



UVIC BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

The School of Social Work is accredited by the Canadian Association of Social Work Education. Our undergraduate (BSW) and graduate programs (MSWF, MSWA, MSWI) nurture accountable and critically engaged social work education, research and practice in the advancement of decolonization, anti-racism, Indigenous resurgence, feminism, 2SLGBTQ+ liberation struggles, disability justice and other social justice struggles.

The School welcomes and is actively recruiting applicants from communities that experience historical and present-day systemic discrimination and marginalization, and who are committed to social justice, equity, anti-racism and decolonization. In our admissions decisions, we will apply a decolonial equity framework which includes an intersectional lens and will prioritize applicants who are Indigenous, Black and other racialized people.

For further information see “What is Social Work?” at <https://www.casw-acts.ca/en/what-social-work>

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK MISSION STATEMENT

The emerging vision of the School of Social Work commits us to social justice, anti-racist, anti-oppressive social work practices, and to promoting critical enquiry that respects the diversity of knowing and being.

Our **educational** mission is to prepare generalist social work practitioners skilled in critical self-reflection and in working with individuals, families, groups, and communities. In particular, we endeavor to prepare Indigenous social workers and child welfare practitioners and we emphasize structural, feminist, Indigenous and anti-oppressive analyses.

Our **scholarly** mission is to share and create collective knowledge and understanding through engaging in critical enquiry and by supporting research and innovative curriculum development at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Our **practice** mission is to act on social justice issues through community change initiatives and anti-oppressive social work. Our political and social responsibility is to participate in and reflect community experiences in all our efforts to challenge oppressive societal structures.

In all our activities, we aspire to create a supportive environment that promotes equity, respect, responsibility, curiosity, collaboration, flexibility, risk-taking and creativity. We support interdisciplinary collaboration. We seek to provide accessible and flexible social work education and we are committed to working across differences, such as gender, age, race, ethnicity, class, abilities, and sexual orientation.

Note: The School is currently re-visiting the Mission Statement with a focus on de-colonization and addressing the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Committee.

We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.



DEFINITIONS

Critical/Anti-Oppressive Practice:

Anti-oppressive social work practice seeks to redress inequalities and social disparities which oppress people due to their ability, age, class, gender, race and sexual identity. Anti-oppressive practice necessitates a high degree of critical self-reflection on the part of the social worker including an examination of how they themselves potentially replicate dominant relationships and/or discourses. Within this framework the social work relationship is one where the practitioner works from a “not knowing” stance in terms of the lived experience of the person(s) they work with. Inherent power imbalances present between the practitioner and service user, as well as within the service user's life, are examined.

For further information on the university's equity policy, please refer to the University of Victoria's Equity & Human Rights (EQHR) page: <https://www.uvic.ca/equity/index.php>

Indigenous Perspectives on Social Work:

The School of Social Work at UVIC places a strong emphasis on Indigenous social work practice. The program seeks to link Indigenous issues with structural oppression and begins the task of addressing power imbalances. The program also seeks to incorporate alternative means of practice based on respect, honour and authentic understanding. This perspective requires a complete critical re-examination of the history, applications and impact of racism and colonialism. The School has Indigenous faculty and core curriculum by and about Indigenous peoples.

For further information on Indigenous based initiatives on campus, please refer to the University of Victoria's Indigenous Plan: <https://www.uvic.ca/assets2012/docs/indigenous-plan.pdf>

Social Justice:

Working towards social justice is a cornerstone of anti-oppressive social work practice. Social justice work involves acknowledging inequality and engaging in activities which are aimed at reducing inequity and oppression. These activities focus on moving our society towards a more equitable distribution of resources and power. Some examples of social justice activities are: letter writing, media campaigning and public education to generate support for social change efforts; engaging in various forms of grassroots organizing and community development; opposing legislation, policies or practices that are oppressive to marginalized groups; and engaging in protests or acts of civil disobedience to draw attention to and oppose oppressive government or corporate systems and actions.

REFERENCES

- Blackstock, C. (2009) The Occasional Evil of Angels: Learning from the Experiences of Aboriginal Peoples and Social Work. *First Peoples Child & Family Review*, Volume 4(1), pp. 28-37.
- Campbell, C., and Baikie, C., (2012) Beginning at the Beginning - An Exploration of Critical Social Work: *Critical Social Work* – an interdisciplinary journal dedicated to social justice Vol. 13(1), pp. 67-81. <http://www1.uwindsor.ca/criticalsocialwork/2012-volume-13-no-1>
- Carriere, J., Richardson, C. (2017). Eds. Calling Our Families Home: Metis people's.

We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.



Experiences with child welfare.BC: J. Charlton Publishing.

First Peoples Child and Family Review Journal

<http://journals.sfu.ca/fpcfr/index.php/FPCFR/issue/archive>

Holmes, C. (2016). [Exploring the intersections between violence, place and mental health in the lives of trans and gender nonconforming people in Canada](#). In M. Giesbrecht and V. Crooks (Eds.) *Place, Health and Diversity: Learning from the Canadian Perspective* (pp. 53-75). Geographies of Health Series. New York: Routledge.

Hunt, S. & Holmes, C. (2015). [Everyday decolonization: Living a decolonizing queer politics](#). *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 19, 154-172.

The Centre for Social Justice <http://www.socialjustice.org/>

Thomas, R., and Green, J. (2007) A way of life: Indigenous perspectives on anti oppressive living. *First Peoples Child & Family Review*, Volume 3(1), pp. 91- 104.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

<http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=905>