

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE**

---

To obtain the MSW degree, students must:

- successfully complete 60 semester hours of study, following the prescribed sequence
- maintain an overall grade point average of 3.00, with no grade less than “C” in any course offered for the degree and no more than 2 classes with a “C”
- and satisfactorily complete the exit requirement: **a thesis or a non-thesis option.**

**Thesis Option:** Students are encouraged to undertake a thesis. If a student has difficulty finding a professor appropriate to serve as thesis chair person, the MSW Program Director will assist in locating one. Students choosing to write a thesis must submit a thesis proposal to a prospective thesis committee chair after completing 15 hours. Once the faculty member approves the proposal and agrees to chair the committee, the student may register for 3 hours of SW 8000: Thesis Research as early as the following summer and fall semesters. Six total credit hours of SW 8000 are required for the thesis, and no more than six credit hours can be used toward the M.S.W. degree.

**Non-Thesis Option:** Students may also choose the non-thesis option, which is a Capstone Experience. The Capstone Experience (CE) is an integrative and reflective non-thesis option composed of three major components, all of which must be satisfactorily completed by students:

- Comprehensive Exam
- Reflective Paper
- Integrative Seminar

**a) Satisfactory Completion of Comprehensive Exam:** The comprehensive exam is a multiple-choice exam similar to the middle-level licensing examination (LMSW). The questions cover core curricular content in the following areas: HBSE, Practice, Policy, Research, Values & Ethics, and Diversity & Oppression. The comprehensive exam will be administered at the beginning of the semester the student intends to graduate; however, students must attend the capstone seminar and submit the portfolio in the spring semester regardless of graduation date.

Students must score *70% or higher* to satisfactorily complete this component of the CE. If a student fails the comprehensive examination, the student will be given one additional opportunity within the same semester to pass the exam containing comparable questions with a score of 70% or higher. Failure to score a 70% or higher will result in the student failing this portion of the CE and will result in the student not receiving the MSW degree. The exam will not be given to any one student more than twice.

**b) Satisfactory Completion of the Reflective Paper**

Instructions will be distributed in the fall prior to graduation. The reflective paper is submitted during the spring semester of the advanced year. Students graduating in the summer and/or fall must submit a reflective paper in the spring.

**c) Satisfactory Completion of the Integrative Seminar**

The integrative seminar is held once per year in the spring semester. All students

graduating in the spring, summer or fall in any given year must attend the integrative seminar in the spring. **Students graduating in the summer and/or fall must also attend this seminar in order to graduate.** *Students must attend and substantively participate in the Integrative Seminar in its entirety.* Failure to attend and participate in the three-hour Integrative Seminar will result in the student failing this portion of the CE and not receiving the MSW degree

Approximately 8-10 students will participate in a three-hour Integrative Seminar. Each student will submit the Reflective Paper to the facilitator assigned to student's particular seminar one (1) week prior to the scheduled seminar. Students not in field internship will be assigned a facilitator. The school calendar contains the Integrative Seminar date.

Discussion during the Integrative Seminar will focus primarily on students' self-assessment of their performance, based on the evidence in the Reflective Paper Themes around evidence-informed practice, professional development issues, and supervision will be explored. The seminar will culminate with each student preparing several post-MSW professional learning objectives that address areas for improvement and build upon identified strengths.