

MSW 2026 Summer and Fall Electives

Summer

SWG581 – Grief and Loss Across the Lifespan

Instructor: Dr. Angela Lavery

This course examines grief and loss across the lifespan. The course will explore attitudes about loss and how this impacts care and support services. Classical and contemporary grief theories will be reviewed along with assessment and interventions for grieving individuals, families, and communities, as well as differences between non-death-related losses, disenfranchised losses, and ambiguous losses. Students will learn culturally responsive care, different developmental considerations, and critical social work practice.

Offered: Class is remote, fully asynchronous from 5/26/2026-6/28/2026

SWG582- Dismantling Ableism: A Critique of Disability Perspectives and Practice

Instructor: Dr. Angela Lavery

This course reviews theoretical and biopsychosocial elements of culturally responsive social work practice across the lifespan with individuals with disabilities and chronic illness, their caregivers, and families. The course examines the status and position of individuals with disabilities of all ages in society, the community, and the interdisciplinary support service delivery system. Students will discuss and consider disability and chronic illness through a social justice and human rights perspective.

Offered: Class is remote, fully asynchronous from 5/26/2026-6/28/2026

SWG589: Analysis and Application of Humor in Social Work

Instructor: Dr. Ginneh Akbar

Are you ready to laugh? :D This elective explores the role of humor as a therapeutic tool and a means of advocacy in social work practice. Students examine theories of humor, its psychological and physiological benefits, and its potential to build rapport, reduce stress, and foster resilience in clients and communities. The course also addresses ethical considerations, cultural sensitivity, and the boundaries of appropriate humor in professional contexts.

Offered: Class is remote, fully asynchronous from 5/26/2026 - 6/28/2026.

SWG590-94 Seminar in Social Work – Supervision and Leadership

Instructor: Dr. Ginneh Akbar

This course is designed to help students develop the knowledge and skills needed to become effective leaders and supervisors in social work practice. Leadership in social work is not just about managing people; it is about creating supportive environments, making ethical decisions, building strong teams, and advocating for both staff and clients. Dive into management styles, team dynamics, ethics, and how to lead effectively with confidence and clarity.

Offered: Class is remote, fully asynchronous from 7/6/2026 - 8/23/2026

SWG590-93 Seminar in Social Work – Early intervention and Social Work with Children

Instructor: Professor Naesha Millwood

This elective course provides MSW students with foundational knowledge and practical application of early intervention strategies rooted in applied behavior analysis (ABA) principles. Emphasizing the social significance of behavioral change, students will learn to integrate evidence-based ABA strategies within social work frameworks to support children and families in diverse settings. This course prepares students to work collaboratively in interdisciplinary teams, develop behaviorally sound treatment plans, and ensure culturally responsive, inclusive care — especially for marginalized and neurodivergent populations.

Offered: Distance Synchronous, Thursdays, 5:30-9:30pm 5/26/2026-8/2/2026

SWG590-95 Seminar in Social Work – Social Work, Social Media, and Pop Culture

Instructor: Dr. Erin Hipple

The course will focus on the influence of social media and popular (pop) culture on cultural perceptions of social work, social service and mental health institutions, the criminal justice system, concepts of diversity equity and inclusion, and resistance/activism. We will use a variety of theories to explore and examine trends in pop culture and social media spaces related to issues relevant to social work. We will also discuss and analyze digitally-based and artistic forms of activism and resistance in promoting ongoing social movements, social justice, and social change.

Offered: Class is remote, fully asynchronous from 8/3/2026-8/23/2026

Fall

SWG570- Addictions: A Neuroscience Approach to Substances & Behaviors

Instructor: Dr. Page Buck and Professor Austin Karr

This course applies theories of addiction from a neuroscience perspective to explore substance use disorders and behavioral/process addictions. Students learn about the types of addiction that they may encounter in their practice as well as the range of treatment modalities available and in development. The course is grounded in a harm-reduction approach to well-being.

Offered: Class is remote, synchronous, Thursdays 5:50-8:35pm

SWG571 – Social Work and Older Adults (Gerontology Certificate course)

Instructor: Dr. Angela Lavery

This course reviews theoretical and biopsychosocial elements of culturally responsive social work practice with older adults, their caregivers, and families. The course examines the status and position of older adults in society, the community, and the interdisciplinary support service delivery system. This class includes information on assessments and interventions with diverse older adult clients regarding health and wellness, chronic illness, social networks, poverty, disability, end of life care and bereavement.

Offered: Class is remote, fully asynchronous

SWG584 – Radical Self Care

Instructor: Professor Shenise Henderson

Wellness and self-care can be extremely challenging for helping professionals despite the fact that taking care of oneself is critical to survival as professionals and as people. Unfortunately, wellness is often neglected in the modern-day human service professions. This course will challenge behavioral health professionals to consider the ramifications of not taking care of themselves while working with vulnerable individuals and populations who require us to be present and healthy. This course presents the theoretical basis for vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, moral stress, empathetic distress, and burnout from both an ethical and a socio-cultural-political perspective. Also covered is the balance of self-care and community care considering the privilege of an individualist approach compared to healing in community. Students will be challenged to consider the privileged narrative of doing work that they "love" when they need to pay the bills with ways to enhance satisfaction and support interests in issues of social justice. The Sanctuary Model will be explored as an example of an organizational response to wellness. Most importantly, students will gain hands-on experience from local experts in multiple self-care practices, including self-monitoring, stress management, yoga, meditation, visualization, and journaling. At the end of the course, each student will have a highly detailed and individualized wellness plan that they can implement and adapt as needed. This course is ideal for all helping professionals, especially those who are facing significant life stressors: caregiving for children, aging parents, and other family members; managing financial obligations; and balancing personal, emotional, and mental health.

Offered: This course will be in-person on West Chester campus, with four meeting dates from 9am-5pm Saturday and Sunday, 9/5 & 9/6, and 11/7 & 11/8

SWG590 – Seminar in Social Work – Black Liberation, Justice & Joy

Instructor: Dr. Ginneh Akbar

In-depth topics in social work offered to complement the program's concentration and not offered in required courses.

Offered: Class is remote, blended synchronous & asynchronous content, with four meeting dates from 9am-5pm Saturday and Sunday, 9/12 & 9/13, and 10/3 & 10/4

SWG594 – Family Violence

Instructor: Dr. Wan-Yi Chen

This course examines family violence as a biopsychosocial phenomenon from a social work perspective. Particular attention will be given to the etiology, myths, and dynamics of intimate partner violence (IPV). Elder abuse, child abuse, and sibling violence are discussed, but are secondary topics. Although historical, sociological, and political perspectives are explored, we

focus on an integrated theoretical model that supports movement toward evidence-based practice and policy innovation. A review of the issues, policies, programs, and services will be discussed.

Offered: Class is remote, fully asynchronous

SWG600 – Assessment, Intervention, and Evaluation for the School Social Worker (School Social Work Certificate course)

Instructor: Dr. Meagan Corrado

Geared toward social workers practicing in school settings, this course will explore individual, group, and systemic approaches to assessment, intervention, and evaluation. This course is divided into three modules: (1) individual interventions and assessment tools, (2) group interventions and assessment tools, and (3) school-wide approaches. Throughout the course, students will be exposed to a wide range of tools and strategies that pull from multiple theoretical lenses and practice-based models. Students will consider how to implement these tools and models from the perspective of social work ethics and values. Additionally, students will consider barriers and opportunities to implementation and identify potential connections between theory and practice.

Offered: Class is remote, synchronous, Thursdays 5:50-8:35pm