

POVERTY, JUSTICE, AND HUMAN CAPABILITIES

THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES, THE SCHOOL OF
SOCIAL SCIENCES, AND THE GEORGE R. BROWN
SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

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DEGREES OFFERED: NONE

The Program in Poverty, Justice, and Human Capabilities (PJHC), housed in the Center for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, provides students with a multifaceted understanding of human well-being, both in the U.S. and internationally. The PJHC collaborates with a number of departments to offer Rice undergraduate students a minor in poverty, justice, and human capabilities. This unique interdisciplinary minor emphasizes a “capabilities approach,” which considers what people are able to do and be—for example, live to old age and engage in economic and political activities—rather than strictly what material goods they possess. The program also acknowledges the central importance of a variety of additional influences on well-being that go beyond income, such as gender, racial, and ethnic disparities; health status; education; human rights; political freedoms; and necessities like food and shelter. A key goal of the PJHC is to enrich students’ understanding of poverty and inequality, so that regardless of their choice of occupation, they will maintain a longstanding commitment to enhancing the well-being of all people. More generally, the program aims to train Rice students to be future leaders in solving global problems in human well-being.

The PJHC minor combines high-caliber undergraduate courses with internship experiences for students to work in the summer or as part of a study abroad program with agencies that help disadvantaged communities and people. Students are placed with organizations where they work directly with clients and gain experiential knowledge that broadens their perspective on human lives and capabilities. Through these academic and experiential learning opportunities, students explore deeper understandings of the structural factors underlying poverty and human well-being and potential policy solutions. The program further aims to promote dialogue among all disciplines about how to address issues of poverty alleviation and human well-being with a sophisticated understanding of the challenges and sound strategies for moving forward.

Although impediments to human well-being take many forms, barriers to the capabilities of women and girls persist across societies; women and girls are therefore disproportionately represented among the poor and those unable to attain their full capabilities. Acknowledging gender inequality as a powerful

influence on disparities in human well-being, the academic component of the program, including the content of core and required courses, recognizes gender as a central analytic category.

REQUIREMENTS FOR MINORING IN PJHC

PJHC minor courses are open to all Rice students, including those not pursuing the PJHC minor; however, in courses with limited space, preference will be given to declared minors. The key core course is HUMA 280/SOCI 280, which is offered each year. Students must submit a brief questionnaire to the program director to be considered for admission to HUMA 280/SOCI 280.

Students must meet the following requirements to complete the minor in PJHC:

- Students must complete six courses (18 credit hours)
- Students must take HUMA/SOCI 280, an approved gender course, and an approved capstone course.
- Students must choose three electives, including one course from the PJHC non-Western elective list, one course from the Race and Ethnicity elective list, and a third course from a broader list that also includes courses from the other lists. A complete list of approved required and elective courses may be found at www.rice.edu/pjhc.
- As part of the minor, students must participate in an approved PJHC direct service learning experience. They do not receive academic credit for this experience. Students who have declared the minor are eligible to participate in the direct service learning experience after successfully completing HUMA 280/SOCI 280 or SWGS 422 and at least one approved elective. Students who wish to pursue an alternative service learning experience should consult with the PJHC director for other programs explicitly approved for the minor and other options, such as study abroad.

For a complete listing of all PJHC courses offered each semester, as well as for more information about the program in general, please visit www.rice.edu/pjhc.