

# **Brandeis University Program in Social Justice & Social Policy (SJSP)**

## **SJSP Minor: Learning Goals**

The Social Justice and Social Policy (SJSP) Program links the university's commitment to social justice with the academic curriculum. The program provides a common place for students in all disciplines to engage with issues of justice and equity. While many of the program's courses offer a primary emphasis either on justice or policy concerns, SJSP strives to deepen understanding of the essential connections between social values and practical policy. Students are encouraged to select courses that approach social justice from historical, philosophical, legal, and comparative perspectives, as well as to explore policy areas in concrete detail. The program provides students with the flexibility to focus on a range of issues and arenas, including civil rights, domestic violence, environmental justice, health inequities, ethnic and religious conflict, slavery, and core questions of democracy, citizenship and disobedience. Key elements of the program include a foundational course and a research-based internship in an academic or social policy setting.

Social justice concerns speak to the core educational commitments of Brandeis. This program does not seek to promote a particular ideological agenda, but rather to spark creative thinking about complex social problems. It carries the search for norms and principles into the wider arena of practical experience. By providing models for critical reflection, it challenges students to articulate their own value commitments in a spirit of constructive debate.

### **Knowledge:**

Students completing the minor in SJSP will understand how to:

- Rigorously engage with core questions of liberty, equality, and justice
- Recognize and locate major philosophical, legal, and analytic conceptions of liberty, equality, and justice
- Relate frameworks from multiple disciplines to pressing social, economic, philosophical, legal, and political issues and policies
- Identify how policy approaches are shaped by and bear upon racial, gender, ethnic, religious, cultural, and political difference
- Locate and classify the points of intersection between social values and practical policies

### **Core Skills:**

As an interdisciplinary program, the SJSP minor encourages students to explore varied perspectives on the intersection of values and action. As students take courses in the various disciplines, they are exposed to diverse methods of inquiry. SJSP minors from Brandeis will be well prepared to:

- Creatively compare and assess foundational philosophical, theoretical, and analytic conceptions of justice
- Interrogate the historical, structural, and cultural contexts that shape the dynamics of discrimination and inequality in a range of institutions

- Clearly communicate theories, analyses, and policy solutions, both orally and in writing
- Apply generalized principles to a range of real-world issues and settings
- Deploy analytic frameworks and tools to develop effective policy approaches to specific social problems
- Adeptly consider and respond to objections to proposed policy solutions
- Collaborate with local agencies and communities to develop policy strategies that address pressing issues