modern slavery against a backdrop of colonialism and slavery to understand key features of modern slavery, both as the crime is perpetuated and variations in legal definitions.

**SOC\_POL 330-0 Economics of Social Policy (1 Unit)** Economic concepts and empirical tools to analyze the design and effects of social policies. Topics include the social safety net, health insurance, minimum wage, and taxation. Pre-Requisites are Econ 281 and Econ 310-1 or SESP 310 for SESP students. SOC\_POL 330-0 and ECON 333-0 are taught together; may not receive credit for both. SESP students must register for SOC\_POL 330-0.

**SOC\_POL 331-0 Economics of Inequality and Discrimination (1 Unit)** Economic concepts and empirical tools to analyze the causes and consequences of inequality and discrimination. Topics include housing policy, crime, earnings inequality, and the role of education. Prerequisites: ECON 202-0 or equivalent and SESP 210-0 or equivalent.

**SOC\_POL 332-0 Economics of Education Policy (1 Unit)** Economic concepts and empirical tools to analyze the design and effects of education policies, including school choice, accountability, education finance, class size policy, and teacher compensation and retention. Prerequisites: ECON 202-0 or equivalent and SESP 210-0 or equivalent.

**SOC\_POL 333-0 Economics of Health, Human Capital, and Happiness (1 Unit)** Understanding causal relationships is a central goal in social science and science in general. It is not sufficient to observe what is happening, we need to know why it is happening. In this course students will learn the toolbox of causal inference econometrics with applications to the economics of health, human capital, and subjective wellbeing. The empirical methods we will cover include multivariate regressions, panel data, difference-indifference designs, instrumental variables, randomized control trials, and regression discontinuities. Health, human capital, and subjective wellbeing (“happiness”) are core dimensions of social welfare and inequality in our society. To develop effective social policies, however, it is crucial to understand the causal mechanisms driving these factors. Prerequisites: ECON 202-0 (Intro to Microeconomics) or equivalent and a 200-level statistics class (SESP 210-0, STAT 202-0, STAT 210-0 and PSYCH 201-0 are all suitable).

**SOC\_POL 334-0 Quantitative Tools for Policy Analysis (1 Unit)** Hands on analysis of the real time challenges facing a range of policy areas and industries across federal and state governments and the private sector. *Formal Studies Distro Area*

**SOC\_POL 335-0 Women and American Political Leadership (1 Unit)** With women comprising 51% of the American population, yet having significantly lower political representation, we will explore the evolution of women’s political leadership in our nation.

**SOC\_POL 351-0 Special Topics in Social Policy (1 Unit)** Advanced work on special topics.

**SESP 114-0 Summer Internship (0 Unit)**

**SESP 115-0 Internship (0 Unit)**

**SESP 116-0 Finding Your Path (0 Unit)** A continuation of Finding Your Path: Pathways and Future Possibilities (SESP 251), a course that supports second-year students most impacted by the historical and contemporary realities of classism and racism as they map their path forward to career fulfillment. This class is a 0 credit class in which Pathways students conduct a search for a summer internship and then complete said internship.

**SESP 195-1 Civic Engagement 1 - Participatory Policymaking (1 Unit)** Policy implementation involves more than just identifying and researching options, policymakers must, consider design program design, costs & sustainability; political feasibility, and building political support. In this class, you will learn how to design policy for implementation through Northwestern’s Participatory Budgeting process.

**SESP 195-2 Civic Engagement 2: Participatory Budgeting (1 Unit)**

Democracy gives limited opportunities for citizens to influence decision-making. In this class you will learn to implement open democracy innovations, that are more inclusive, more representative, and lead to better policy outcomes, by implementing a campus-wide participatory budgeting process, where community decides how to spend \$1000 to address climate change.

**SESP 195-3 Civic Engagement 3: Organizing, Gathering & Policy Implementation (1 Unit)**

How do we motivate people to take action? In this class, you will learn the techniques of relational organizing (canvassing, one-on-ones, public narrative), designing civic gatherings (Civic Saturdays) that move people to action to build social movements. You will also oversee policy implementation of community development projects selected in the participatory budgeting process.

**SESP 200-0 Understanding Knowledge (1 Unit)** What does it mean to know something? What are the different types of knowledge and what distinguishes them from one another? What counts as fact vs. opinion vs. belief and so on; who gets to decide and under what conditions? How is knowledge produced and how does it gain traction? How does the source and type of knowledge interact with socio-political-cultural constructs and systems of power and, in turn, how can "knowledge" be used to produce and/or perpetuate power and privilege or to empower those who are marginalized? Finally, how does what we do in SESP and at Northwestern as both consumers and producers of knowledge fit within the landscape of these questions? In this course students will explore these and other questions to gain insight into the social production, distribution, consumption, interpretation, and operationalization of "knowledge." Using primarily seminar-style discussion, the first portion of the course focuses on building and analyzing theoretical frameworks and applied texts in order to generate a working understanding of "knowledge" in its myriad forms. Among our goals for the first portion of the course is to tie theoretical, academic, and "folk" knowledges to everyday experiences and the world around us writ large. The second portion of the class will involve a series of applied cases studies, including welcoming members of the SESP faculty community to present on their research, which we will work to bring into conversation with our generated frameworks regarding the sources, types, and implications of knowledge.

**SESP 201-0 Human Development: Childhood and Adolescence (1 Unit)**

Personal, social, and cognitive development from birth through adolescence. Interplay of biological and experiential factors on linguistic and conceptual development, ego, and personality.

**SESP 203-0 Human Development: Adulthood and Aging (1 Unit)**

Psychological, sociological, and biological factors influencing socialization and development from young and middle adulthood through old age. Influences of family, school, and work on the individual.

**SESP 204-0 Designing for Social Change (1 Unit)** A key goal of this course is to acquire an intellectual and applied understanding of the principles of program design and development, which include a sustained consideration of issues affecting the quality of program implementation. This course is best suited for FIRST AND SECOND YEAR students.

**SESP 210-0 Introduction to Statistics and Research Methodology (1 Unit)**

Definitions and classifications of terms used in quantitative methods; measures of typical and maximum performance, reliability, and validity checks; reporting and displaying data; interpreting results.

**SESP 218-0 Leaders Lab (1 Unit)** Leaders Lab is an interactive, engaging and dynamic fall quarter course that was created and designed for incoming first and second-year students in SESP to reflect, experience and engage in dialogue about the "big" questions in life such as: who

am I? What is my purpose in life? How can I be me? What are my responsibilities to the communities I'm a part of? Why do I serve? What is leadership? How can I lead? This course is associated with the SESP Leadership Institute. Only students enrolled in the leadership institute can register for this course.

**SESP 251-0 Special Topics (1 Unit)** N/A.

**SESP 260-0 Community Based Research Methodologies: Educational Justice (1 Unit)** This course examines the histories, ideas, practices, relations and possible futures that shape struggles for educational justice and human thriving. The course is unique in that it brings together an intergenerational group of thinkers and learners (high school students, undergraduate students, youth workers, graduate students, professors, high school teachers and community members) to engage in collaborative study, reflection and design.

**SESP 272-0 Field Research Methods (1 Unit)** Guided practice in systematic and participant observation. Observer bias, field notes, unobtrusive measures.

**SESP 291-1 Peer-Led Learning: Theory and Practice (0.25 Unit)** SESP 291 is the training program for students working as first-time mentors in the Peer Leaders program. It is taken over two academic quarters, with each quarter offering .25 credit (a total of .5 credit). You will receive a "K" grade for fall quarter, which means you are continuing in the course. After winter quarter, you will receive a letter grade which will be retroactively applied to fall quarter.

**SESP 291-2 Peer-Led Learning: Theory and Practice (0.25 Unit)**

**SESP 295-1 Leadership Studio I (1 Unit)** Learning organizing requires building a real organization. Students accepted to the certificate program will further develop their organizing skills by taking a leadership role on the executive board of Open Democracy Northwestern (undergraduate club). Leaders will develop strategy, train club members, manage operations. Leaders will receive weekly coaching from instructors. Course is only open to students who have completed the first year sequence of the certificate. Prerequisites: Prior to 2024-2025 students will need to have completed SESP 195-0 3 times to enroll. 2024-2025 and beyond, students will need to have completed SESP 195-1, 195-2, 195-3 to enroll.

**SESP 295-2 Leadership Studio II (1 Unit)** Learning organizing requires building a real organization. Students accepted to the certificate program will further develop their organizing skills by taking a leadership role on the executive board of Open Democracy Northwestern (undergraduate club). Leaders will develop strategy, train club members, manage operations. Leaders will receive weekly coaching from instructors. Course is only open to student who have completed the first year sequence of the Civic Engagement Certificate. Prerequisites: Prior to 2024-2025 students will need to have completed SESP 195-0 3 times to enroll. 2024-2025 and beyond, students will need to have completed SESP 195-1, 195-2, 195-3 to enroll.

**SESP 298-0 Student Organized Seminar (1 Unit)** Courses proposed by students and supervised by faculty sponsors on special topics approved by the SESP undergraduate education director. May be taken only once per quarter; pass/no credit only. Consultation with the SESP student affairs assistant dean advised.

**SESP 299-1 Civic Engagement Capstone Research (1 Unit)** Independent study courses leading to completion of the Certificate in Civic Engagement capstone project.

**SESP 299-2 Certificate in Civic Engagement- Capstone Project (1 Unit)** Independent study courses leading to completion of the Certificate in Civic Engagement capstone project.

**SESP 310-0 Causal Methods for Evaluating Policy (1 Unit)** This course will provide students with a framework for understanding causal inference and a toolkit for making causal claims using quantitative data. Prerequisites: Students need to have taken SESP 210-0 or any 200-level STATS course.

**SESP 320-0 Race and Education (1 Unit)** Conceptual underpinnings of the construct of race and how conceptions of race have influenced the course of education in the United States.

**SESP 322-0 Crafting Child Policy (1 Unit)** This course is open to undergraduate students interested in the intersection of child development, social policy, and applied research. The course will guide students in how to apply psychological theory and rigorous research methods to the study of child and family policies in real-world settings. Working in groups, students will have the opportunity to answer pressing questions posed by the Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Education and Chicago's Office of the Mayor. Group projects have the potential to help inform the structure and development of the state's innovative policies for young children (birth to 8) and their families.

**SESP 323-0 Trauma and Atrocity: Holocaust Memory, Memorial and Museums (1 Unit)** What is Holocaust memory? How has Holocaust memory changed over time, and how does the Holocaust continue to affect our understanding of trauma, atrocity, and human rights today? This seminar addresses individual memory, including survivor and witness testimony, memory and trauma, and the impact of the Holocaust on survivors' families and communities.

**SESP 324-0 Pedagogies for History and Injustice: Holocaust Education Design (1 Unit)** N/A.

**SESP 325-0 Race, Adolescence, and School Discipline (1 Unit)** In recent years, racial disparities in school discipline have attracted the attention of educators, policymakers, parents, and the general public. Why is it so hard for legal, political, and educational institutions to improve school discipline? How do intersections of race, gender, and social class matter for students' experiences of school discipline? Are there schools that are getting discipline right? What does that look like, and to what extent can other schools learn from their successes? In this course, we will learn about evidence-based policy improvements and imagine how to create schools where race does not predict discipline.

**SESP 351-0 Special Topics (1 Unit)** Advanced work on special topics.

**SESP 351-SA Special Topics (1 Unit)** Advanced work on special topics. This course is limited to students approved to study abroad through the Global Learning Office (GLO).

**SESP 360-0 Magic Monsters & the Holocaust (1 Unit)** In this course, we'll explore public learning about the Holocaust through popular film and fiction. We'll question which historical narratives are being told and which are being ignored, and we'll ask why and how genres like fantasy, sci-fi, fairy tales, and time travel are commonly used to bring stories of mass-violence to the public.

**SESP 381-0 BSED/BSJ Experiential Learning Community Workshop Series (0 Unit)** In their second year, students choose 1 experiential education requirement – either the SESP Practicum, Student Teaching, or Medill Journalism Residency for 4 units of credit. The students participate in the Community Workshop Series during the year they complete their experiential education requirement.

**SESP 390-0 Research Apprenticeship (1 Unit)** Opportunity to participate in faculty research projects. Prerequisites: consent of the faculty member and the SESP assistant dean for student affairs; submission

of completed Request for Independent Study/Special Courses Form at registration.

**SESP 391-0 Advanced Research Design (1 Unit)** Overview of research methods that may be used to design and implement the honors thesis. Prerequisites: SESP 210-0 and SESP 272-0 recommended.

**SESP 392-0 Experiential Learning: Practicum (4 Units)**

**SESP 392-SA Experiential Learning: Practicum Study Abroad (4 Units)**

**SESP 398-0 Senior Thesis Seminar (1-3 Units)** Students develop, design, implement, and evaluate a research project under a faculty advisor's guidance. Prerequisites: senior status, cumulative GPA by the end winter quarter of the junior year, recommendation for the honors program from SESP 391-0 instructor(s); consent of program director.

**SESP 399-0 Independent Study (1 Unit)** Faculty-supervised study of special topics of the student's own choosing and not covered in regular courses. Prerequisites: consent of the supervising faculty member(s) and the SESP assistant dean for student affairs; submission of completed Request for Independent Study/Special Courses Form at registration.