

MDiv-MSW Dual Degree Program

Introduction

The **Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College (SSSW)** and the **Union Theological Seminary (UTS)** are internationally recognized leaders in social work and theological education, respectively. Complementing Silberman’s mission and historical commitment to social justice, UTS – the nation’s oldest independent seminary – is distinguished by an interdenominational, interreligious focus and strong ethics curriculum. Its students develop integrated understandings of spiritual and social contexts. Located in East Harlem (SSSW) and Morningside Heights (UTS), neighborhoods that face disproportionate social challenges, these two schools are poised to capitalize on their proximity and mutual responsiveness to the needs of New York City communities. Together, SSSW and UTS offer the **MDiv-MSW Dual Degree Program in Social Work and Divinity** to streamline the pathway to earning both degrees, maximizing educational experiences and professional opportunities for students interested in careers that bridge religious studies with clinical social work.

The MDiv-MSW Dual Degree Program builds upon core values shared by these two vocations across their closely entwined histories of social justice, community empowerment, and service. These values include: an appreciation of the diversity of religious and spiritual beliefs, and how these influence individuals and communities; the connection of the bio-psycho-social to the spiritual; and self-awareness as students and practitioners explore their personal and professional identities. To this end, the Program’s goals are to:

- a. Train master’s-level professionals who can provide multi-level, comprehensive, and effective services to assure the health and well-being of individuals, communities, and populations while understanding, mobilizing, and supporting spiritual beliefs, networks, and organizations as significant resources.
- b. Facilitate students’ attainment of social work, spiritual care, and interdisciplinary competencies.
- c. Facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration between SSSW and UTS faculty and staff in curriculum development, teaching, research, and practice.
- d. Partner with organizations in East Harlem, Morningside Heights, and other urban communities of need to develop multi-disciplinary service learning experiences and applied research opportunities that utilize spiritual beliefs and practices, networks, and organizations to ameliorate health disparities and improve well-being.

Students in the MDiv-MSW Dual Degree Program are able to earn both degrees concurrently in four years through a streamlined, 105-credit curriculum based upon the goals above – compared to 138 credits over five years, which would be required in order to complete them separately. This streamlined curriculum removes overlapping course requirements; cross-honors electives; and ensures that students

achieve competencies required among both MSW and MDiv graduates. For more details about the curriculum, please see Program Description below.

What Can I Do with my MDiv-MSW Dual Degree?

Students who graduate from the MDiv-MSW Dual Degree Program will be highly prepared for professional practice that integrates spirituality with clinical social work and social welfare. Recent literature points to the growing value of this dual-expertise. Religion and spirituality are increasingly seen as integral to the lives of many of the populations social workers have historically served. Since 2011, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has dedicated resources to building social workers' capacities with diverse religious and spiritual expression among their clients. The field of theology at the same time has moved to prepare ministers to serve people and communities facing adverse challenges, through a deep understanding of social systems, structures, oppression, and injustice. Graduates of the MDiv-MSW Dual Degree Program will enter a professional landscape with a strong demand for their unique combination of competencies, skills, and expertise.

Specific professional roles that MDiv-MSW graduates will be well-prepared for include:

- Chaplaincy:
 - Hospital
 - Prison
 - Higher Education/University
 - Military
 - Police/Firefighters
 - Athletic Leagues

- Clinical Social Worker:
 - Individual
 - Family
 - Small Groups

- Pastoral Psychotherapist
- Substance Abuse Counselor
- Program Coordinator
- Project Manager
- Program Director
- Community Organizer
- Grant Writer
- Grants Administrator

- Discharge Planner
- Executive Director
- Ordained Religious Leader/Clergy/Pastor

Admissions Requirements & Registration

Prospective MDiv-MSW Dual Degree Program students typically must apply to each school *separately* and *simultaneously*, and must gain admission to each school according to its standard criteria.

- **Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College** – MSW Program, Full-Time Pathway in the **Clinical Practice** method – <https://sssw.hunter.cuny.edu/admissions/>
- **Union Theological Seminary** – <https://myunion.utsnyc.edu/admissions/apply-for-admissions/apply-now>

Applicants may indicate that they are applying for the Program by selecting a designated option on CUNY’s “Apply Yourself” application portal.

Union Theological students who decide to pursue the Dual Degree Program after they have begun MDiv studies must apply and gain admission to SSSW prior to the end of their first semester at UTS. Likewise, Silberman students who decide to pursue the Program after they have begun MSW studies must apply and gain admission to UTS prior to the end of their first semester at SSSW. In both of these cases, individual modifications to the program pathway may be necessary and the student’s time to completion may be more than four years.

Once matriculated in the MDiv-MSW Dual Degree Program, students must register at both the Silberman School of Social Work and Union Theological Seminary. For the first two years of the program, Union Theological Seminary serves as the student’s primary institution of record and handles the bulk of student registration; the Silberman School of Social Work then takes on this role during the student’s final two years in the program.

Advisement

Each school maintains a dedicated advisor for students in the MDiv-MSW Dual Degree Program, who is able to answer questions and assist matriculated students with course registration, degree planning, and accessing resources for success:

Ms. Pamela DeCuir

Dual Degree Academic Advisor

Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College

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The Rev. Dr. Violet Lee

Dual Degree Academic Advisor

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Program Description

The 105-credit MDiv-MSW curriculum includes 48 credits from UTS, 51 credits from Silberman, and 6 integrated credits (three credits of which are allocated to each program for a total of 51 and 54 credits, respectively). It is designed to provide students with competencies in social work and theological principles, methods, and evidenced-based practice, as well as interdisciplinary competencies in understanding and addressing urban social problems and advocating for social justice issues. The curriculum is comprised of most existing courses within each discipline. The major components are summarized below.

For the greatest level of detail on curricular requirements specific to Union Theological Seminary, please see <https://utsnyc.edu/academics/degrees/>.

A. Required core and foundation courses:

- i. YEAR ONE UTS core courses: (23-27 credits) Students will gain foundational knowledge and understanding of the historical and contemporary sources, methods, issues, and perspectives addressed within and by theological disciplines. Students will complete courses in four of the five core areas of the MDiv curriculum: *Bible, Church History, Theology, and Interreligious Engagement*.

YEAR TWO UTS core courses: (18-20 credits) Students will complete their foundational Bible and History courses and will develop practical skills in courses taken in the fifth core area, *Practical Theology*.

- ii. YEAR ONE Social Work foundation courses: (6 credits) Students will gain a foundation in social work frameworks and approaches, including anti-oppressive work, through a year-long required course named Practice Lab.

YEAR TWO Social Welfare Policy foundation courses: (6 credits) Students will gain a foundation in social welfare policies and their relevance to social service delivery and practice.

YEAR THREE Human Behavior in the Social Environment courses: (9 credits) Students will learn concepts relevant to each phase of the life cycle within the conceptual framework of human behavior and its interaction with the social environment.

YEAR FOUR Social Work Research courses: (6 credits) Students will learn basic research methods and data analysis within the context of social work.

- iii. MDiv students are normally required to take a minimum of 15 credits in an area of concentration. Course credits earned in the dual MDiv-MSW program will satisfy this requirement.
- iv. Social Work advanced practice methods (9 credits): Students will select one of three advanced practice methods: Clinical Practice with Individuals, Families, and Groups; Community Organizing, Planning, and Development; or Organizational Management and Leadership. Students who specialize in Clinical Practice with Individuals, Families, and Groups develop advanced competencies in assessment, diagnosis, and treatment including psychotherapy and counseling; client-centered advocacy; consultation and evaluations. Those specializing in Community Organizing, Planning, and Development will develop competencies needed to engage, motivate, and mobilize people and resources to solve social problems at either at the neighborhood or city-wide level and the strategies, tactics, and program development skills needed to make change. Those specializing in Organizational Management and Leadership attain competencies needed for effective management of human service organizations including assessment and mobilizing of internal and external resources; leading staff; program and policy design, implementation, and evaluation.

B. Field placement (12 credits):

As professional practice degrees, both the MSW and MDiv require students to engage in supervised field placements, in which they have the opportunity to apply classroom knowledge and theories to real-world situations. All MDiv-MSW students complete field placements that incorporate into practice the knowledge, values, and skills of both disciplines. Because SSW field requirements are greater than those of UTS, SSSW will take the lead in assigning and supervising field instruction. SSSW and UTS will also identify a field advisor who holds the MSW or MDiv and knowledge of both disciplines to supervise field placements, and field instructors with experience providing instruction in dual degree programs. Students will complete between 900 and 1,200 hours of supervised field practicum as required for licensure as a Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) in New York State.

C. Elective courses (21 credits):

Students complete seven elective courses, to be selected based on their academic and professional interests and goals in consultation with their academic adviser. At least one elective course should be taken from each school. UTS strongly recommends that dual degree students, particularly those on the clinical MSW path, take one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) for 6 credits that will count toward their MDiv elective requirements.

D. Required interdisciplinary courses (6 credits):

All students take two semester-long courses which are meant to synthesize and integrate learning at the end of year three and again at the end of the program in year four. These courses focus on integrating students' identities as both social workers and faith-based practitioners to help launch them as professionals.

Table 1 below presents a sample semester-by-semester course sequence based on 14-15 credits per semester, during the Spring and Fall. The MSW is most often completed in two years by full time students, who take 15 credits each semester and thus complete it in four semesters. The MDiv is usually completed in 3 years of full-time study. The proposed dual degree is expected to take (a minimum of) 8 semesters to complete, based on an average course load of 4 courses per semester. Summer study can reduce the course load in some semesters of the program. Summer courses are offered routinely in the MSW program and are available to Dual Degree Program students.

Faculty

The faculty of the Union Theological Seminary can be found here:

<https://utsnyc.edu/academics/faculty/>.

The faculty of the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College can be found on the [Silberman School of Social Work](#) page within this Hunter College Graduate Catalog.

**Table 1. Silberman School of Social Work and Union Theological Seminary Dual Degree: MSW/MDiv
105 credits: 48 UTS; 51 Silberman; 6 integrated**

YEAR 1

| FALL | | SPRING | |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| BX 101 or OT 101/101a | 4-5 credits | NT 101/101a or Bible elective #1 | 3-5 credits |
| CH 107 or CH 109 | 2 credits | CH 108 or CH 101 | 2-3 credits |
| ST 103 (or ST 104 in spring) | 3 credits | ST 104 (or ST 103 in fall) | 3 credits |
| IE 102 | 3 credits | CW103 or CA102 | 3 credits |
| SSW 717 | 3 credits | SSW 718 | 3 credits |

YEAR 2

| FALL | | SPRING | |
|--|-------------|---|-----------|
| BX 201 or Bible elective #2 | 3 credits | CW 104 or CA 102 | 3 credits |
| CH 107 or 109 OR CH elective | 2-3 credits | IE elective | 3 credits |
| Theology elective (ST, CE, PR) | 3 credits | UTS general electives (e.g., denominational requirements) | 3 credits |
| PS101 & PS110 (for CPE) or practical theology elective | 3 credits | UTS or SSSW general elective | 3 credits |
| SSW 701 | 3 credits | SSW 702 | 3 credits |

Summer CPE – recommended elective (6 credits)

YEAR 3

| FALL | | SPRING | |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| SSW 761 | 3 credits | SSW 762 | 3 credits |
| SSW 721/741 | 3 credits | SSW 722/742 | 3 credits |
| SSW 711 | 3 credits | SSW 712 | 3 credits |
| UTS general elective | 1-3 credits | UTS general elective | 1-3 credits |
| UTS general elective | 1-3 credits | *** Integrative Seminar | 3 credits |

Summer CPE – recommended elective (6 credits)

YEAR 4

| FALL | | SPRING | |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| SSW763 | 3 credits | SSW764 | 3 credits |
| SSW723/743 | 3 credits | SSW752 | 3 credits |
| SSW7151 | 3 credits | **SSW or UTS general elective | 3 credits |
| SSW713 | 3 credits | UTS general elective | 1-3 credits |
| UTS general elective | 1-3 credits | *** Integrative Seminar | 3 credits |

The required number of UTS general elective credits ranges from 10-14 credits depending on a student's Option A or Option B choices in the Biblical, Historical, or Practical fields. Most electives carry three credits but some may carry one or two credits (e.g., SU courses sand guided readings).

** Silberman requires two 3-credit electives. Silberman will accept 3 UTS elective credits in satisfaction of one 3-credit Silberman course.

*** The Integrative Seminar satisfies both UTS and Silberman requirements.

Table 1 Legend

SSW= Offered by SSSW; all other courses offered by UTS

BX =Bible (Cross Testament)

OT=Bible (Old Testament)

NT=Bible (New Testament)

CH=History

ST=Systematic Theology

IE=Interreligious Engagement

PS=Psychology & Religion

CW=Worship

CA=Communication Arts