I. Introduction

Message from the Executive Vice Dean of Academic & Student Affairs

II. Concentration options

Community Organization, Planning and Administration (COPA)
Families and Children
Health
Mental Health
Social Work & Business in a Global Society

III. Sub-concentration options

Military Social Work and Veteran Services
School Social Work
Older Adults

IV. Field Placement Process

Frequently Asked Questions

V. Form

Concentration Selection Form (Online submission, not included)

VI. Appendices

A. Curriculum Snapshot
B. Concentration Contact Information
C. FAQ Virtual Clinical Experience (VCE) - Military Sub-concentration only
D. Regional Map
Dear MSW Students:

Congratulations on your acceptance into the MSW@USC program! The information in this packet will help you to make the most informed choice based on your individual interests and career aspirations. We offer five concentrations and two sub-concentrations. You need to select one concentration, but a sub-concentration selection is optional. Each concentration has three required courses and three elective options. SOWK 611 Leadership in the Social Work Profession and Organization is also required of all students in the MSW program. If you select a sub-concentration, you must be sure that you take the courses required for that specific sub-concentration. When in doubt, please consult with your Student Support Advisor who can answer your specific questions.

Not sure about which concentration to select? I can assure you that they are all excellent! This is one of the unique aspects of a USC MSW degree. First and foremost, you are training for professional social work. Regardless of which concentration you select, your MSW degree will open doors and provide access to professional employment opportunities in a wide range of fields practice.

What should I expect in the Concentration Year?
The world is quickly changing, our profession is changing, and our Concentration curriculum has been developed to anticipate and respond to these changes. Social workers are called upon to respond to the conditions of a rapidly changing world. New problems, changing populations, arenas of activity, and new social, economic, and political contexts require practitioners who are not only knowledgeable, ethical, and skilled, but also confident, innovative, and resourceful. Graduates of USC’s MSW program will be appreciative of the historic commitments of the profession; skilled in employing technology, current knowledge and best practices; resilient enough to weather and succeed in inhospitable environments; and savvy enough to foresee and respond to emerging trends.

Our curriculum focuses on the knowledge and skills that will educate students to:
- work with populations and problems in large multicultural urban areas in the US and around the world;
- be culturally competent, understanding the impact of globalization and bi-culturalism;
- think critically to analyze and solve problems;
- anticipate, assess and respond to emerging social issues;
- cross boundaries, thinking and acting across levels, disciplines, theoretical orientations, and arenas of practice;
- employ effectively multiple change strategies with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and at the level of social policy;
- draw from diverse knowledge bases from social work and allied disciplines, practicing with the recognition of current research findings;
- use technology skillfully with clients, residents, other professionals, other disciplines, and decision makers;
- advance the cause of social economic justice nationally and internationally; and
- lead social work innovation at the local, national, and global levels.
Students should keep these 3 things in mind:

1. In the concentration year all students must take three (3) required concentration courses and a complete a concentration specific field placement (i.e., your selection of Concentration determines the 3 required concentration courses you will take and the type of agency placement appropriate for you). Sub-concentrations have other required courses.

2. Students work with their Regional Field Placement Team to develop their agency field placement based on their unique interests and experiences. Though the Field Team will work within the community to identify an appropriate placement for all students, we are reliant on the willingness of the agency to host students and therefore, we do not guarantee a certain type of placement. Students are encouraged to be considerate of this limitation when selecting a concentration and requesting certain types of agencies, settings, or populations.

3. All students take SOWK 611: Leadership in the Social Work Profession.

What choices do I have in the Concentration Year?
The concentration year MSW curriculum offers students the opportunity to study in one of five substantial concentrations:
- Community Organization, Planning and Administration
- Families and Children
- Mental Health
- Health
- Social Work & Business in a Global Society

In addition to the concentrations indicated above, you also have the option of pursuing a sub-concentration in the following areas:
- Military Social Work and Veteran Services (open sub-concentration that can be pursued with any concentration as long as you have a related field placement and complete the required courses in this sub-concentration)
- School Social Work (Families & Children Concentration students entering field placement in the fall semester and live in California, Arizona, Kansas, Oregon, or Texas). Students resides outside these geographic areas but placed in school settings may select this sub-concentration. Please consult your regional field team for the specific requirement.
- Older Adult will be available for VAC students from all concentrations starting January 2015.

Determining which electives best fit your concentration?
There are several elective options in the VAC program. You are encouraged to consider all of the electives that are offered; it is important to note that electives are typically offered based on student interest and class size. However we have developed a category of electives called Selectives as a way of helping you target which electives are most closely aligned with your area of concentration. You will find these listed in each of the concentration information sections in this packet. We also offer a significant number of electives that while not necessarily concentration-specific are quite unique and interesting.

Please note: Mental Health concentration students MUST take several “prescribed electives.” The VAC Registrar or your Student Support Advisor can identify these for you.
What about part-time students?
Part-time students can continue to pursue their degree by enrolling for either 6 or 8 semesters. Six semester students will follow the concentration curriculum depicted in Appendix A. Eight semester students will take two courses (required concentration courses or the Leadership course) plus field each term during semesters five and six, and then the three electives during semesters seven and eight.

For your reference, a concentration contact list has been provided in the back of this packet (see Appendix C). Please feel free to ask questions during this selection process. We want to help you make the best choice possible for your interests and learning!

R. Paul Maiden, PhD, LCSW
Executive Vice Dean and Professor Academic and Student Affairs
II. CONCENTRATION OPTIONS

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION, PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION (COPA)
- Annalisa Enrile, PhD, Chair
- Murali Nair, PhD, MSW, Co-Chair
- Renee Smith-Maddox, PhD, VAC Co-Coordinator
- Ruth White, PhD, MPH, MSW, VAC Co-Coordinator

FAMILIES & CHILDREN
- Michal Sela Amit, PhD, Chair
- Jacquelyn McCroskey, DSW, MSW, Co-Chair
- Tyan Parker Dominguez, PhD, MPH, MSW, VAC Co-coordinator
- Mary Beth Harris, PhD, VAC Co-Coordinator

HEALTH
- Iris Chi, DSW, Golden Age Association Frances Wu Chair for Chinese Elderly and Director of China Program, Chair
- Dawn Joosten, PhD, LCSW, Co-Chair
- Karra Bikson, PhD, LCSW, VAC Coordinator

MENTAL HEALTH
- Shannon Mayeda, PhD, LCSW, CRADC, Chair
- Dorian Traube, PhD, MSSW, Co-Chair
- Estela Andujo, PhD, LCSW, VAC Co-Coordinator
- Eileen Abel, PhD, VAC Co-Coordinator

SOCIAL WORK & BUSINESS IN A GLOBAL SOCIETY
- Beverly Younger, PhD, LCSW, Clinical Associate Professor, Chair
- Michàlle Mor Barak, PhD, Lenore Stein-Wood and William S. Wood Professor in Social Work and Business in a Global Society, Co-Chair
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION, PLANNING, & ADMINISTRATION (COPA)

This concentration is designed to prepare students to function as mid-level administrators, planners, program developers, and community organizers. The COPA faculty are committed to a philosophy that views macro-practice as central to the development of services and the well-being of communities in urban settings. Students will develop skills in policy practice, management and finance, program development and evaluation, and community organizing.

Concentration Requirements
The COPA Concentration offers a core set of required courses that provide advanced knowledge of macro practice, research skills, and leadership. In this concentration all students are required to take the following three core courses: SOWK 629, 639 and 648 (refer to descriptions below) along with SOWK 611 and SOWK 686a/b.

SOWK 629: Evaluation of Research: Community Organization, Planning and Administration
This course is designed to introduce students to different research methods for assessing macro-practices and social work programs. The following areas of research practice are examined in depth: qualitative research for assessing programs and practice methods, participatory action research, program evaluation models and needs assessment. Additionally, this course will introduce students to use mapping and census data for understanding communities and services in an urban context.

SOWK 639: Social Policy for Macro Practitioners: Policy and the Politics of Reform
This course is designed to provide a skill base for advanced macro-practitioners who will be expected to originate, respond to and implement policies at local, State, and Federal levels. Students learn to apply skills in policy analysis, political advocacy, and planning social justice actions relevant to macro-level practices. The course is divided into modules, each of which addresses related aspects of reform and social justice in the human services.

SOWK 648: Management for Community and Social Services
This course is designed to prepare students to function as mid-level macro managers and community practitioners. The course examines the roles, functions, and responsibilities of social service managers, including supervisor, community organizers, and project planners working in urban social work agencies. Topics to be covered include: community and management practice; finance analysis; leadership skills and skills in developing strategic plans.

SOWK 686a/b: Field Practicum
This two-semester course builds upon the first year foundation field practicum and concentrates on knowledge and skill development in macro practice. Students select field placements from a variety of organizational systems that provide services to adults, children, youth, families, communities and/or provider groups. Students complete 550 hours in this practicum, under the supervision of an MSW and carefully selected preceptor(s). Tasks and assignments are designed to expose students to and help them develop knowledge and/or skills in: organizations, administration and planning, leadership development, funding sources/budgets, needs assessment, grant writing, policy analysis, media/marketing, program evaluation, political/legislative advocacy, and board/committee structure and functions.
SOWK 611: Leadership in Professional Social Work and Organizations
This course is designed for students to learn advanced knowledge and skills to be effective leaders. Topics include motivation, leadership styles, power and influence, transformational leadership and leading change. Leadership can develop in all levels of the organization, various places in the community, from policy maker to policy advocate and from established leaders to residents wanting to make a difference.

Electives
Students will need to take a total of three 3-unit electives (total 9 units). Depending on their individual plans, students can take electives from other concentrations including clinical courses. Students are encouraged to take the SOWK 673: Program Development and Grant Writing elective.

COPA Students Develop the Following Skills:
- Leadership
- Organizational Analysis
- Policy Analysis
- Needs Assessment
- Advocacy
- Budgeting
- Media Marketing
- Program Planning & Development
- Program Evaluation
- Grant Writing
- Special Events Fund Raising
- Political Practice
- Work with Boards/Committees
- Supervisory
- Administration & Management

COPA Careers & Professional Development
Upon graduation, many COPA students find jobs in many traditional and non-traditional social work practice settings. Past COPA graduates are currently employed in professional roles as:
- Policy Analysts
- Legislative Aides
- Program Developers
- Grant Writers
- Program Directors and Administrators
- Program Operations Managers
- Community Organizers
- Professional Consultants
- Fundraising and Development Officers
- Careers in Higher Education
- Research and Evaluation Professionals
- Non-profit Program Managers

As a COPA graduate, the career possibilities are broad and wide.
FAMILIES AND CHILDREN CONCENTRATION

The Families and Children Concentration prepares students for strengths-based practice with children, youth, and adult family members within the context of multicultural urban communities. Designed around the “needs of a population” rather than a specific “setting or method,” the curriculum addresses a broad range of social, educational, health and mental health, economic, and social justice needs that affect families and children while acknowledging and promoting understanding of issues of diversity. Classroom curricula and field assignments are designed to prepare social workers for effective practice with families, in universal institutions like schools and early care and education settings, and in residual settings such as public child welfare and juvenile justice offices that deal with family and youth problems. The curriculum reflects a synthesis from theories supporting family-centered practice, work with children, adolescents, parents, and older adults in intergenerational family units, “best practice” principles, and knowledge derived from allied fields including neuroscience, child development, psychology, education, medicine, nursing and others. The primary focus of practice taught in the Families and Children Concentration is broad, ecologically based, family centered, and strength based. Recognizing the reality of practice in many field agencies and the needs of students preparing for licensing, the curriculum promotes and supports skill development in mental health assessment and diagnosis (utilizing the DSM IV-TR and DC: 0-3), and intervention and treatment of children, adolescents, and families.

FIRST CONCENTRATION SEMESTER – REQUIRED COURSES:

SOWK 601: Advanced Theories and Clinical Interventions with Children and Adolescents
This course advances both theoretical knowledge and clinical practice skills in working with children and adolescents, their families and social environments. Viewing the child in the context of his/her family and community, and using ecological, bio-psychosocial, attachment theory, neurobiological, and family systems perspectives, emphasis is placed on understanding factors contributing to the healthy growth and development of a child from neonatal care to young adulthood. The course prepares students to intervene to promote the healthy emotional, mental, educational and social development of children and adolescents. It focuses on understanding the roles of community, educational and familial contexts on problems affecting children. It also examines developmental derailments or disruptions resulting from abuse and neglect, trauma, and other mental health issues. Explanatory theories of behavior are presented at an advanced level, along with theories and EBI strength-based intervention in work with children and their families. Skill development is promoted in assessing children and the parent-child dyad and in utilization of the DSM IV-TR and the DC: 0-3 as diagnostic tools as well as implementing EBP and strengths-based interventions to promote resilience and healthy development of children and adolescents.

SOWK 611: Leadership
This course promotes the development of professionalism and the skills needed for social workers to assume positions of leadership within communities and at all levels of organizational operations.
SOWK 686a: Field Practicum
Students complete 550 hours total in this two-semester practicum focusing on knowledge and skill development in work with Families and Children utilizing both public and private social service agency settings. The field placement serves as the arena for the development of skills and the integration of knowledge in work with children, youth and adults in the context of family utilizing eco-systems theory as a primary framework. Students become aware of organizational and inter-organizational issues, the implication of research for practice and policy and an awareness of current issues, program and social policies affecting families and children.

SECOND CONCENTRATION SEMESTER – REQUIRED COURSES:

SOWK 602: Advanced Theory and Clinical Interventions with Families
This course provides students with knowledge on advanced work with families with a broad range of family structures from diverse ethnic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. The course focuses on advancing theoretical, evidence-based interventions and clinical practice skills in working with families. Utilizing an ecological perspective, the family is viewed as the unit of attention while recognizing the roles of policy, community and organizations in supporting the family’s well-being and resilience. The course also uses a family systems perspective and integrates theories of family development and family life cycle in understanding families. Interventions studied are strength-based and evidence-based and focus on prevention, early intervention and intervention with families. Students will advance their theoretical knowledge and clinical practice skills in working with families exhibiting difficulties such as immigration, homelessness, mental and physical illness, domestic violence, child abuse and substance abuse. Emphasis is placed on empowering families and working with strength-based family therapy models as well as utilizing communal and organizational supports.

SOWK 603: Merging Policy, Planning, & Research for Change in Children & Family Services
This course is the capstone experience for the second semester student in the Families and Children Concentration offering the student the opportunity to demonstrate a command of social welfare policy, practice and research skills by developing a client-centered grant proposal that responds to an unmet service need or community issue. The student will build on knowledge and skills acquired in the foundation year to cultivate specialized skills in program development, program evaluation, and grant writing pertinent to a wide variety of children and families service systems.

SOWK 686b: Field Practicum
A second semester continuation of SOWK 686a as described above.

Electives
Students may select for their three electives any of the elective courses offered by the school. Additionally, if space allows, students may select a core or required course from any of the other Concentrations as an elective or can choose to select a course from the university courses and outside of the School of Social Work if it is listed as 500 or above and after it has been approved by both their advisor and the Concentration Chair. The most frequently selected electives by students in this concentration include: SOWK 617: Substance Abuse; SOWK 666: Domestic Violence; SOWK 678: Child Maltreatment; SOWK 668: Social Work and Law;
SOWK 599: Play Therapy; SOWK 685: Working with Adolescents; and SOWK 692: Loss, Grief and Bereavement. Students also often participate in global and national immersion summer courses as part of their electives.

**Clients Served**
The concentration prepares students for strengths-based practice with children, youth and adults across the life span, living in a wide variety of family systems. Family strengthening supports and services are conceptualized in the context of communities and key support institutions such as parks, libraries, early childhood education, youth groups and other positively-oriented activities that may be caked upon to provide help and support for all kinds of families. Families who may face life challenges resulting from issues such as: poverty, social injustice, lack of education, school failure, lack of employment and employment skills, immigration and acculturation issues, mental illness, homelessness, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, community violence, substance abuse, and chronic and terminal illness. The Concentration prepares students to work with all kinds of family structures including traditional two parent families, single parent families, same sex parent families, extended and kin caregiver families, foster and adoptive families, as well as children living in group homes and residential care facilities or in transitional housing programs. Students will also learn to work with adults in parenting roles such as biological parents, foster parents, adoptive parents, guardians, mentors, and teachers as well as residential care providers. Because of the complex contexts of families living in the American society and the diversity of the United States population, special attention is given to diversity issues cultural responsiveness and cultural competence.

**Families and Children Concentration Field Agencies**
Students provide a wide range of interventions in Families and Children placements, such as individual, group, and family therapy; case management; community advocacy; crisis management; and support and interaction with parents and caregivers. Services are provided in homes, schools, and agency settings. Types of agencies in which students complete Families and Children Concentration placements include:

- Traditional and alternative schools
- Residential and day treatment program
- Children’s advocacy centers
- Child welfare programs, including investigations, foster care, and adoptions
- Head Start, school readiness, and after school programs
- Domestic violence shelters and outreach

**Types of Employment**
Students are prepared for practice in complex urban environments in a very broad range of settings depending upon the area of interest developed by each student and upon the selection of electives in the concentration year. These areas include but are not limited to: early child care and education, school social work, child protection in the public child welfare system or in non-profit organizations providing specialized prevention and treatment programs to abused and neglected children and their families; the juvenile justice system; the mental health system and child guidance clinics; domestic violence programs; substance abuse treatment programs; mentoring programs; and many other social service settings that provide prevention, early intervention, and treatment services for children, youth and their families.
Skills Developed
Students will be able to: engage and assess family issues and concerns; develop treatment plans; deliver and evaluate services and supports that respond to problems common to children and families in complex diverse urban settings; work effectively with diverse populations across disciplines and theoretical orientations and within multiple arenas; anticipate and respond to emerging social issues within local, national and global contexts; and, utilize leadership skills to motivate, influence and direct others in the achievement of goals improving the quality of life for families and children. Students whose goals include LCSW licensure, will have completed the foundation upon which the required two years of supervised post MSW social work experience will be built and will be prepared to take the post graduate license preparation course recommended for all candidates taking the LCSW licensing exam.
HEALTH

Dramatic changes in healthcare delivery, technology, and discoveries in genetics, neuro- and bio-behavioral sciences have created new challenges and exciting opportunities for both clients and social workers. Navigating the increasingly complex health care system and making thoughtful decisions about new treatment options are areas where the health social worker makes a difference. As healthcare becomes more team oriented and less confined to hospitals, health social workers can provide specialized leadership. Community practice, conflict mediation, team development, case management, critical path model implementation, solution-focused therapy, chronic illness management, and policy advocacy are increasingly important in health social work.

Students choosing the Health Concentration will become professionals offering culturally responsive services in a variety of healthcare systems and settings, and to a range of diverse consumers. They will be comfortable with cutting edge use of the Internet and other digital technologies as tools for social workers. Concentration courses and field work are designed to prepare students for ethical interdisciplinary practice. Field placements will range from the traditional hospital sites to residential care, ambulatory clinics, home health, and community organizations.

Consistent with best practice models, students will learn interaction strategies designed to help individuals, couples, families, and groups cope with the stresses of illness and disease and to adapt strategies for maintaining health and wellness. Emerging technology, case management models, discharge planning, specific resources and referrals and legal and ethical mandates will be taught.

Issues of health policy, organization and development, macro practice, and research will round out the experience, preparing students for leadership roles in our diverse and urban environments.

In addition to the required courses, students will have the opportunity to choose from a range of elective courses across wide range of topics to further enhance career goals.

Course and field work will enable students to:

1. Develop an understanding of the social work role in varied interdisciplinary health settings, learn to make clinical decisions based on social work theory and values, and enhance the ability to work effectively as part of an interdisciplinary team.

2. Obtain knowledge of organizational behavior in the health context; develop competence in administration, program planning, organizational politics, and advocacy.

3. Examine theory-driven and evidence-based practices and their application to the formulation of social work assessments, treatment plans, and practice with individuals, groups, and families in healthcare settings.

4. Identify and effectively analyze the societal forces which shape health policy and service delivery, and understand the subsequent impact on practice.

5. Recognize the role of biological, psychological, social, spiritual, and cultural factors as they affect health, illness, and disability across the lifespan.
6. Understand the needs of special populations, as defined by gender, race/ethnicity, age, socioeconomic

7. Play a leadership role in program development, proposal formulation and in formulating practice guidelines and practice quality improvement and monitoring.

8. Acquire sufficient competency in research skills to be able to understand and apply research knowledge to practice in the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and participate in evaluating one’s own practice.

9. Enhance self-awareness for greater effectiveness as a social work professional and leader by examining

Course Requirements

Students selecting the health concentration must take four core courses and select four electives. As with all concentration year students, each health concentration student must enroll in the leadership course as well.

Core courses for the health concentration include:

**SOWK 631: Advanced Theories and Clinical Interventions in Health Care**
Evaluation of theory, best practices, emerging issues, and skill development in health settings; interaction among cultural, socio-economic, and organizational factors.

**SOWK 632: Program Planning and Evaluation in Health Care**
Program and intervention development and evaluation research in health settings. Issues and skill development in program design and methods for evaluation.

**SOWK 636: Policy in the Health Care Sector**
Evolution and current setting of health policy; dynamic interaction between cultural, socio-economic, and political factors in shaping American health policy. Required for students in Mental Health in Health Settings concentration.

**SOWK 686a/b: Field Practicum (Health Concentration)**
This two-semester, 8-unit course builds upon the first year foundation Field Practicum, and concentrates on knowledge and skill development in clinical practice. Students select placements from a variety of healthcare settings that provide services to adults, children, youth, families, and/or communities. Students complete 550 hours in this practicum, under the supervision of an MSW and carefully selected preceptor(s). Tasks and assignments are designed to expose students to and help them develop knowledge and/or skills in: clinical assessment and intervention, case management, interdisciplinary team interaction, program planning and development, evaluation, leadership, and advocacy.

Electives

Students will need to take a total of three 3-unit electives (total 9 units). Depending on their individual interests, students can take electives from other concentrations including clinical courses.
Health Concentration Field Agencies

Some of the areas where students are placed and find employment include:

- Adult Day Health Care
- Alternative Treatment Centers
- Assisted Living Facilities
- Community Health Care
- Home Health Care
- Hospice
- Hospital Social Work
- Management
- Health Concentration
- Mobile Clinics
- Rehabilitation Centers
- Residential Settings
- Private For-Profit
- Specialized Clinics (e.g. oncology, HIV/AIDS, multiple sclerosis, diabetes, obesity, pain)
MENTAL HEALTH

Social workers provide more mental health services than any other profession in the United States. Mental health services are provided to persons, families, and groups in a variety of public and private, traditional and non-traditional settings such as community based mental health centers, community clinics, schools, hospitals, primary care, at the workplace, and on the street. Mental health services are provided to individuals who experience a wide range of complex problems, including crises, grief and loss, trauma, mental illness, and situational and adjustment difficulties. Such problems impact individuals and families across the life span and the communities in which they live. Socio-political, socio-cultural and a multiplicity of contemporary factors, such as the economy, family stability, housing, acculturative stress, immigration, addiction, and military involvement, are important contextual influences on a person’s mental health.

USC’s Mental Health Concentration has a long and established history of leadership in the development of mental health practice and the training of social work practitioners and leaders in meeting the needs across many communities locally, nationally, and internationally. Our distinguished faculty is widely known for their teaching excellence, scholarship, and research contributions. Many of our tenure track and clinical teaching faculty are actively involved in direct practice and consultation services within the local Los Angeles community, as well as nationally and internationally.

The public mental health system of care is undergoing a transformation to recovery oriented evidence-based interventions that prioritize strength-based approaches and cultural competence. Such approaches are consistent with a social work framework promoting hope, strengths and resilience, and empowerment. USC’s Mental Health Concentration has provided leadership in the development and dissemination of evidence-based interventions throughout the region, establishing the first evidence based field unit with an agency partner.

The Mental Health Concentration offers courses in assessment, diagnosis, behavioral and practice theory, evidence-based intervention models, research, leadership, and advanced practice with individuals, couples, groups, and families. In addition, students can choose from a broad array of electives in which they can have the opportunity to build knowledge in population-specific topics (e.g., addiction, older adults, play therapy, domestic violence, military families). Throughout the Concentration coursework, racial/ethnic diversity, socio-cultural factors, as well as other aspects of diversity are considered and prioritized in the delivery of culturally relevant and culturally competent practice within complex urban settings.

Mental Health Concentration Outcomes
The objectives of the Mental Health Concentration are related to the provision of advanced knowledge, values, and skills for second year students that build on the general content of the first year.

Specifically, mental health students will:

1. Gain an appreciation of mental health as a holistic concept related to a state of positive well-being, not merely the absence of pathology or illness including the knowledge of:
   a. The socio-cultural and other community influences that enhance mental health and emotional well-being;
   b. The needs of the individual and significant others;
   c. Recognition of the principles of primary prevention, advocacy, continuity care, community participation, attention to vulnerable groups, and the importance of natural support systems.
2. Be able to apply explanatory behavior theories to understand the mental health functioning of individuals, families/couples, and groups. This theoretical understanding exists within our social work biopsychosocial framework that emphasizes the interactive and reciprocal functioning of biology, psychology and the social environment.

3. Differentially assess a broad spectrum of common mental health problems encountered by clients in complex urban environments compounded by severe mental illness homelessness, dual diagnosis, health problems, violence, poverty, and discrimination.

4. Design and implement an intervention plan from a range of practice theories, methods or modalities that can be used to enhance or restore more effective mental health and social functioning. The plan will place on emphasis on those interventions that have been empirically supported (evidenced based practice models).

5. Deliver services to individuals, families/couples, and groups in a way that reflects an understanding and an appreciation of the differences produced by factors such as age, gender, ethnic/racial/cultural heritage, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, religious preference, physical ability, and other social factors that may be present in persons using mental health services.

6. Know the interrelationship between oppression, disempowerment, and mental health problems and the need to work toward social justice as these factors impact persons using mental health services.

7. Expand the understanding of their own values, the use of self, and the ways in which these factors may influence social work practice.

8. Apply social work ethics in practice.

9. Have an awareness of the policies and the philosophical and ideological issues reflected in the current structure of mental health service systems as related to the creation of services, organizations, and community practice.

10. Understand the social work perspective by providing leadership in interdisciplinary practice, collaboration, and consultation.

11. Understand mental health organizational functioning within urban communities to determine the adequacy of an organization's service to clients, and demonstrate the ability to develop services to meet unmet needs of clients.

12. Have the ability to critically assess and apply evidenced-based knowledge to inform their practice in mental health settings.

13. Have the ability to apply behavioral research methodologies to monitor and evaluate mental health practice.

Concentration Requirements
The Mental Health Concentration offers a core set of required courses that provide advanced theoretical knowledge, evidence-based clinical skills and research knowledge, which permit students to administer direct clinical services to clients within mental health settings.
Students are required to take three core courses (SOWK 605, 645, and 625) in addition to the field practicum component (SOWK 686a/b). Students are required to take elective coursework that covers substantive content on clinical skills with groups and families. The selection of such electives that meet this requirement are to be discussed with the concentration advisor.

**SOWK 605: Human Development and Mental Health**
Understanding problem-producing behaviors and their ramifications on individuals, families, and groups that comprise the clientele in mental health settings. *Prerequisite: SOWK 505.*

**SOWK 645: Clinical Practice in Mental Health Settings**
Social work processes from intake to termination; emphasis on clinical skills required for social work practice in a broad spectrum of mental health settings.

**SOWK 625: Evaluation of Research: Mental Health**
Range of research conducted in mental health; evaluation of selected research reports and their application to social work practice. *Prerequisite: SOWK 562.*

**SOWK 686a/b: Field Practicum for Mental Health Concentration**
This two-semester, 8 unit course, builds upon the first year foundation Field Practicum and concentrates on knowledge and skill development in clinical practice. Students complete 600 hours in this practicum, under the supervision of an MSW and/or qualified preceptor(s). Tasks and assignments are designed to expose students to and help them develop knowledge and/or skills in: clinical assessment and intervention including evidenced based models, case management, multidisciplinary team interaction, evaluation, leadership, and advocacy. Students follow a selection and assignment process for field placements from a variety of mental health settings that provide services to adults, children, youth, families, and/or communities.

**Electives**
Students will need to take a total of three-3 unit electives (total 9 units). Mental Health concentration students MUST take several “prescribed electives.” Additional information on these courses will be provided by the VAC Registrar.
SOCIAL WORK & BUSINESS IN A GLOBAL SOCIETY

Concentration Overview
The Social Work and Business in a Global Society (SWBGS) concentration prepares students to be social work leaders who partner with business organizations to ease tensions between work, individual and family needs, to bring balance to stressful work environments, and to promote positive well-being and equity for employees, organizations and the communities they impact.

Bringing a humane approach and ethical values to workplace environments, SWBGS students develop the skills needed to create positive change for individuals and the complex systems within which they work. Our students are encouraged to think globally, reflecting the increasing reality of the worldwide impact of today’s business organizations.

Concentration Principles
The focus of the SWBGS Concentration is framed by three principles: Incorporating social work ethics and values in business; the identification of individuals, families and communities as stakeholders in the world of business; and an emphasis on the importance of global interdependence in guiding organizational actions.

The Pillars of the Social Work & Business in a Global Society Concentration and Skills Developed
The social work roles and functions of the concentration fall within the pillars described below:

1. Corporate Social Responsibility: Social work students receive training on providing guidance to businesses on effective giving strategies, community and population needs assessment, funding strategies and accountability processes, and other resources needed to make meaningful contributions to communities.

2. Employment Sustainability: Social work students apply the person-in-environment lens toward long-term employment sustainability, learning to assess client education, training, and employment needs, and individual-business interactions from the perspective of how to best empower people to obtain, maintain or even regain employment across various jobs and employers.

3. Inclusion and Diversity in Businesses: Social work students gain skills in empowering businesses to increase their focus on the quality of human relationships in the workplace, and to implement organizational practices that honor and value all individuals, while supporting organizational effectiveness and sustainability goals.

4. Behavioral Health and Wellness Across System Levels: Social work students learn to promote and empower employers and employees to collaborate in creating healthy workplaces, emphasizing micro (individual and family interventions), mezzo (work group or organizational group interventions) and macro (organizational and policy level interventions) that promote behavioral health and in turn support employee well-being.

5. Balancing Work and Life: Social work students incorporate a broader focus that looks at the interdependent nature of business operations and human well-being, guiding multi-level interventions that shift the focus toward methods of achieving both organizational and individual or family goals.

Future Career Roles and Settings
SWBGS classes and placements prepare students for a diverse range of roles, either inside or outside of businesses. Here are some examples:
• Work with a company to develop their privately funded campaign to address world hunger, or to create an employee volunteer campaign to mentor high school students toward successful careers.
• Develop an employee diversity and inclusion program to bridge the cultural gaps between employees in a U.S. headquarters office and new employees in worksites in India or other developing countries.
• Provide clinical assessment and counseling for employees dealing with depression, divorce, work stress or other personal concerns.
• Design and manage Work & Life programs, finding resources for an employee dealing with an elderly parent with dementia who lives out of state, or an employee who wants to continue nursing her first baby after returning from maternity leave.
• Explore emerging innovative roles with the goal of creating positive work environments, such as designing cross-system teams that integrate the work process and also build collegiality and respect among employees.

Future job titles may include titles like these currently advertised in the job market:
• Corporate Social Responsibility Manager
• Employee Assistance Program clinician
• Behavioral Healthcare Manager
• Organizational Change Management Consultant
• Global Diversity and Inclusion Manager
• Employee Wellness Specialist
• Director Sustainability

An example of organizations with which our Southern California graduate students are currently working:
• USC Center for Work and Family Life/Counseling and Organizational Development
• Cal Tech Institute of Technology/Employee and Organizational Development Unit
• Warner Brothers/Employee Programs and Initiatives
• Target/Human Resources
• Los Angeles Foster Care Program/Therapist
• UCLA Staff and Faculty Consultation Center
• Alta/Med Health Services Corporation
• Actors Fund of America

Curriculum
The curriculum includes a total of three required courses, two of which are set (all students take the same two courses) and the third of which is chosen from two selectives or alternate required courses. The selective courses allow students to design their concentration focus around a micro or macro practice orientation.

Required Courses:

SOWK 672: Context and Policies of Social Work Practice with Work Environments
This course prepares students for social work practice in work environments, with an understanding of the historical development and current realities of work environments, and the evolving roles of social workers practicing in business settings. Emerging trends in Employee Assistance Programs, managed behavioral health, organizational change and development, and corporate social responsibility are explored, with an emphasis on the increasing globalization of service delivery. Students will also learn to analyze and apply international, national, state and organizational policies to specific problems and accompanying interventions that currently impact the workplace and the lives of workers. Consideration is given to a wide range of issues such as the impact of the economy on employment, the changing nature of work, the impact of work on the family; trends
in incorporation and organizational structures, and the impact of relevant policies on vulnerable individuals, families and communities. Students will also utilize theory, a multilevel system analysis and team planning to propose micro, mezzo and macro work environment solutions within the context of current policy concerns.

SOWK 679: Mezzo Theory and Practice in Work-Related Environments

Human behaviors in groups on the job and in work-related environments are at the core of numerous social problems, including discrimination, work stress and health problems, verbal abuse or bullying, workplace violence, and even poor community relations or disregard for surrounding environments. In addition, knowledge of these types of human behaviors and effective interventions prepare social workers to take the lead on improving human interactions in business organizations, resulting in higher functioning organizations, better employment sustainability, and greater well-being for the individuals, families and communities that interact with organizations. The importance of cultural competency, social work ethics, and working toward social justice within work environments is integrated throughout the course.

Students will gain a working knowledge of mezzo practice skills including group assessment, training, debriefing, counseling, facilitation, strategic planning, and dialogue to address organizational needs such as inclusion, conflict, trauma, team building and work group strengthening. Students engage in team activities and assignments to increase their understanding of mezzo dynamics, to deepen their awareness of their own interactive styles and to increase their ability to become self-reflective practitioners. In turn, this awareness will strengthen their capacity to assess, model and empower others to utilize collaborative and effective behaviors in their work environments.

Selectives (students choose one of the following two courses):

SOWK 671: Micro Practice & Evaluation in Work-Related Environments

This course prepares students to become micro level practitioners serving in a variety of work-related settings, including Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), Work/Life programs, behavioral health/managed care, behavioral health disability management, wellness or personal growth programs, career or job counseling, and coaching consultation practice. The course applies theories of human behavior and knowledge of individual and family problems and strengths, while including a focus on the intersection of personal and work concerns. Students are provided with opportunities for increasing their self-awareness and cultural competency, and for critically analyzing ethical dilemmas that may be triggered within complex work-related practice settings. With an emphasis on assessment and short-term evidence-based intervention models, students gain knowledge and skills in problem identification, assessment, use of clinical diagnoses, treatment planning, linkage and referrals. Micro level practice evaluation design, methods, and reporting on both case level (single system) and program level evaluations are also core components of the course.

SOWK 673: Macro Practice & Evaluation in Work-Related Environments

In rapidly changing local, national and global organizations, there is a growing need to address the tension between workers’ responsibilities to families and to their jobs, the effects of discrimination, workplace inequities, or job-related stressors, and the often competing goals of business organizations and the surrounding communities or populations they impact. With an emphasis on incorporating social work values in work environments, this course prepares students to become macro practitioners in organizational settings. Students engage in learning about the processes of creating and evaluating change at the organizational level to promote well-being for individuals and families, workplaces, employees, employers, unions, and the communities.

The class encourages students to develop the skills that social workers need to become organizational change agents. Students learn to apply the social work process to organizational level change, assessing organizations and stakeholders’ needs, applying organizational theories, and planning, implementing, sustaining and evaluating change efforts or programs. Examples of internal organizational interventions or programs discussed
in SOWK 673 include inclusion and diversity, employee engagement, employment changes and sustainability, and organizational well-being. Externally focused programs include community relations, corporate giving and corporate social responsibility or sustainability, operating at boundary between organizations and the communities they impact. The class is project-focused, including an opportunity to research, and design an organizational-level change or program, as well as proposing the formal evaluation component that measures its effectiveness.

**Electives**
Since practice in the world of work can give you opportunities to develop your professional career in many directions, we encourage you to select your unique individualized course of studies from among the electives offered by the school. Your field faculty will be available for consultation and will assist you in choosing the courses that best serve your professional goals.

**Placements for the SWBGS Concentration**
With a variety of educational experiences available to students who enter this field of specialization, students gain knowledge and expertise in the various levels of practice and with different populations. Some placements focus more on the micro level (individual and family clinical focus) of intervention while others are geared more towards the mezzo and macro interventions (organizational change and program development). Students, in consultation with the field faculty and the field instructor, will select placements that will maximize their learning experiences. The Social Work & Business concentration also draws upon what are called “non-traditional placements” in organizations that may not ordinarily hire MSW professionals, in financial services, insurance, health services, corporate relations and foundation management settings. Academic placements for the Social Work & Business in a Global Society concentration are being developed on a national basis, and the specific type of placements available may depend on regional availability.

**Southern California UPC Placement Sites for SWBGS Examples:**
- Alta-Med Health Services Corporation
- Association of Psychiatric Social Workers, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 2717
- California Institute of Technology, Human Resources
- California Institute of Technology, Staff and Faculty Consultation Center
- City of Long Beach, Human Resources
- Families in Schools, Early Education and Family Literacy Programs
- Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)
- LAUSD School Operations, Human Relations, Diversity & Equity
- Orange County Department of Education
- Pacific Clinics, Mental Health Worker Training Program and Employment Services Program
- Sedgwick Calabasas Disability and Absence Management, Sedgwick Claims Management Services
- The Actors Fund, Employee Assistance Program
- UCLA Healthcare 50 Plus
- UCLA Staff and Faculty Consultation Center
- UCLA-LOSH (Labor Occupational Safety & Health) Program
- USC Center for Work and Family Life
- USC School of Social Work-AT &T City Center
- Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc., Employee Programs & Initiatives
- Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc., Employee Relations-Organization Development
III. SUB-CONCENTRATION OPTIONS

MILITARY SOCIAL WORK AND VETERAN SERVICES

Anthony M. Hassan, PhD, Sub-concentration Chair
Fred Stone, MSSW, MPA, LCSW, VAC Co-Coordinator
Eugenia Weiss, PsyD, MSW, LCSW, VAC Co-Coordinator

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK

Steve Hydon, LCSW, Sub-concentration Chair
Mary Beth Harris, PhD, LCSW, Sub-concentration Co-Chair

OLDER ADULTS

Maria Aranda, PhD, LCSW, MPA, Sub-concentration Chair
MILITARY SOCIAL WORK AND VETERAN SERVICES

The competencies required for social workers working with the military, veterans and active duty members, families, and organizational decision-makers, represent both a distinctive niche and critical expansion of talent. Without military-specific knowledge and skills, social workers could be seen as outsiders, potential threats, and poorly prepared practitioners who may inhibit the dictums of the social work profession. Therefore, it is imperative that these social workers understand the military context, relevant cultural elements, and historical framework of military.

The Military Social Work and Veteran Services sub-concentration prepares students to provide a full range of human services to the nation's military personnel, veterans and their families, helping them cope with the stresses of military life such as including managing prolonged deployments and transitioning back into a home environment. The sub-concentration is open to all students, especially military personnel, spouses and other military dependents and veterans who wish to maintain a post-military career affiliation with the Armed Forces and provide professional services to their military comrades and families.

Outcomes
The objectives of the Military Social Work and Veteran Services sub-concentration are related to the provision of advanced knowledge, values, and skills for second year students that build on the general content of the first year.

Specifically, military social work students will:

1. Gain an understanding of and appreciation for the background, structure, roles/missions of the armed forces, the branches of the Department of Defense (DoD), which consists of the Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and state Guard and Reserves and deliver services in a way that reflects their understanding and appreciation of these differences.

2. Be able to compare the life styles and issues of services members, veterans, their families, and communities with the civilian sector and facilitate recognition of the direct practice, policy, administrative activities, and advocacy implications.

3. Develop insight into the reasons for military service, the experiences of minorities, and current issues facing the military, its members, and the dependent population in order to apply social work services with a culturally responsive perspective.

4. Understand theories and research-informed intervention strategies as well as ethical dilemmas, diversity issues and the many stressors inherent in the military, when striving to intervene with service members, veterans and military families.

5. Demonstrate a knowledge base related to risk and protective factors associated with deployment, military service, and other aspects of life and role transitions that service members and veterans experience. Be able to explain complex bio-psycho-social spiritual factors germane to assessment and treatment planning with service members, veterans, and military families.

6. Be able to reflect on their own affect, thoughts, world views, and biases that influence practice and teach the use of “professional self” in clinical practice contexts.
Beyond the basic professional social work foundation course requirement of the Master of Social Work degree, the sub-concentration in Military Social Work and Veteran Services offers a specialized training focusing on the needs of military personal, veterans and their families.

Requirements:
Students in the Military Social Work and Veteran Services sub-concentration are required to complete an online Military Culture Seminar and take two core courses (SOWK 640 and 641) in addition to the field practicum component (SOWK 686a/b). USC makes every effort to place students in this sub-concentration in placement that will expose them to military members, veterans, and their families. This military-related placement, however, is NOT guaranteed. In cases when a military-related placement is not available, students may be assigned to a Virtual Clinical Experience (VCE). The VCE is a weekly two-hour session that meets in the virtual classroom with a faculty facilitator and military affiliated clients (see Appendix C). One semester is required to meet the placement requirement for the military sub-concentration.

Military Culture Seminar
Students are required to complete a military culture seminar on-line module within the first month of their 686a course and will receive 3 field hours for successful completion. Students enrolled in the sub-concentration will receive seminar login instructions at the start of their 686a course.

SOWK 640: Clinical Practice with the Military Families
Theoretical and practical approaches to clinical practice with military families. Overview of common social issues in the military system and demands on the families dynamic. Prerequisites: SOWK 505, SOWK 535.
- Military families structure
- Culture of military families life
- Demands and stressors, and impact of deployment on the military families
- Best practice interventions for couples/children/families affected by combat stress/PTSD
- Domestic violence and child abuse
- Substance abuse
- Impact of geographic relocation
- Families resilience
- Grief, loss and suicide in the military/veteran families

SOWK 641: Clinical Practice with Service members and Veterans
Theoretical and practical approaches to trauma for use in treatment of PTSD. Advances students’ knowledge of best practices and current evidence-based models on PTSD. Prerequisites: SOWK 505, SOWK 535.
- Phenomenology and neurobiology of combat trauma, and implications for clinical practice
- Phase-oriented, multi-modality social work practice planning
- Engagement, therapeutic alliance, and clinical case management
- Psychosocial factors influenced by physical injuries
- Adjustment to loss and change, grieving, and mood disorders
- Treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress/PTSD
- Therapeutic approaches to clients with trauma-related symptoms and substance abuse

SOWK 686a/b: Field Practicum
A range of placement options are available for students interested in learning more about working with military personnel, military retirees, spouses and other military dependents. Students will complete 550 clock hours of internship in one of the following approved settings:
Practicum sites are based on the availability of the agency to accept a student and a field instructor to provide supervision; therefore, students are NOT guaranteed a specific type of agency. **Students interested in the Military sub-concentration must reside within geographical range of an approved agency (45 minutes to one hour/30 miles).** In cases where a student does not reside within the geographical range of an approved agency, the student would need to determine if it is possible to travel beyond the geographical range for an approved placement. If the student is unable or unwilling to travel beyond the geographical area, it may not be possible to develop a placement that would meet the Military sub-concentration requirements. An agency would, however, be developed to meet the concentration requirements.

**Elective options**
Individuals pursuing the military social work sub-concentration will also be able to select from a variety of highly relevant elective courses that will serve to enhance their training and future service delivery capabilities. Each of these courses has been enhanced with military and veteran specific content. The following list is intended to provide an example of the types of electives that maybe offered, however all of the electives will not be offered each semester:

- Substance Abuse w/consideration of Other Addictive Disorders
- Domestic Violence
- Disabilities and Family Care Giving
- Loss, Grief and Bereavement (loss of body image and recovery)
- Spirituality
- Social Work Practice with Severe and Persistently Mentally Ill
- Clinical Practice with Couples
- Psychopharmacology in Mental Health
SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK

The School Social Work sub-concentration prepares students to practice in school settings, with particular emphasis on intervention with children, adolescent and families.

The School Social Work sub-concentration will be available in 2014-15 to VAC students in the Families and Children Concentration.

Residence eligibility for the School SW Sub-Concentration:

- Students in California, Kansas, Oregon, Arizona, or Texas may select the sub-concentration pending the availability of a school field placement.
- Students in other states may also select the sub-concentration, pending (1) approval from the regional field education coordinator and (2) availability of a school placement.

Course Requirements:

1. Enrollment in Families & Children Concentration courses: SOWK 601, 602 & 603 and two electives of your choice.
2. Enrollment in a required three-unit course SOWK 614: Social Work Practice in School Settings in the first or second semester of the concentration year. This course is concerned with policies, theories, and principles underlying the practice of social work in school settings. The focus is on school social work as part of an interdisciplinary approach to resolving school-related problems and on the social worker as a facilitator and advocate to aid students, families, schools, and communities to achieve educational goals.

Field Work Experience in a School Setting:

1. Students will engage in micro, mezzo, and macro practice with individuals, groups and families in school settings for a minimum of 550 field hours (600 for CA PPSC) for their concentration field placement. VFP students will be in school field placement for 790 field hours (three-semester placement).
2. Students in the sub-concentration may begin their field practicum in any semester. However, schools in many communities are closed during the summer months. Thus, careful selection and planning is required in order for you to complete the required practicum hours within a functioning school setting.
3. Students will be supervised by a qualified (credentialed) MSW field instructor determined by USC Field Education.

State-by-State Requirements for School Social Workers:

Professional requirements for school social workers are managed at the state level in most states. Requirements range from defined state credentialing policies managed by the state department of education or licensing board, to less formal requirements that are enforced by local school districts. Students who select the School Social Work Sub-Concentration with the intent to become a school social worker in their own state should investigate their state or local requirements at the beginning of their field placement in a school. Thus, they can maximize the opportunity to meet the requirements through selection of specific course electives and field experiences before completing their MSW program.
PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES CREDENTIAL (California Only)

Social Workers who seek professional employment within a California public school system must hold a Pupil Personnel Services Credential (PPSC). This credential is issued to eligible persons by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) on recommendation of qualified schools of social work. The USC School of Social Work has a CTC approved program to prepare social workers for practice in public school settings.

This preparation can be completed as part of the MSW program. School Social Work contributes to the overall academic success of children and adolescents. Other State of California Requirements:

Students wanting to obtain the PPSC must complete a minimum of 600 field hours in their school placement setting. Additionally, students are required to be fingerprinted, submit official transcripts and a PPS Application to obtain the credential. This process will be facilitated by Field Education Coordinators. In addition, the candidate for Credential must obtain a passing score on the California Basic Education Skills Test (CBEST). Information about the test may be secured from the USC testing Bureau.

California School Social Work Placements (list of placements is only a sample/partial list):

- Anaheim Union School District
- Compton School District
- Magnolia School District
- East Whittier School District
- San Pedro School District
- Ontario Unified School District
- Unified School District
- Pasadena Unified School District
- Beverly Hills School District
- Children’s Bureau
- Culver City School District
- Placentia Yorba Linda School District
- Santa Monica School District
- Orange County Department of Education
- Los Angeles
- Long Beach Unified School District
- West Covina School District
OLDER ADULTS

The Older Adults sub-concentration will be available to VAC students in the Health and Mental Health Concentrations. The Older Adults Sub-concentration electives will be offered on the VAC starting in January 2015.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, gerontological social work is one of the fastest growing occupations. Through this sub-concentration, students learn about the aging process and its impact on the well-being of individuals and their families; theoretical concepts; practice skills for preventive, rehabilitative and supportive services; public policy; and personal and societal attitudes and values that can affect older adults. Graduates are prepared for direct service roles with seniors and their caregivers in geriatric health and mental health centers, hospitals and long-term-care facilities, multipurpose senior centers, welfare planning bodies and retirement communities.

The Older Adults Sub-concentration consists of four required courses: SOWK 653, SOWK 616, SOWK 686a, and SOWK 686b.

First semester

SOWK 653: Social Work with Older Adults (3 units)
The course is designed to provide students with an in-depth understanding of aging theories and issues related to old age at individual and societal levels for effective social work practice with older adults and their families. This course examines both normative and pathological aging for their impact on physical, psychological, and economic functioning. The course will also discuss social aspects of aging relating to families roles and responsibilities, cultural diversity, support networks, and the use of health and social service. Students will understand the needs of older adults and their families, as defined by race/ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation and the unique barriers to service manifested from language and cultural differences. Case discussions from field placement are integrated into the course.

Students will learn the policymaking process while focusing on a particular aging related policy area such as health, work and retirement, housing and transportation, and long term care. Upon completion, students will be able to articulate a working definition of social policy practice as it relates to an aging society and understand major economic developments and current societal trends that affect older persons and their families. Students will also understand the processes of agenda building, problem definition, and policy analysis to assess how these forces affect and shape delivery of service to older persons and their families.

SOWK 686a: Field Practicum II (4 units)

Second semester

SOWK 616: Clinical Practice with Older Adults (3 units)
This course provides an intensive examination of clinical practice with older adults from a social work perspective. Drawing from strengths-based, empowerment-oriented frameworks, students will have the opportunity to critically evaluate health and mental health conditions and challenges in diverse aging populations and multicultural environments. Clinical competence in gerontological and geriatric social work requires a keen understanding of biopsychosocial issues of late-life as well as the application of empirically-supported interventions in home and community-based settings. Students gain an increased understanding of the
rationale, process, and challenges of evidenced-based practice and the skills needed to develop relevant and practical interventions responsive to the particular issues facing older adults and their caregivers.

**SOWK 686b: Field Practicum II** (4 units)

**Students who enroll in the Older Adults Sub-concentration will be able to:**

1. Facilitate student’s learning of major bio-psychosocial theories and frameworks used to explain the aging process within the individual, and its impact on the families, community, and larger society.
2. Facilitate student’s examination of the effect of ageism on older adults.
3. Prepare students to examine the variations in aging experiences for older adults of diverse racial/ethnic, cultural, social class, health status, and sexual orientation backgrounds, and introduce what is culturally appropriate practice.
4. Prepare students to discuss social aspects of aging as they relate to families roles and responsibilities and social support networks.
5. Facilitate student’s learning of major aging policies and programs through analyzing the structure of the American political system, the major stages in the policy process, and the roles and interaction of the various civic elements of society.
6. Facilitate students’ learning of the prevalence and risk factors of select health and mental health challenges affecting the bio-psychosocial development of diverse aging populations.
7. Prepare students to demonstrate knowledge of the rationale, process, and challenges of evidence-based practice.
8. Facilitate students’ understanding and application of strengths-based and empowerment social work practice in diverse aging populations specifically with regard to interventions and practice guidelines serving older adults.
9. Facilitate students’ skills in specifying one or more practice models by asking relevant questions and examining evidence pertaining to the evidence.
10. Develop students’ facility for oral and written expression and analytic thinking necessary for professional social work practice.

**NOTES:**

- Both SOWK 653 and 616 are (1) available as electives to all social work students regardless of their primary concentration election, and (2) meet the State of California’s Board of Behavioral Sciences aging and long-term required courses for LCSW licensure.
IV. FIELD PLACEMENT PROCESS

Frequently Asked Questions

Assistant Director, VAC Field Education
Suh Chen Hsiao, MSW, LCSW
Community-Based Field Placement

The field placement builds on the foundation of the Virtual Field Practicum or BSW internship, helping you develop advanced clinical skills and knowledge within a designated concentration area. Please refer to the Regional Map (See Appendix D) for additional information on the Regional Director who oversees the state(s) where your field placement will be located.

The following FAQs will provide additional information on what to expect for the field placement process.

FIELD PRACTICUM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the goal of the agency field placement?
The field placement helps you develop advanced skills and knowledge within a designated concentration area.

How is my placement selected?
Based on area of interest, students have the opportunity to interview with approved placements that meet the requirements of each student’s selected concentration. A final placement assignment will be based on the following data: feedback from the student, feedback from the agency, the student's educational needs and goals, and whether a particular field instructor and/or agency can meet these needs.

How many agencies will I interview?
One agency is provided initially for consideration; however this may vary among geographic locations.

When and how will I be notified of my placement interview site(s)?
Students will receive an email notification which will have the placement information and a request for you to contact your assigned agency(ies) for your interview(s). It is extremely important that you contact the selected agencies immediately to schedule your practicum interviews. Upon completion of the interviews, the students and agency representatives are required to submit interview reaction sheets for feedback on the interviews. Notification of your placement site will be sent upon completion of this process.

If I have circumstances that impede my placement in certain agencies, will that affect my field placement?
It is imperative that the Placement team be apprised of any special circumstances as soon as possible to make appropriate placement assignments that will not jeopardize your confidentiality or the agency requirements. Should this information not be forthcoming, it can impede your successful progression through the program.
Will I be placed at the agency of my choice?
Students are encouraged to email the Regional Directors with the names of any agencies that may be of interest and we will contact the agency to determine if it is a qualified USC placement site and will be added to our database for the potential placement of all students. **Under no circumstance should a student contact an agency to solicit or confirm field placements.**

Will I be placed with the client population of my choice?
Students are placed in their area of concentration interest.

What happens if I decide to change my concentration?
Student can change their concentration by contacting vacfield@usc.edu before entering the community-based field placement. However, this may delay your field placement and expected graduation date. Change of concentration will require approval from the Regional Field Team and the VAC Registrar. Priority registration and field placement will be given to concentration students who chose their concentration on time.

Will my field placement be close to where I live?
We make every attempt to locate an educationally appropriate placement as close to your residence as possible, however seek to place students within a 30-mile range. At times, the best placement match is further from your home than you may prefer.

If I do not have a car, will I be assigned to a field placement site?
Yes. While we may be able to accommodate you, the number of field placement options for non-driving students is limited.

Can I do my field placement where I work?
If approved, a Place of Employment internship may be considered. Consideration for a Place of Employment internship request must meet the following criteria:

- An agency application, virtual site visit, and Memorandum of Understanding between the agency and USC SSW must be completed prior to consideration for approval of the Proposal for Place of Employment Internship.
- All of the required field hours must be under the supervision of an MSW Field Instructor who is not the student’s employment supervisor and meets the standards of the USC School of Social Work (i.e., the Field Instructor must have a minimum of two-years post-masters work experience and have been employed at the fieldwork site for a minimum of one year).
- The field instruction assignments must be different from the student’s regular work assignments and the student’s employment hours and field hours must be differentiated and separate.
- The assignments must be new learning for the student: i.e., a new population, new treatment methodology, or a new field of practice.
- During internship hours the student’s educational goals and Learning Agreement should be the primary focus of the position.
- Please note: There will be no fieldwork credit given for previous professional work experience.

An administrative review and approval by the Regional Director is required for such requests. Additional information may be requested, however we are unable to guarantee that your employment can serve as your placement. If you are interested in learning more about whether your agency could serve as a field placement, please contact the Regional Director to discuss your specific situation.

**What specific requirements must be completed prior to my starting the placement?**

Many field placement agencies require fingerprinting, criminal clearance, and TB testing. Some agencies require proof of car insurance, a good driving record, a medical evaluation, and/or drug testing. You will be notified as to which of these your field placement requires and are responsible for the cost incurred. If you have a special consideration that has not been indicated on your field placement application, please contact your Regional Director.

**When does my agency field placement begin?**

Field placement begins the first week of class.

**How many hours a week will I need to complete in my field placement?**

A minimum of 16-20 hours per week for a total of 790 hours is required for the three-semester community-based field placement. For Advanced Standing students, an average of 20 hours per week for a total of 550 hours is required for the two-semester field placement. Based on student performance, additional hours may be required to meet CSWE core competencies.

**What days am I in the field placement?**

Field placement days are scheduled by the student and placement agency around the student’s class schedule, with field hours falling during normal business hours (9am-5pm). Students are required to maintain a schedule that is reflective of one to two eight-hour day(s) and additional four-hour block schedule.

**Are there weekend and weeknight placements available?**

Field placements occur on weekdays during regular business hours. Students are encouraged to consider adjustments in their schedules to accommodate a weekday schedule. Field placement agencies able to accommodate interns outside of normal business hours are minimal. We cannot guarantee placements at alternate times.
What happens if my field placement begins late?

Sometimes due to unforeseen circumstances with the student, agency or field instructor, a student may begin the placement late in the program. In this case, students are expected to work with the Regional Director, Field Liaison, and Field Instructor to determine how you will meet the 790 hours for three semester community placement or 550 hours required in your Concentration year. This may mean additional hours per week or extended time in the agency.

Will I receive payment?

Most of our field placement agencies do not provide a stipend or salary for students. While some agencies may offer stipends based on language ability or other special circumstances, we do not select agencies on the basis of whether a stipend is provided but instead on the type of learning opportunities available to the student. We therefore do not require agencies to compensate students, and subsequently a stipend or salary is never guaranteed.

Will I receive a grade for the field placement?

Field Practicum is a six-unit course for Foundation Year (three units for each semester) and eight-unit course (four units each semester) for Concentration, for which you will receive a grade of CR (credit), NC (no credit), or IP (in progress) at the end of the semester. You will be evaluated by the Field Instructor and your Field Liaison will assign your grade for each semester. Please refer to the Field Education Manual for specific field requirements via this link: http://sowkweb.usc.edu/download/msw-vac/field-education/vac-field-manual.

Where will I be placed if I select the Military Sub Concentration?

A range of placement options are available for students interested in learning more about working with military personnel, military retirees, spouses and other military dependents. Students will complete 790 clock hours of internship (550 for Advanced Standing students) in one of the following approved settings:

- Family Services Unit
- Military Hospitals
- Veteran Services Organizations
- Salvation Army
- VA Outpatient Centers
- Vocational Rehabilitation Centers
- Community based agencies serving military families and veterans
- Armed Forces
- Community Mental Health Centers
- University Student Counseling Centers
- Military Correction Facilities
- Base/Installation (only available for overseas or students residing on base)
- Veteran Affairs
- Vet Centers
- Other approved agencies serving military families and veterans
Practicum sites are based on the availability of the agency to accept a student and a field instructor to provide supervision, therefore no guarantees are extended to students on a specific type of agency that would be arranged.

**What happens if a Military Sub-concentration placement cannot be identified in my geographic area?**

Some geographic areas may be challenged in finding appropriate agencies that can guarantee a military-affiliated caseload. In these cases, the Regional Director will identify a placement site in your Concentration focus without the military caseload and students will be required to participate weekly in Virtual Clinical Experience (see Appendix C).

Students who would prefer to drop the Military sub-concentration designation can continue with their Military sub-concentration coursework as electives, however will no longer be identified by the School as being enrolled in the sub-concentration.

**What happens if I defer or take an LOA?**

Placement requires a minimum of 8 weeks to secure additional placement options for returning students. We cannot guarantee that your initial interview sites will be available upon your return to placement.

**Who do I contact if I have questions about my Concentration?**

The Regional Field Directors (see Appendix D) are responsible for working with the placement team to identify your concentration placement. If there are questions related to the academic requirements of the concentration, please refer to Concentration Contact Information (see Appendix B).

**How do I find out about the licensure requirement in my State?**

Please refer to this link to find out specific licensure requirement in your State:

http://socialworklicensemap.com/
V. FORM

Concentration Selection Form (Online submission, not included)

Students will select their Concentration and any Sub-Concentration by completing the online Field Placement Form. Please submit the online form by the assigned due date; failure to complete the survey may result in a delayed field start date. If you have questions in regards to this process, please contact VAC Field at vacfield@usc.edu or 213-821-0900 for assistance.
VI. APPENDICES

A. Concentration Year Curriculum Snapshot
B. Concentration Contact Information
C. FAQ Virtual Clinical Experience (VCE) - Military Sub-Concentration only
D. Regional Map
### APPENDIX A: CY CURRICULUM SNAPSHOT

**Concentration Year Curriculum Snapshot for FT Students (Subject to change)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Third Semester</th>
<th>Fourth Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Families &amp; Children</strong></td>
<td>601 Advanced Theories &amp; Clinical Interventions with Children &amp; Adolescents</td>
<td>602 Advanced Theories &amp; Clinical Interventions with w/Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>611 Leadership in the Social Work Profession and Organizations</td>
<td>603 Merging Research, Planning &amp; Policy for Change in Families and Children Settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>686a Field Practicum</td>
<td>686b Field Practicum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 @ Electives *</td>
<td>1 @ Elective*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mental Health</strong></td>
<td>605 Human Development and Mental Health</td>
<td>611 Leadership in the Social Work Profession and Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>645 Clinical Practice in Mental Health Settings</td>
<td>625 Evaluation of Research in Mental Health Settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>686a Field Practicum</td>
<td>686b Field Practicum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 @ Electives*</td>
<td>1 @ Elective*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COPA</strong></td>
<td>629 Evaluation of Research: Community Organization, Planning and Administration</td>
<td>639 Social Policy for Managers, Planners, &amp; Community Organizers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>648 Management for Community and Social Services</td>
<td>611 Leadership in the Social Work Profession and Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>686a Field Practicum</td>
<td>686b Field Practicum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 @ Electives*</td>
<td>1 @ Elective*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health</strong></td>
<td>631 Advanced Theories &amp; Clinical Interventions in Health Care</td>
<td>611 Leadership in the Social Work Profession and Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>636 Social Policy in the Health Care Sector</td>
<td>632 Program Planning and Evaluation in Health Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>686a Field Practicum</td>
<td>686b Field Practicum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 @ Electives*</td>
<td>1 @ Electives*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>673 Program Development, Training, Grant Writing &amp; Program Evaluation in Work Setting</td>
<td>611 Leadership in Social Work Profession and Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>686a Field Practicum</td>
<td>686b Field Practicum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 @ Electives*</td>
<td>1 @ Electives*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Some electives are prescribed if you select Mental Health or a sub-concentration.*
APPENDIX B: CONCENTRATION CONTACT INFORMATION

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION (COPA)
Ruth Cislowksi, MSW, MAJCS
cislowsk@usc.edu

FAMILIES & CHILDREN
Lisa Wobbe-Veit, MSW
lisa.wobbeveit@usc.edu

HEALTH
Renee Michelsen, LCSW
michelse@usc.edu

MENTAL HEALTH
Laurel Davis, MSW, LCSW
laurelda@usc.edu

SOCIAL WORK & BUSINESS IN A GLOBAL SOCIETY
Terri Lee, LCSW, CEAP
terri@usc.edu

MILITARY SOCIAL WORK AND VETERAN SERVICES
Stephanie George, LCSW
stephanie.george@usc.edu

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK
Suh Chen Hsiao, MSW, PPSC, LCSW
shuhsiao@usc.edu

OLDER ADULTS
Amber Ford, LICSW, OSW-C
amberfor@usc.edu
APPENDIX C:
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
VIRTUAL CLINICAL EXPERIENCE (VCE)
MILITARY SUB-CONCENTRATION ONLY

USC makes every effort to place students in the Military Social Work and Veteran Services sub-concentration in placement that will expose them to military members, veterans, and their families. This military-related placement, however, is NOT guaranteed. In cases when a military-related placement is not available, students may be assigned to a Virtual Clinical Experience (VCE). VCE is a guided learning experience in the online classroom. Students and a faculty member meet in small groups to work through simulated cases with military clients (played by actors). VCE will help students build on their clinical skills and provide opportunities to engage in clinical assessments and interviews. Highly qualified military sub-concentration faculty will facilitate this experience and engage best practices to guide your individualized learning. This clinical learning experience will provide you the necessary preparation for when you later interact with military-affiliated clients. Student participation in the VCE is mandatory for students who are not placed in a military sub-concentration placement setting.

The VCE group will meet on a weekly basis for two hours per session and will be facilitated by a Military Sub-concentration faculty member. There will be a maximum of 8 students in each session to allow for individualized learning experiences. These sessions will be recorded which will allow you to review for later learning and preparation for when you interact with clients. Once a military sub-concentration placement has been secured, you will not be required to attend the sessions for the remainder of the semester. Students receive credit towards field for their participation in these sessions.

What is a Virtual Clinical Experience?
The Virtual Clinical Experience, or VCE, is a new, innovative clinical learning experience that combines the use of a well-documented traditional method — the standardized patient — with the modern technology of the Virtual Academic Center, resulting in a dynamic new way to develop your clinical skills.

What is the purpose of the Virtual Clinical Experience?
The purpose of the VCE is to help you build your clinical skills in the concentration year. Since this is a military-oriented clinical experience, it will provide you with the opportunity to be in a guided learning experience facilitated by a military sub-concentration faculty. This will expose you to some of the challenges experienced by military clients, veterans, and their families.

Does the VCE replace my in-person field placement?
No, the VCE does not replace your in-person field placement, however it is mandatory for students whose practicum site does not serve a large enough military-affiliated population. The intent of this experience is to supplement your clinical experiences related to the military sub-concentration.
How does the VCE work?
You will be assigned into small groups of approximately six to eight students along with one faculty facilitator. The small group meets weekly on the Virtual Academic Center learning platform, using the same technology used for live classes. During the weekly meetings, the group will be joined by a standardized patient who will act as the group’s client (the standardized patient is an actor who portrays a client, based on a scripted scenario). During the group meetings, students will take turns working with the client, just like engaging a real client over the Virtual Academic Center platform. Faculty will facilitate the learning experience, stopping and starting the exercise as needed, and leading a discussion following the client’s departure.

Who is the facilitator?
The facilitator will be a faculty member of the USC School of Social Work. Because the standardized patient will be military-related, the faculty will have military expertise.

What and how will I learn in VCE?
You will learn clinical skills and techniques through observation and modeling of your peers, actual engagement with the client, and the guided faculty debriefing discussion after the client departs. VCE allows you to practice and try out new techniques and approaches in a live environment, but without the worries or consequences that might accompany an actual client. Still, the standardized client is well trained, and he or she will seem very real to you.

Do I get field hours credit for VCE?
Yes, field hours are granted for your weekly work with VCE.

What is the schedule? How long does it last?
You will meet once a week with your faculty-facilitated group for two hours. Depending on your field placement, you may meet only for a few weeks before starting your placement, or you may meet every week for a full semester. A discussion with the faculty facilitator and your Concentration Liaison will help determine the most appropriate length of time.

Is it mandatory for me to participate in VCE?
If your placement site does not serve a military population then yes, it is mandatory for you to participate in the assigned VCE to meet the military sub-concentration requirements. If you have a schedule conflict, please contact your Regional Field Director.

Who can I talk to about this further?
If you have further questions, please contact your Regional Field Director or your Student Support Advisor.
APPENDIX D:

USC REGIONAL FIELD MAP

The USC Regional Field Faculty consists of the following:
Renee Michelsen | National Field Director - michelsen@usc.edu
Suh Chen Hsiao | Assistant Director, VAC Field — shuhsiao@usc.edu

Ruth Cislofski | Regional Director - cislofsk@usc.edu, Metro Los Angeles, San Diego and Kern County
Marsalee Malatesta | Clinical Assistant Professor - malatest@usc.edu Orange County and South Bay Los Angeles
Curtis Johnson | Clinical Assistant Professor - jerovitch@usc.edu Inland Empire, Riverside, and San Bernardino

Amber Ford | Regional Director - amberfor@usc.edu ID, MT, WY, NM, OR, Northern California
Stephanie George | Clinical Assistant Professor - george034@usc.edu CO, UT, and Northern California
Susan Edwards | Clinical Assistant Professor - susanedw@usc.edu NV, WA, AK, HI, and AZ

Laurel Davis | Regional Director - laurelda@usc.edu FL & AL
Lisa Wobbe-Veit | Clinical Associate Professor - lisa.wobbeveit@usc.edu GA & NC
Melissa Singh | Clinical Assistant Professor – singhmi@usc.edu TX, OK, MO, KS, TN, LA, MS, AK & SC
Jill Davis | Clinical Associate Professor – jilldav@usc.edu

Terri Lee | Regional Director - terri@usc.edu IL and WI
Michelle Bell | Clinical Associate Professor - bellmm@usc.edu IN, KY, MI, OH, PA, RI, MN, MA, and WV
Mary Baron | Adjunct Field Faculty — marybar@usc.edu MD

Advanced Standing
Terry Jordan | Adjunct Faculty – tajordan@usc.edu Advanced Standing Field Advisor