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 African American studies, anthropology, communication studies, economics, 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


SOC_POL 201-0 Introduction to Social Policy (1 Unit) Social policy formulation: the substance of major American social policies, the agenda-setting process, and how the political system shapes social policy in this country.

SOC_POL 304-0 Social Policy & the Human Services (1 Unit) Development of social policy for human services in the United States. Human service policies for education, mental health, physical health, prisons, income, and aging.

SOC_POL 305-0 Law and Social Policy (1 Unit) Use and influence of the legal system in and on social institutions and policy.

SOC_POL 306-0 Contemporary Issues in Education (1 Unit) Current policy issues and major debates in K-12 education. Characteristics and skills of the critical consumer of policy. Topics vary by year.

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 310-0 Legal Aspects of Education (1 Unit) School governance structure and decision making; relevant state and federal legislation; role of the US Supreme Court in affecting public schooling.

SOC_POL 311-0 Social Policy and the United States Health Care System (1 Unit) Examines the health care delivery system in the United States through a review of US health policy issues.

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 330-0 Economics of Social Policy (1 Unit) Economic concepts and empirical tools to analyze the design and effects of social policies.
community-consulting process; start of preliminary work for the Certificate in Civic Engagement capstone project.

**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 303-0 Designing for Social Change (1 Unit)** Processes, challenges, and ethics of designing programs, at home and abroad, for realizing human rights and meaningful social change.

**SESP 310-0 Statistical Causal Inference (1 Unit)** N/A.

**SESP 317-0 Gender and the Life Course (1 Unit)** How gender influences major life stages. Focus on the psychosocial effects of gender on children, young, midlife, and old adults; societal institutions; and selected social policy issues.

**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)** N/A.

**SESP 323-0 Holocaust Memory, Memorials, and Museums (1 Unit)** N/A.

**SESP 324-0 Hidden Holocaust Histories (1 Unit)** N/A.

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

**SESP 372-0 Methods of Observing Human Behavior (1 Unit)** Guided practice in systematic and participant observation. Observer bias, field notes, unobtrusive measures.

**SESP 382-0 Practicum in Human Development; Learning Sciences (4 Units)** Real-world participant observation in professional activities and projects; development of analytical field studies of the practicum experience based on field notes, recorded observations, and class discussions; culminates in a final research paper. For LRN SCI students only. Prerequisites: SESP 372-0; consent of SESP practicum director 2 quarters before registration (3 quarters if a Summer Session practicum).

**SESP 384-0 Practicum in Human Development - Washington, D.C. (4 Units)** See description for SESP 382-0. Offered during Summer Session only. For participants in the Washington, DC, field studies program only. Prerequisites: SESP 372-0; consent of SESP practicum director 3 quarters before registration.

**SESP 386-0 Practicum: Human Development & Psychological Svcs. (4 Units)** See description and prerequisites for SESP 382-0. For HDPS students only.

**SESP 387-0 Practicum: Learning& Organizational Change (4 Units)** See description and prerequisites for SESP 382-0. For LOC students only.

**SESP 388-0 Practicum: Social Policy (4 Units)** See description and prerequisites for SESP 382-0. For SOC POL students only.

**SESP 389-0 Practicum in Human Development - San Francisco (4 Units)** See description and prerequisites for SESP 382-0. Offered during Summer Session only. For participants in the San Francisco field studies program only.

**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 Methods (1 Unit)** Overview of research methods that may be used to design and implement the honors thesis. Prerequisites: SESP 210-0 and SESP 372-0 recommended.

**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.