

Let the world be your classroom!

- Meet face-to-face with people from diverse cultures engaged in struggles for justice in Mexico
- Discuss current social issues with Mexican people at the grassroots level
- Expand your worldview and change your perceptions about global justice and human liberation
- Gain valuable skills, including improved Spanish, for working with the increasing Latino population in the United States and with other immigrant populations

What makes our program so unique?

Specially Tailored Semester — Participate in a study abroad program specifically designed for social work majors.

Experiential Education— Integrate solid academic work with real life experiences. Get to know the people and the culture outside the walls of a classroom.

Diverse Guest Speakers — Learn directly from social work practitioners, social welfare policy makers, and community leaders.

Living/Learning Community — Reflect on your learning experience together in a community of faculty, staff, and social work majors.

Home Stays — Spend four to five weeks in local households participating in daily life and activities and improving your Spanish skills.

Language — All courses are taught in English. A minimum of one college-level Spanish course is required, but advanced Spanish courses are also available; language interpretation will be provided for guest lecturers and field trips, and course work may be submitted in either Spanish or English.

Fieldwork/Community Engagement — Develop closer relationships in the community and improve your Spanish by doing fieldwork or volunteer work in a Mexican organization and then reflecting upon it within the context of your courses.

Interaction with Mexican Social Workers — Spend one week in Cuernavaca with social work students from the area, and another week participating in classes at the UNAM.



Goal of the program

To develop cross-culturally competent, ethical social work professionals with a global perspective by providing a semester of transformative, experiential learning focused on social and economic justice.

The BSW Mexico Consortium started the social work semester in Mexico in 2003 to meet CSWE curriculum for a BSW degree. Because schools differ in their specific requirements, please discuss with your advisers as early as possible your plans to study in Mexico so you can select a plan that will satisfy the curriculum requirements of your home institution.

Location

Our study center is located in Cuernavaca, a picturesque city in central Mexico known as “the city of eternal spring,” noted for its innovative grassroots organizations and history of social struggle. Cuernavaca is a 90-minute drive south of Mexico City.

Course Offerings

Students are expected to take four of the following courses while in Mexico:

A Spanish Language Course

(required except in the case of students who are proficient in Spanish) Mexican instructors at the Universal Language School provide Spanish instruction; classes are composed of no more than six students. Improve oral competency in Spanish through an intensive month-long course offered at the beginning of the semester.

You may choose between Beginning Spanish I and II, Intermediate Spanish I and II, Advanced Conversation and Composition, or Conversations in Cultural Context. Students may take additional Spanish courses in January or Summer Session I for an additional fee.

International Social Welfare:

The Mexican Context - Required

This course develops students’ understanding of current social, economic, political, and cultural realities in Mexico through an exploration of Mexican culture and history. Particular emphasis will be placed on intercultural communication and the role of U.S. foreign policy in Mexico both historically and currently. This understanding will frame students’ knowledge of contemporary social welfare and social work practice with migrants and immigrants in the U.S. and will also serve as a foundation for the other social work courses taught in Mexico.

Social Work with Groups and Families Theory and Practice

This course is part of the practice sequence in generalistic social work education. The primary focus is on the study of human behavior in groups with an extensive opportunity to practice skills necessary to be effective an effective group member and leader. Historical development of group work and mutual systems will be studied. The effect of diversity on group interaction both in U.S. and Mexico are highlighted.

Comparative Social Policy

This course in comparative social policy will use Mexico and the U.S. as the context for studying policy formation, implementation, analysis, and the importance of values on these processes. Roles and responsibilities of citizens and professionals in the formulating and implementing policy responsive to social needs will be addressed.

Social Work Field Experience

For those who need to complete fieldwork while in Mexico, the field experience contributes to the practicum hours required for the BSW degree. Students will be placed in a community social service agency in order to observe, learn from, and work with social work practitioners involved in the tasks and activities of the agency. A seminar will be provided to help link theory to practice under the supervision of a faculty member from a CSWE accredited school and a practitioner from Mexico. The hours of placement will be approximately 100 in Mexico.

Students will be asked to complete a language assessment and participation might depend on language abilities. Beginning and Intermediate students are encouraged to take an additional Spanish course in January at their own cost.

Potential Guest Speakers and Field Trips

- Listen to a panel of Mexican social workers discuss social services and social policy in Mexico.
- Spend time in a rural community that has been affected by immigration to the U.S.
- Talk with an expert in HIV/AIDS about its impact on Mexico.
- Talk with a representative from Mexican Family Services regarding social welfare.
- Visit Mexican social service agencies and low income neighborhoods to learn about the community’s challenges and responses to problems.
- Visit the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City and talk with Citizenship and Immigration Service agents about Mexican migration and U.S. immigration policy.
- Tour the Xochicalco pyramid site and learn about the cultures of indigenous peoples.
- Visit the Diego Rivera mural in Cuernavaca to learn about key events in Mexican history.

Complete course descriptions are available on our website.



“This semester has opened my eyes to Mexico and to myself. I have learned about history, family, communication, roles and more. I have been challenged to name things about my own culture and my own views that I would not have seen in the USA. I now know how it feels to be lost in a culture and have learned to value the differences there are.”

~ Student, Winona State University

General Information

Prerequisites

A minimum of one college-level Spanish is required. This can be taken in January in Cuernavaca before starting the program if necessary. Students may also take additional courses in January to improve their proficiency. Please inquire about the cost. Students from non-member schools must have completed an introductory social work course.

Cost

Cost for BSW Mexico Consortium is equivalent to the tuition at your home institution, plus a room and board fee of approximately \$3,500. This includes tuition, room and board, field trips, pre-trip background reading materials, logistical information, airport or bus transfers, and general program oversight. Students are responsible for their travel to and from the program, books, and personal expenses. Students from non-member schools pay the same cost as the Center's other semester programs for which the prices are listed on the website.

Credit

Each credit is the equivalent of four semester hours. Students will take four courses for a program total of 16 semester hours. Credit is granted and transcripts are issued by each student's home institution for co-sponsoring schools.

Eligibility

Open to sophomores, juniors and seniors at each of the BSW Mexico Consortium schools (check with your school representative to see which works best for your program). Students from member schools are given priority in admission, and the selection of students for this semester is made at each participating school. Social work students from other CSWE accredited institutions may be accepted on a space-available basis.

Lodging/Meals

You will spend most of the semester living together dormitory-style in Augsburg College's center in Colonia San Antón, close to downtown Cuernavaca. Most meals are provided and accommodations are made as best as possible for vegetarians and students with special dietary needs.

An important part of social work is building relationships. Students will have the opportunity to live in local households of modest means from four to five weeks participating in daily life and activities.

Students with Children

Occasionally children have accompanied their parents on programs. Please contact us for information.

Application datelines

Deadline for consortium schools is September 15. Students from BSW Mexico Consortium should request an application from their own department. The deadline for non-consortium schools is October 15 and applications may be requested directly from the Center for Global Education.

Faculty

Courses will be taught both by Augsburg's adjunct professors based in Mexico and a social work professor from a CSWE accredited co-sponsoring schools. In addition, the program is supported by the Mexican Social Work Advisory Council that provides guest lectures and assistance with program activities.

Educational Philosophy

The Center strives to offer academic semester programs that are rigorously academic, experiential, intercultural, and transformative. Five assumptions about education shape our programs:

- **Process:** The best kind of learning is learning how to learn.
- **Community:** Effective learning takes place in the context of community.
- **Content:** Liberating education takes place when the content of the curriculum is made real through experience and includes dialogue with people whose voices are underrepresented in academia and society at large.
- **Critical Analysis:** Liberation education requires critical analysis of experiences in order to make the experiences educational.
- **Action:** Liberating education encourages individuals to live as active agents of history, and hence, fosters social transformation rather than the maintenance of the status quo.

True education enables and empowers individuals to think critically about their world and their role in it. The Center's role in this process is to create the occasion for dialogue, helping people make connections and ask questions, but allowing those who share their lives with us to be interpreters of their own experience.

Disclaimer

Information is subject to change. The Center for Global Education will not hesitate to cancel or to re route any part of the program should it appear unsafe for travel.

Center for Global Education at Augsburg College

The mission of the Center for Global Education at Augsburg College is to provide cross-cultural educational opportunities in order to foster critical analysis of local and global conditions so that personal and systemic change takes place leading to a more just and sustainable world. Its first undergraduate semester program was conducted in 1979 and the Center was established in 1982. Since then over 1600 students from more than 280 different colleges and universities in North America have participated in its study abroad programs. In addition, the Center also coordinates more than 35 short-term travel seminars for adults and students each year.



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Center for
Global
Education
25 Years
AUGSBURG
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2211 Riverside Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55454
globaled@augsborg.edu
www.augsburg.edu/global/spa/swksem.html
1-800-299-8889

Local Contact:



Mexico
Spring Semester
Late January - Mid May

Social Work in a
Latin American Context

BSW Mexico Consortium
Augsburg College, Bemidji State University,
Bethel University, College of St. Catherine/
University of St. Thomas, Metropolitan State
University, St. Cloud State University,
St. Olaf College, University of Sioux Falls,
Winona State University

Center for Global Education
at Augsburg College