

# DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

Phone: 703-993-4247

Website: <https://socialwork.gmu.edu/>

## Administration

- Emily Ihara, Chair

The mission of the Department of Social Work (SOCW) is to promote human well-being by ensuring economic and social justice, as well as human rights for all. The department accomplishes this mission by providing an academically rigorous education that nurtures and develops social work leaders, scholars, and practitioners to serve diverse populations, engage in critical thinking, challenge injustice, and implement interventions grounded in theory and science.

The research and scholarly activities of the department contribute to basic and applied social science research that investigates systemic inequities in power and unequal access to resources. The department aims to solve individual, family, and social problems by identifying and developing effective interventions rooted in scientific theory and collaborates with community members, social service agencies, governmental stakeholders, students, faculty, alumni, and research funders to cultivate community partnerships, enhance capacity, and provide technical expertise to human service organizations caring for diverse local, national, and global communities.

## Undergraduate

The mission of the BSW Program is to prepare entry-level generalist social work professionals who will demonstrate ethical leadership in innovative multidisciplinary practice, social reform, and research in diverse communities. Students are provided a range of opportunities to develop a broad knowledge and skills base consistent with the systems and strengths perspectives. They are expected to practice using core social work values and to examine and resolve ethical dilemmas. Classroom and field experiences prepare students to be competent in the use of relevant new technologies and in culturally sensitive, generalist social work practice.

## Graduate

The mission of the MSW program is to prepare social workers for advanced professional practice bringing excellent interpersonal, technological, research, and communication skills to the human service delivery system. The MSW program builds upon a foundation of generalist social work knowledge and skills that integrates micro and macro theory and practice and emphasizes empowerment and systems transformation. This foundation equips students to enhance human well-being and to promote social and economic justice through ethical professional practice with culturally diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Graduates will be prepared to work collaboratively with individuals, families, and communities to stimulate positive change through clinical practice, advocacy, social and political action, and address local, national, and global challenges.

## Field Placement

The Department of Social Work will make reasonable efforts to work with a student to secure an appropriate field placement, but it does not guarantee a placement. A student with a criminal history may find it

difficult to obtain a field placement or employment in a human service agency depending on the specific charge. It is possible that a student with a criminal background may not be able to be placed in a field practicum or complete their degree program. The Criminal Background Policy is available on the Social Work Department website. (<https://socialwork.gmu.edu/>)

## Program Completion

Part-time students are encouraged to take at least 6 credits per semester to promote timely completion of the program.

## Faculty

### Department Faculty

#### Professors

Ihara (chair), Matto, Tompkins (associate dean for faculty affairs), Wolf-Branigin

#### Associate Professors

Cleaveland, Freedman, Hines, Inoue, Kirsch, Lee

#### Assistant Professors

Hand, King, Parisi, Prieto, Tomaszewski, Villodas, Waithaka

#### Administrative Faculty

Booth, Climer, Cornejo, Hensley, Laster

#### Emeriti

Davis, Raskin, Ritchie, Rome, Rose, Whittington

## Requirements & Policies

### Policies

#### Academic Advising

Each student is assigned an academic advisor who is a faculty member within their academic department or a professional academic advisor within the Office of Student Affairs (OSA). Academic advisor assignments are listed on the College of Public Health website (<https://publichealth.gmu.edu/students/academic-advising/>), and students are expected to meet with their advisor regularly (at least once each semester) to seek advice about academic schedules and program plans, internships, and career guidance. Students also should meet with their advisor if they are experiencing academic difficulty or personal challenges or if they are feeling overwhelmed.

#### Student Responsibilities

All students are responsible for knowing the requirements of their major as specified in the university catalog for their catalog year; academic deadlines outlined in the semester academic calendar (<http://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/>); and university policies and procedures (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/>).

Students also should run their own degree-evaluation (<http://registrar.gmu.edu/students/degree-evaluation/>) to identify graduation requirements and progress towards their degree. While academic

advisors can give advice to students, students are responsible for the academic planning decisions they make. Academic advisors cannot be held responsible for mistakes made by students in selecting courses that may not count toward their degree and thus delay a desired graduation date.

## Programs

- Aging Studies Minor
- Gerontology Graduate Certificate
- Health and Social Policy Minor
- Social Work Minor
- Social Work, BSW
- Social Work, MSW