

Department of Social Work
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**Summer 2026
Human Biology for Social
Workers**

Social workers, to effectively assess client systems, need to have background knowledge in sociology, psychology, political science, economics, and human biology. This course will provide social work students with basic knowledge about human biology that will aid them in assessing client systems and creating intervention plans that have a greater potential to create desired outcomes. The course will explore the basics of anatomy, biological development, and heredity. Further, the course will look at issues around health, illness, disability, mental illness, the impact of substance use, sexuality, and aging. Finally, we will examine issues around Public Health.

Intended Audience

This course is intended for students entering an MSW program that requires all students have completed a Human Biology class before starting the graduate program. The course also is intended for BSW students who have complete their core science requirements but are still required to complete a Human Biology class as part of their Social Work Program. Since the requirements of each MSW and BSW program vary, we strongly recommend that the student check that this course will meet the requirements of their program before completing the course. A copy of the syllabus is available to document the course content to MSW and BSW programs.

Credit

This is a noncredit pass/fail course.

Instruction Method/Expectations

The course is offered as an on-line course that is divided into six topical modules and takes six weeks to complete. For each module students will read assigned readings, listen to assigned podcasts, complete a short written assignment, a short quiz, and/or participate in an on-line asynchronous discussion board. Students need a computer or tablet with an internet connection. Students need a web-browser (e.g., Explorer, Safari, etc.) and a word processing program (MS Word, Apple Pages, Text Edit, etc.). Students need basic web-browser skills and word processing skills. Students will be required to listen to and possibly watch podcasts and videos. Finally, students need a functional email address that is provided to the instructor.

This class is scheduled to start May 19, 2026 and end on June 30, 2026.

If you have any questions about the course, please contact Brandon Fredette at (413) 572-8033 or via email bfredette@westfield.ma.edu. To register for the course online, please visit: www.westfield.ma.edu/humanbio