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SEL Foundations Course Description

 [Course Enrollment Intake Form](#) 

 Questions? SELCourses@berkeley.edu 

Spring 2026 Course Dates

One week of required self-paced orientation activities will begin on *TBA*.

Asynchronous instruction will occur from *TBA* (12 weeks).

Four required live online sessions will be on Thursdays from 6:30-8:00 pm PT on *TBA*.

Course Description

In a unique multi-sector partnership, UC Berkeley Extension and the [School of Social Welfare](#), Sacramento County Office of Education, and the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) have come together to build social and emotional learning capacity across California

through graduate-level courses for educators and leaders through the [CalHOPE Student Support Project](#). Informed by a statewide coalition of education stakeholders, the SEL Foundations Course is designed for classroom teachers who work directly with pre-K through 12th-grade students.

In this 12-week online graduate-level course, you will learn about systemic social and emotional learning (SEL) and practical strategies to promote adult well-being and equitable, evidence-based SEL among school-aged children and youth. You will study assets-based, accessible methods to develop local strategies that promote positive relationships and improve conditions for learning to make schools centers of social and emotional well-being.

Major Topics of Exploration Include:

- The field's history, purpose, research, and role in promoting educational equity
- Personal and community well-being among educators
- The basic neuroscientific principles behind learning, emotions, relationships, and healing
- Contemporary programs, practices, and culturally responsive pedagogy
- Partnering with families and communities to advance systemic SEL
- SEL policy and advocacy relevant to classroom educators

Upon successful completion of the course, you will receive a certificate of completion, indicating that you have demonstrated knowledge of systemic social and emotional learning theory and practice; the capacity to implement evidence-based social and emotional learning in your classroom with school-aged children; the ability to serve as an SEL teacher leader among your peers; and capacity to effectively advocate for high-quality implementation at your site.

Prerequisites

Participants must hold a Bachelor's degree and be working as an education professional serving pre-K through 12th-grade students in California.



Course Outline

Course Objectives

- Understand the core goals and components of systemic social and emotional learning, including why and how SEL is central to promoting positive relationships, well-being, and success in school, work, and life.
- Understand how SEL is connected to related education frameworks and goals, including academic attainment and school climate, and culture imperatives.
- Understand both the research base that underlies SEL practice and the strategies for using research evidence to continuously improve educational practice.
- Understand SEL's role in promoting educational equity and global citizenship by using transformative, culturally responsive, and healing-centered practices.
- Apply basic neuroscience principles behind emotions, motivation, and learning, and the impact of stress and trauma on the brain, to classroom settings.
- Demonstrate enhanced knowledge of classroom and school-wide SEL planning, implementation, and continuous improvement processes, including selecting evidence-based SEL curricula.
- Demonstrate an enhanced capacity to engage in personal development and reflection practices that strengthen adult SEL competencies and well-being.
- Demonstrate enhanced capacity to foster developmentally appropriate student SEL competencies through direct instruction, academic integration, and classroom pedagogy that centers student voice and experience.
- Demonstrate an enhanced capacity to create welcoming and inclusive learning environments that promote belonging, support student well-being, and honor the identities of all community members.
- Demonstrate an enhanced capacity to build authentic partnerships with families to support student SEL.

Course Structure

SEL Foundations (SOC WEL X265L) is a fixed-date course equivalent to 3 graduate-level credits. Students will complete one online asynchronous module per week for 12 weeks and attend four 90-minute synchronous live discussions during specified weeks of the 12-week course.

The 12 course modules are nested under one of five topics:

- Topic A: Foundations of SEL — Creating Conditions for Thriving
- Topic B: Adult SEL — It Starts With Us
- Topic C: Neuroscience of Learning, Emotions, and Healing
- Topic D: Promoting a Connected Classroom Through Programs and Practices
- Topic E: Students, Families, and Community on Practice and Policy Partners

How You Learn

- Deeply knowledgeable and experienced instructor
- Online and live discussions with classmates
- Weekly modules with multimedia talks, podcasts, and interviews with practitioners and field experts
- Scholarly readings and field resources
- Topical artifacts
- Strategies to improve your professional practice and foster your own well-being
- Weekly reflection prompts to apply, expand on, or critique course topics

The course culminates in a Capstone Project, which builds your capacity to identify assets-based, data-driven SEL goals, select and implement research-based strategies to address that goal, and reflect on your professional practice for continuous improvement purposes.

We anticipate that educators will need to dedicate six or more hours per week to coursework.

? [Frequently Asked Questions](#)