

# HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY

Degree Types: PhD

The Human Development and Social Policy Program (HDSP) (<https://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/hdsp/>) studies how public policy affects human development and well-being, how research on human development across the life span informs policy, and how people affect policy.

The core curriculum in HDSP provides interdisciplinary training in human development, qualitative and quantitative methods, and policy development, implementation, and evaluation. Students then specialize in areas such as child development and social policy, adult development and social policy, or human development and education policy.

Depending on their specializations, students receive training for academic positions in basic departments such as psychology, sociology or economics and for multidisciplinary programs such as human development, education, social ecology, public health and family studies. Graduates are also strongly qualified for positions in private and nonprofit social research firms and for government research or policy positions.

## Additional resources:

- Department website (<https://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/hdsp/>)
- Program handbook(s)

## Degree Offered

- Human Development and Social Policy Program PhD (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/human-development-social-policy/human-development-social-policy-program-phd/>)

Upon receipt of a PhD in Human Development and Social Policy, our students will:

- **HAVE DEVELOPED AN ACADEMIC IDENTITY AS A DISCIPLINARY AND/OR INTERDISCIPLINARY SCHOLAR.** Upon graduation, students will have come to see themselves as an independent scholar, with enthusiasm for research, concomitant modes of thinking and inquiry, and openness to ideas and unexpected findings. Further, HDSP students will have developed an identity as a disciplinary or interdisciplinary scholar. This disciplinary or interdisciplinary identity will be accompanied by a sense of belonging to a particular community or communities, an understanding of how that positions oneself in relation to existing scholarship, professional organizations, publishing outlets, and the job market.

*Criteria for evaluating: Students will have affiliated with one or more professional associations that reflect their disciplinary/inter-disciplinary identity; they will have presented at professional conferences associated with their relevant professional associations; they will be able to identify key publication outlets associated with their professional community(ies).*

- **EXHIBIT DEPTH AND BREADTH OF METHODOLOGICAL EXPERTISE.** HDSP students will have developed depth of expertise in a specific set of methods (including both quantitative and qualitative methods) in addition to a broad understanding of the limitations, affordances, and assumptions of other widely used methods related to their chosen research topic. HDSP students will have developed an

understanding of how different methods can complement each other and how to triangulate multiple methods.

*Criteria for evaluating: To demonstrate breadth students will have taken and passed required courses in quantitative and qualitative methods. Methodological depth will be reflected in students' dissertation research (assessed by faculty with expertise in their methodology(ies) of choice) and publications (evaluated by the peer review process).*

- **HAVE DEVELOPED THE CAPACITY TO DESIGN AND UNDERTAKE RIGOROUS, ANALYTICAL, ETHICAL, AND INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO IMPORTANT ISSUES IN THE SOCIAL WORLD.** HDSP students will be able to design and conduct an independent research study from start to finish, adjusting their research as necessary in response to changing or unexpected circumstances. When doing so, HDSP students may combine and execute methodological and (inter-)disciplinary expertise in novel ways in service of a research question. Skills include the ability to develop relevant research questions, synthesize and build on existing literature, build a conceptual framework, negotiate data/site access, clean data, and manage data in a field-expected way. HDSP students will understand the ethical aspects of doing research, how their positionality affects their scholarship, the ways in which their scholarship may serve to reproduce or interrupt existing structures of inequality, and the impact of their scholarship on the communities they are working with.

*Criteria for evaluation: Completed dissertation that comports with disciplinary/inter-disciplinary identity, as evaluated by committee members with related substantive and methodological expertise.*

- **HAVE DEVELOPED THE POTENTIAL TO TAKE THE STUDY OF THEIR CHOSEN TOPIC OF INTEREST IN NEW DIRECTIONS BY BRINGING DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES, METHODS, AND FRAMEWORKS TOGETHER.** HDSP students will develop expertise in the theories, research literature, epistemological assumptions, history, limitations, and appropriate methods for their chosen discipline or disciplines. They will have an awareness of how their chosen topic of study fits in with the core tenets of human development and social policy, the affordances and constraints of different disciplinary approaches for investigating their topic of interest, and how other human development and social policy approaches might investigate their topic differently. If they are working at the boundaries of multiple disciplines, they will be able to flexibly bring more than one discipline together to productively investigate their topic. They will be able to critique their own and others' approaches and methods to studying their questions, to engage with topics or fields within HDSP where they don't necessarily have expertise. They will be able to recognize and interrogate existing systems of inequality and the role that their own and others' research might play in producing or interrupting inequities for individuals and communities across the life span.

*Criteria for evaluation: Successful completion of the guided literature review (milestone 2/TGS qualifying exam). This milestone is designed to foster an in-depth understanding of affordances and constraints of different disciplinary perspectives in understanding a topic of interest. Guided Literature Reviews are assessed by a committee of four faculty, each of whom represents a different disciplinary perspective.*

- **HAVE DEVELOPED A FOUNDATION TO UNDERTAKE THE FULL RANGE OF PROFESSIONAL TASKS OF A PROFESSIONAL RESEARCHER.** Students will have some experience with many of the tasks that are part of being a professional researcher, including writing conference proposals, presenting at conferences, navigating

academic publishing, writing grants, identifying collaborators, serving as grant and paper reviewers. They will also have developed the capacity to expand their skills in these realms post-PhD.

*Criteria for evaluation: Students will have submitted proposals for conferences, presented their work, and submitted manuscripts for publications. They will have also applied for fellowships and/or small grants.*

- **HAVE THE FOUNDATION TO BECOME A FLEXIBLE, INNOVATIVE AND SUPPORTIVE TEACHER AND/OR MENTOR.** HDSP students will develop the foundation to construct and teach courses in their areas of expertise, including a foundation for effective pedagogy, providing meaningful student feedback, and DEI competencies as they relate to classroom instruction. They will begin to develop skills at mentoring less experienced researchers, including the ability to empower their future students or less-experienced researchers to navigate uncertainty and develop a stance as a life-long learner. They will be able to represent themselves as an educator in oral and written form, including teaching statements.

*Criteria for evaluation: Students will, at a minimum, act as a teaching assistant for at least two undergraduate courses. Students will receive positive student evaluations for their courses or discuss with the instructor of record specific ways to address concerns raised in the evaluations. For those students who hope to go into academia, they will work with the Career Center to develop and receive feedback on a teaching statement. Students may also pursue coursework and/or certificates from the Searle Center.*

- **BE STRONG COMMUNICATORS, WHO CAN EFFECTIVELY SHARE THEIR WORK TO DIVERSE AUDIENCES IN A RANGE OF MODALITIES.** HDSP students will develop the ability to communicate findings in written and oral fashion to diverse audiences. These audiences might include: other researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and/or the public. For some students, it may be important to be able to situate their work in and communicate findings to international audiences. HDSP students will be able to leverage their interdisciplinary training to communicate their findings to researchers across disciplinary lines. They will be able to communicate through a range of modalities (including social media) the relevance and importance of findings in non-technical language to policymakers, practitioners, and the public.

*Criteria for evaluation: Successful defense of their dissertation; presentation of findings in diverse professional, policy, and practice settings.*

## Human Development and Social Policy Courses

### HDSP 401-0 Proseminar in Human Development and Social Policy I (1 Unit)

Conceptual framework for studying human development, socialization, and social policy. Theoretical and empirical studies.

### HDSP 402-0 Child Development and Social Policy (1 Unit)

Major theories and current empirical research concerning cognitive and social/emotional development of children. Interaction of internal maturational factors with effects of families, peers, and schools.

### HDSP 403-0 Adolescent Development (1 Unit)

Biological, cognitive, and social development during adolescence. Social institutions and policies that affect the well-being of adolescents.

### HDSP 406-0 Diversity Science in Psychology (1 Unit)

Grad-level seminar course designed to frame and engage the concept of "diversity science" in psychological research. Topics include: the WEIRD

history of psychology; psychometric and other validity issues in studying diversity; (3) qualitative and diverse methodologies; (4) levels of analysis in studying diversity (e.g., individual-level versus group-level phenomena); (5) oppression and privilege, and strategies for understanding and redressing social inequities.

### HDSP 407-1 Culture and Development (1 Unit)

This course will provide a comprehensive understanding on the role of culture in human development at behavioral, psychological, and neurobiological levels. Importantly, this course will not only review well-documented similarities and differences across cultures (e.g., how cultures are different from each other), but also examine potential mechanisms underlying such cultural differences (e.g., why there are cultural differences) based on empirical studies.

### HDSP 408-1 Emotional Mysteries (1 Unit)

Classrooms, work settings, and family relations are hotbeds of emotion. But what is an emotion? What happens in our bodies when an emotion is triggered? How can emotions help us live productive, healthy, and connected lives? And can we ever truly understand what somebody else is feeling? These are some of the mysteries that we will seek to unravel in this course. We will read literature from Darwin to the latest scientific studies, combine lectures and small-group discussions, conduct research experiments, and engage in peer review and online collaboration.

### HDSP 410-0 Quantitative Methods I: Probability and Statistics (1 Unit)

### HDSP 411-0 Quantitative Methods II: Regression Analysis (1 Unit)

### HDSP 412-0 Quantitative Methods III: Empirical Tools for Causal Quantitative Analysis (1 Unit)

### HDSP 413-0 Theories of Human Development (1 Unit)

Biological bases and interactions with the social and physical environments as sources of human development. Social, emotional, and cognitive aspects of development. Theorists include Bowlby, Erikson, Piaget, Vygotsky, Mead, and Gardner.

### HDSP 414-1 Research Design (1 Unit)

The purpose of this class is to pull together key core concepts related to research design in HDSP. Many of these concepts are touched upon in other methods courses. This class seeks to bring some of these key concepts together and explicitly discuss the implications for research design. We will begin by reviewing Crotty's framework for distinguishing between and linking epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and method. The course will then focus on epistemology, theoretical perspective, and methodology. (We will not address methods, as they are addressed more centrally in the quant and qual methods sequences.) We will identify key methodologies of interest to course participants (i.e. experimental design, quasi-experimental, developmental designs, case study, ethnography, participatory, etc.) and provide an overview of each. Finally, we will also spend some time on the craft of writing research proposals.

### HDSP 415-0 Society, Stress and Development: Implications for Intervention (1 Unit)

Recent research has demonstrated that, rather than human biology determining human behavior and experience, human biological development is exquisitely sensitive to environmental input, particularly the social environment. In this course, we will discuss theoretical models and data regarding the interplay between biology and social experience in development. Topics include gene-environment correlations, gene-environment interactions, epigenetics, and theoretical models for the interplay between biological systems and ecological conditions. We will learn some basic facts about brain development, stress physiology, and immune functioning, and will examine social-environmental influences on these systems. Special emphasis is placed on the social influences

on stress-system biology, a major pathway by which socio-emotional experience affects the body, brain and developmental outcomes.

**HDSP 421-0 Adult Development and Work Careers (1 Unit)**

**HDSP 424-0 Intersectionality, Measurement and Public Policy (1 Unit)**

As understanding of identity and bias increased, Kimberlé Crenshaw developed the theory of intersectionality which challenges us to consider various components of identities as having the potential to create overlapping and intersecting experiences. When an individual holds multiple identities that have traditionally been marginalized, any discrimination experienced will be different than someone without that unique blend of identities. To use Crenshaw's initial example in 1989, Black women experience a different type of racism than Black men, and a different form of sexism than White women. Thirty years later, researchers still are coming to terms with what this means in the public sphere, but also in research which underlines the importance of thinking about identity more comprehensively and completely. In this class, we will begin by addressing the question of what intersectionality is. We will also consider how considering identity as intersectional alters our understanding of policy, and what policy should address. Importantly, we will consider how to incorporate intersectionality into a basic framework of research and analysis through a term-long project.

**HDSP 425-0 Economics of Health, Human Capital, and Happiness (1 Unit)**

Understanding causal relationships is a central goal in social science and science in general. Correlations help to predict outcomes, but if we want to influence outcomes we need to understand causal pathways. It is not sufficient to observe what is happening, we need to know why it is happening.

**HDSP 426-0 Organizations, Institutions and Society: Persistence and Change Among Public, Private and Non-Profit Sectors (1 Unit)**

Organizations, Institutions and Society: Persistence and Change Among Public, Private and Non-Profit Sectors This graduate seminar will introduce theories of institutional persistence and change in the context of public, private and nonprofit settings. The course is organized as a seminar and will blend foundational studies in institutional theory with contemporary work from sociology, organization sciences, education and nonprofit studies. An overarching theme of the course addresses how new practices and organizational forms spread (diffusion), how they stick (institutionalization) and how they take the form that they do (emergence). Topics covered will include accountability and performance, organizational learning, contemporary debates about social mechanisms, and micro-foundations of institutional theory. Ideally, this course will provide a platform for students to develop and advance their own research projects, in the form of a research proposal for beginning doctoral students or an empirical analysis for more advanced students.

**HDSP 427-0 Sociology of Education (1 Unit)**

Conflicts between offering opportunity to youth and societal imperatives for selecting and preparing youth for future careers; how society and schools deal with this conflict. Approaches to policy reform.

**HDSP 428-0 Education Policy: Design, Implementation and Effects (1 Unit)**

**HDSP 429-0 Social-Community Interventions (1 Unit)**

Design and implementation of social systems interventions in organizations and communities, especially preventive applications in human service agencies and institutions.

**HDSP 430-0 Economics of Social Policy (1 Unit)**

Economic context for social policy (economic crisis, unemployment, poverty); household economics; labor market theory and studies; economic rationales for social policy.

**HDSP 431-0 Race, Gender, & Capitalism (1 Unit)**

This graduate seminar will focus on fundamental theories in the study of race, gender and capitalism. Questions that animate this class include: How do structures of racism and sexism interact with the economic system of capitalism? What are the limits of capitalism to disrupt and dismantle inequities by race and gender? What are alternative economic structures that might produce conditions for race and gender liberation? How do systems of inequity shape the conditions of marginalized groups both domestically and globally? The seminar will rely heavily on use of canonical, and lesser known, books to answer these questions, and encourages students to use the knowledge gained throughout the seminar to engage in aspects of their own research as a final project.

**HDSP 432-0 Field Methods (1 Unit)**

The contribution of ethnography to the study of social policy. Strengths and weaknesses of this method for study of governmental programs' impact on clients and participants.

**HDSP 433-0 Modern Theories of the State and Social Policy (1 Unit)**

Recent theories of social policy in the context of the welfare state. Analysis of alternative theories and their implications for contemporary problems in social policy.

**HDSP 435-0 Advanced Qualitative Methods (1 Unit)**

**HDSP 440-0 The Politics of Public Policy (1 Unit)**

Framework for understanding the structure and process of development. How existing social policies can be analyzed and new policies developed.

**HDSP 442-0 Social Policymaking and Policy Implementation (1 Unit)**

**HDSP 451-0 Topics in Human Development & Soc Policy (1 Unit)**

Topics may vary. May be repeated for credit with change of topic.

**HDSP 481-0 Practicum in Human Development & Soc Pol (1-3 Units)**

Specialized fieldwork opportunities. May be repeated for credit.

**HDSP 482-0 Methods in Social Psychology (1 Unit)**

During the quarter, we will examine issues regarding research design, with a particular focus on social psychological traditions. Topics will span the entire research process, including the development of hypotheses and a program of research, details of study design, statistical considerations, and guidance in the reporting of findings. The course will be grounded in perspectives that utilize laboratory contexts and employ a variety of field settings.

**HDSP 489-0 Identity & Motivation (1 Unit)**

The seminar focuses on the connection between conceptions of the self and goal-oriented motivation, with particular attention devoted to the influence of social, structural, and cultural forces. The first segment of the term will cover classic theoretical work concerning the self and identity. Next, we will consider the relevance of a variety of social influences on identity and motivation. Finally, the course will close with a survey of contemporary identity-based intervention research and practical applications relating to trends in social inequalities, including education and health.

**HDSP 491-0 Readings in Human Development & Soc Pol (1 Unit)**

Specialized study between student and faculty sponsor. May be repeated for credit with change of topic.

**HDSP 499-0 Independent Study in Human Dev & Soc Pol (1 Unit)**

SEE DEPT FOR SECTION AND PERMISSION NUMBERS.

**HDSP 519-0 Responsible Conduct of Research Training (0 Unit)**

**HDSP 590-0 Research in Human Development & Soc Pol (1-3 Units)**

SEE DEPT FOR SECTION AND PERMISSION NUMBERS - Independent investigation of selected problems pertaining to thesis or dissertation. May be repeated for credit.