

An interdepartmental program

Courses of Study:  
Minor

## Social Justice and Social Policy

### Objectives

Concepts of justice play a profound role in clarifying human needs for health and well-being. Such basic social problems as inequality, poverty, and discrimination pose a constant challenge to policies that serve the health and income needs of children, families, people with disabilities, and the elderly. The public response to such problems, in America and elsewhere, rests on contested definitions of social obligation and social citizenship. The program in social justice and social policy examines these essential connections between social values and practical policies. It unites elements in liberal arts study to bridge the analytic gap between ends and means. It also brings together an unusually broad spectrum of faculty and curriculum—combining the academic perspectives of arts and sciences departments with professional expertise from the Heller School for Social Policy and Management. Students are encouraged to explore policy areas in concrete detail, focused variously on particular groups (children, the elderly, people with disabilities) or particular services (health care, income support). Students can also select courses that deal thematically with problems of social equity (poverty, discrimination), as well as courses that approach social justice from historical, philosophical, and comparative perspectives. Key elements of the program include a foundation course, a capstone course, and a research-based internship in a social policy setting.

The concern with social justice speaks 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.

### How to Become a Minor

The program in social justice and social policy (SJSP) is open to all Brandeis undergraduates. Students may begin the minor at any time, but are encouraged to complete the foundation course within the first two years of study. To enroll in the minor, students must fill out the declaration forms from the Office of the University Registrar and meet first with one of the members of the program committee. A minor adviser will then be assigned by the director to help plan a course of study, including the timing of the internship/independent research and capstone requirements.

### Committee

**Anita Hill**  
(Heller School)

**Marion Smiley**  
(Philosophy)

**David Cunningham, Chair**  
(Sociology)

**George Ross**  
(Politics; Sociology)

**Melissa Stimell**  
(Legal Studies)

**Richard Gaskins (on leave spring 2009)**  
(American Studies; Legal Studies)

**Thomas Shapiro**  
(Heller School)

### Requirements for the Minor

**A.** The foundation course, SOC 123b (Crisis of the Welfare State). Normally this course will be taken within the first two years of study. It is strongly recommended as an introduction to the program, but is not a formal prerequisite for other courses.

**B.** Students must complete any three elective courses from those listed below. Electives are grouped into topical fields, but students may choose courses from any group. No more than two electives from the Heller School or from any single department may be counted toward program requirements, except for the foundation course.

**C.** An internship approved by the SJSP internship director and the successful completion of SJSP 89a (Social Justice, social Policy Internship) which is usually offered in the fall semester. Internships undertaken for other majors or minors will not fulfill this requirement. The internship experience and the internship seminar combined count as one academic course.

**D.** One additional course approved by the program director.

**E.** No more than two courses may be double-counted for this minor and for any particular major.

**F.** A passing letter grade must be obtained in each course taken for the program. Pass/fail grading option is not allowed. Students must achieve a GPA of at least 2.00 in all courses for the program.

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**Courses of Instruction**


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**(1–99) Primarily for Undergraduate Students**


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**SJSP 89a Social Justice, Social Policy Internship**

*To obtain an internship for the fall term, students must discuss their placements with the SJSP internship instructor by April 1.*

Supervised internship in a social justice, social service, social policy, or social research organization. Students will meet as a group and will complete research assignments. Usually offered every year in the fall semester.

Ms. Stimell

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**SJSP 98b Social Justice and Social Policy Independent Research**

*Prerequisite: SOC 123b or permission of the program director.*

Guided readings and research on an independent topic that builds upon and integrates the particular course work completed in the SJSP program. Research may be directed by a member of the program committee or by another faculty member with the approval of the program director. Usually offered every semester.

Staff

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**Core Courses**
**SOC 123b**

Crisis of the Welfare State

**Electives**

The following courses are approved for the program. Not all are given in any one year. Please consult the *Schedule of Classes* each semester.

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**Aging and Disability Policy**
**HS 124a**

Dilemmas of Long-Term Care

**HS 524a**

Long-Term Care: A Policy Perspective

**HSSP 192b**

Sociology of Disability

**SOC 177b**

Aging in Society

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**Democracy and Social Justice**
**ED 155b**

Education and Social Policy

**HS 300a**

Theories of Social Policy, Social Justice, and Social Change

**PHIL 20a**

Social and Political Philosophy: Democracy and Disobedience

**POL 154a**

Seminar: Citizenship

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**Dynamics of Discrimination and Inequality**
**HS 110a**

Wealth and Poverty

**HS 528f**

Law and Society: Race and Class

**LGLS 120a**

Sex Discrimination and the Law

**LGLS 121b**

Law and Social Welfare: Citizen Rights and Government Responsibilities

**Family and Child Policy**
**SOC 104a**

Sociology of Education

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**Health Care Policy**
**HS 104b**

American Health Care

**LGLS 114a**

American Health Care: Law and Policy

**LGLS 131b**

Patient Autonomy: Law, Medicine, and Ethics

**SOC 190b**

Caring in the Health Care System

**SOC 191a**

Health, Community, and Society

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**Historical and Comparative Perspectives on Social Justice**
**AAAS 80a**

Economy and Society in Africa

**AMST 188b**

Justice Brandeis and Progressive Jurisprudence

**LGLS 124b**

International Law and Development

**PHIL 13b**

The Idea of the Market: Economic Philosophies

**SOC 176a**

Nature, Nurture, and Public Policy