



Florida State University College of Social Work

DOCTORAL PROGRAM GUIDE

CSW.FSU.EDU





WHY FSU? WHY THE COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK?

Florida State University (FSU) is a nationally recognized, student-centric institution that takes pride in offering challenging, yet invigorating academic programs, open communication with students, and opportunities to assume leadership roles that help them develop leadership skills. On FSU's main campus, there are 18 colleges offering more than 300 undergraduate, graduate, professional, and doctorate programs.



FSU RANKS AMONG THE

TOP 20

PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

BY U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT



FSU IS A RECOGNIZED 2022

DIVERSITY CHAMPION

AND RECEIVED A 2022 HIGHER EDUCATION
EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY AWARD
FROM INSIGHT INTO DIVERSITY

Our Program

Since 1974 the Doctoral Program at Florida State University has built its national reputation by guiding scholars toward excellence. Students are challenged with excellent research and teaching opportunities that prepare them for careers as leaders in education and research. The doctoral program emphasizes training in research methods and adult pedagogy. Students participate in experiential learning in systematic methods of inquiry that foster independence in research and scholarship, particularly in qualitative and quantitative research including intervention research.

Students are guided by our outstanding faculty members who have expertise in a wide variety of substantive and methodological areas. Faculty have rigorous expectations of students and are dedicated to the ethical principles of social work research and practice. Faculty are committed to fostering a transformative experience for our students, guiding them to a future where they enjoy successful careers in academia as accomplished researchers and educators.



The FSU College of Social Work doctoral program offers rigorous training in translational research that makes an important impact in the real world. Over 75% of our recent graduates have earned tenure-track positions at universities across the country, where they make impressive contributions to their communities and the field of social work.



Dr. Stephen Tripodi

Doctoral Program Director, Associate Professor | stripodi@fsu.edu



PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES



\$18+ MILLION
IN ANNUAL RESEARCH FUNDING



70+ PERCENT

FACULTY RESEARCH PROJECTS
FEDERALLY AND STATE FUNDED



INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AREAS
REPRESENTED AMONG FACULTY



3x

NUMBER OF FACULTY
RESEARCH PROPOSALS
TRIPLED IN 5 YEARS

The College of Social Work houses several institutes, centers and initiatives engaged in translational research and evidence-based practice and outreach.



**Stoops Center for
Communities, Families
and Children**



**Florida Institute
for Child Welfare**



**Institute for Justice
Research and
Development**

MDC

**Multidisciplinary
Evaluation and
Consulting Center**



**Institute for
Family Violence Studies**



**Maura's Voice
Research Fund**

College of Social Work faculty and students are involved with interdisciplinary and intercollegiate research and projects. Some partners on campus include:

- FSU Center for Population Sciences for Health Equity
- Florida Center for Reading Research



FACULTY PROFILE



Dr. Shamra Boel-Studdt

Associate Professor

Shamra Boel-Studdt is an Associate Professor in the College of Social Work. Dr. Boel-Studdt's research focuses on youth with complex behavioral health needs who require services in higher-level care settings. Specifically, her research focuses on addressing longstanding gaps in service quality and effectiveness for children and youth treated in residential and in-patient care settings who represent a highly vulnerable population with heightened risks for chronic placement disruption and poor educational, relational, and behavioral health outcomes.

Her translational research seeks to address the limited uptake of evidence-based practices in higher level care service settings by establishing comprehensive quality assessment systems for child-service systems grounded in research supported practice standards. The quality assessment system serves as a mechanism for promoting the uptake of research-based practices in care settings through ongoing evaluation that informs quality improvement supported by targeted training and technical assistance.

Dr. Boel-Studdt's work has shaped child welfare legislation in Florida and proposed legislation in other states aimed at providing effective care for high needs youth. Her funded projects include a longstanding collaboration with the Florida Department of Children and Families to develop, validate and scale up a legislatively mandated Statewide Accountability System for residential group homes and shelters.

In 2020, Dr. Boel-Studdt began partnering with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and University of Texas Health Sciences Center at San Antonio to develop a quality accountability and training platform for residential treatment centers serving youth with acute mental health needs. She is also the principal Investigator for an evaluation of Advanced Certification Trainings (AdCert) for child welfare professionals funded by the Florida Institute for Child Welfare.

Dr. Boel-Studdt's doctoral teaching includes Introduction to Applied Statistics for the Social Sciences and Introduction to Linear Modeling. She enjoys teaching and mentoring doctoral students to provide applied research experiences that help prepare them for future research. Outside of her professional role, she enjoys spending time with her family, running, reading, and watching classic films.



FACULTY PROFILE



Dr. John Mathias

Associate Professor

John Mathias is a social work professor with a courtesy appointment in the Department of Anthropology and uses ethnographic and community-engaged methods to study the social justice implications of environmental issues. He seeks to understand how some environmental hazards, like hurricanes or industrial pollution, can exacerbate social inequality. He also studies the inspiring work of people—including activists, nonprofit workers, librarians, and others—who seek to overcome such inequality and promote environmental justice.

Trained as an anthropologist and a social work researcher, Mathias has conducted research in both India and the US. In India, his research has focused on diverse environmental activists, all of whom have dedicated their lives to protecting nature and building a more just society. He explores how ordinary people come to such activist lives, what challenges this path brings, and what this can teach others about the stakes in committing oneself to an activist cause. In the US, his research identifies causal processes by which hurricanes and tornadoes compound chronic social inequality, especially racial inequality, and develops recommendations for policies and social action to counteract these processes.

Mathias collaborates with scholars in diverse disciplines, such as engineering, geography, urban planning, and medicine. Leveraging his expertise in macro social work practice, he facilitates collaborations between interdisciplinary research teams and community members in order to counteract power imbalances between researchers and those they study as well as to increase the positive impacts of research on peoples' lives. His research been funded by the National Science Foundation, the National Hazards Center, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and his articles have been published in top journals in anthropology, social work, and disaster studies.

As an educator, Mathias loves to explore the social implications of big ideas with students, help them hone their craft as writers, encourage them to question the cultural assumptions embedded in much American social work scholarship, and accompany them as they develop their own driving questions as researchers. Off campus, he enjoys growing fruit trees, watching HGTV with his daughter, taking epic tandem bicycle trips with anyone willing, and camping along the riversides and shorelines around Tallahassee.



STUDENT HIGHLIGHT

“ The knowledge of the faculty, unique research opportunities, and exceptional mentorship in the college made me confident that I could achieve any academic goals that I set for myself. ”



Elizabeth Curley

Doctoral Candidate

As a previous graduate of the College of Social Work, I decided to pursue a PhD at Florida State because I knew that there was no better fit for developing experience in criminal-legal social work and the necessary skills. The knowledge of the faculty, unique research opportunities and exceptional mentorship in the college made me confident that I could achieve any academic goals that I set for myself. Even facing the challenges of COVID, the high standards I've come to expect from the College of Social Work for opportunities available to me did not falter.

Since my first semester of the program in 2019, I have received high-quality education and experience in quantitative, qualitative, intervention research and measurement validation methodologies. Faculty members have allowed me to demonstrate new skills and challenge myself in every arena of social work research and education.

I have presented at five conferences, including the 4th Annual Children of Incarcerated Parents National Conference. I've developed training materials such as one for representatives within the criminal/legal system that is focused on working with justice-involved LGBTQ+ individuals.

Thanks to the generous opportunities provided by faculty on their own research projects, I have worked on 11 research studies with a range of responsibilities. From these projects, I have published three peer-reviewed publications with four more papers in development.

My teaching assistantship also helped me to grow as an instructor and value my role as a social work educator. The realms of research and teaching even intersect in my upcoming work on an innovative research project to integrate case-based learning into the curriculum of the college.



STUDENT HIGHLIGHT



“

The program provides an environment where students can access a nurturing academic atmosphere, receive comprehensive research training and mentorship offered by their esteemed faculty.

”

Sanoop Valappanandi
Doctoral Student

The Doctoral Program at the FSU College of Social Work stands apart for its steadfast commitment to providing students with comprehensive theoretical and practical training in quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. The faculty members, known for their national and international experiences across diverse research areas, offer a wealth of knowledge and guidance.

During my first year in the Doctoral Program, I engaged in multiple research projects. I worked closely with the Stoops Center for Communities, Families, and Children, actively contributing to data collection, analysis, and publication on several research studies focused on the vulnerability and resilience of rural communities and special needs populations in the face of natural disasters and pandemics.

One unique aspect of the program has been the opportunity to conduct my own research as part of my coursework. I have conducted a systematic review of the effectiveness of drinking water quality programs in India as well as a study on the association of children's respiratory health and traditional cooking methods in India. Both studies have led to opportunities to present at conferences and for publication. My research practicum also has me working on a project studying the impact of climate change and local adaptation practices among marginalized communities living on coral islands in India.

The program also encourages interdisciplinary learning. I undertook a directed individual study with a political science professor and authored a manuscript on the determinants of local participation in natural resource governance. I also hold a chair position in the organization, Scholars Across Anthropology and Social Work, and will present at a roundtable at the upcoming American Anthropological Association conference.

The social work Doctoral Program is an ideal place for dedicated research scholars. The program provides an environment where students can access a nurturing academic atmosphere, receive comprehensive research training and mentorship offered by their esteemed faculty.



RECENT GRADUATE FEATURE

“ I am grateful for my experiences and the connections I made due to attending FSU. ”

Dr. Jessica Bagneris

Assistant Professor,
University of Houston
PhD, 2022



“As a doctoral student pursuing my degree during the Coronavirus pandemic and consistent civil unrest, I never expected to be a 2022 graduate of the FSU College of Social Work Doctoral Program. I have graduated and am now a tenure-track assistant professor at the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work. I now have the opportunity to continue my passion, researching ways to improve the biopsychosocial outcomes of marginalized children and families.

At FSU, I was able to connect with mentors who were integral and went above and beyond to help me pursue my research area, connect me with researchers across the world, and provide me with research opportunities that honed the skills that helped me be competitive and thrive during the job market. Thanks to the faculty members who helped me solidify my dissertation and prepare for the job market,

I was able to interview and attend campus visits at multiple institutions, leading to the institution that was the right fit for me.



Throughout the program, I had the opportunity to teach multiple courses, assist on various funded research projects, work with multiple research teams as both a learner and a leader, and mentor undergraduate, Masters, and Ph.D. students along their journey. After speaking with doctoral students across the globe, I know that my job market success was unique, and I feel confident in my abilities to successfully matriculate toward tenure and prepare future students. I am grateful for my experiences and the connections I made due to attending FSU.”



ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT



“The FSU College of Social Work PhD program prepared me with the skills I need to thrive both within and outside academia.”

Dr. Stephanie C. Kennedy

Policy Director, Council on Criminal Justice
PhD, 2016; MSW, 2011

“The FSU College of Social Work PhD program prepared me with the skills I need to thrive both within and outside academia. I am currently the policy director for the Council on Criminal Justice,

a nonpartisan think tank focused on data-driven criminal justice policy reform. In this role, I work with individuals and groups across the nation, generating and translating research evidence to drive durable, sustainable, and implementable policy innovations.

My passion for engaging in criminal justice reform was fueled by the outstanding leadership and mentoring I received from faculty and staff within the College of Social Work. Prior to leaving academia, I served as the director of research dissemination at the Institute for Justice Research and Development, a premier research center housed within the College of Social Work dedicated to conducting rigorous intervention research at the intersection of social work and criminal justice. During this time, I honed my research translation skills and built upon the solid research and writing foundation developed during my time as a doctoral student.

As a doctoral student, I was granted numerous opportunities to work on grant-funded research projects and gain the skills needed to design and implement my own studies as a principal investigator and disseminate research findings to scholars, policymakers, and practitioners. I was encouraged to craft a dissertation project focused on incarcerated women's histories of trauma and how trauma intersected with their mental health and substance use disorder symptoms and engagement in criminal behavior. I received excellent support and mentoring throughout the project and ultimately was able to conduct both quantitative and qualitative analyses on nearly 200 incarcerated women's experiences. I felt well prepared both to succeed and to translate the findings into actionable policy and practice solutions to improve prevention and intervention services for women in crisis.

The opportunities afforded to me during the FSU College of Social Work doctoral program made me the rigorous and grounded scholar that I am today and paved the way for me to transition onto the national policy stage. Students are the heart of the College of Social Work and I would not be where I am today without the training, mentoring, and support I received from numerous faculty and staff. ”



ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT

“The energies offered by social work faculty during my doctoral studies contributed to my success as a researcher and educator.”



Dr. Stephanie Grace Prost

Associate Professor

PhD, 2017; MSW, 2008; BSW/BS, 2007

“I graduated from the FSU College of Social Work (CSW) PhD program in 2017 and began my tenure-track position with the University of Louisville (UofL) Raymond A. Kent School of Social Work and Family Science that fall. I am now an associate professor and am conducting research related to the health and well-being of older persons who are incarcerated, work that has been funded by the National Institute on Aging and University of Louisville Executive Vice President for Research and Innovation.

The energies offered by social work faculty during my doctoral studies contributed to my success as a researcher and educator. With supportive guidance from faculty my work was selected for the 2017 Student Award for Social Work Research by the Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education. Positive networking opportunities fostered by Dr. Stephen Tripodi helped me build scholarly relationships and forge new paths in research, later culminating in a successful application for the Academic Health and Policy Conference on Correctional Health Junior Investigator Award. This same networking was integral to my recent selection to participate in the Justice Community Opioid Intervention Network Learning Experiences to Advance Practice Investigator Program funded by the National Institutes of Health Helping to End Addiction Long-Term® (HEAL) Initiative.

College of Social Work faculty have also contributed to my knowledge and skill building surrounding teaching. Doctoral students were offered dedicated coursework and teaching practicum related to instructional strategies and pedagogy. Such hands-on opportunities were critical to my having been nominated as a University of Louisville Faculty Favorite and Student Champion. For each of these and numerous other experiences, I remain ever grateful.”



ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

For the application and complete details on the Ph.D. admissions requirements, please visit csw.fsu.edu.

1. A master's degree from a graduate school of social work (MSW) with a Grade Point Average of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale); The school must be accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.
 - a. International applicants must have a CSWE accredited MSW or equivalent degree. If the degree is earned outside of CSWE jurisdiction, the applicant must have their degree evaluated and validated by CSWE. The cost of CSWE validation is the responsibility of the applicant. Exceptions may be considered by the Doctoral Program Director on a case by case basis.
2. Transcripts from all previous undergraduate and graduate academic work; "Good standing" status at the last school attended
3. An official Graduate Record Examination (GRE General Test). The GRE requirement may be waived for students based on criteria available at csw.fsu.edu/phdadmissions.
4. For International Applicants, evidence of English language proficiency is required as demonstrated by an acceptable score on the following tests:
 - Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) – internet-based or paper-based test
 - International English Language Testing System (IELTS)
 - Pearson Test of English (PTE)
 - Duolingo
 - Cambridge C1 Advanced Level
 - Michigan Language Assessment
5. Resume/Curriculum Vitae
6. Statement of Purpose
7. Writing Sample
8. Letters of Recommendation (minimum: 3)

CONNECT WITH US!



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