

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK
BSSW PROGRAM**

**Social Work 480 – Field Practice Seminar
Fall 2002**

INSTRUCTORS:

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5:15 - 6:15 p. m.
By appointment

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BSSW PROGRAM MISSION

The BSSW Program at the University of Tennessee exists to fulfill a need for disciplined, highly educated and trained generalist social workers to help people improve their social functioning in a technologically complex, culturally diverse, and rapidly changing society. There is a focus on the reciprocal relationships between persons and their environments. Social workers are doers; they are problem-solvers who are able to intervene in multiple-level systems and perform various professional roles. Their actions are guided and informed by a broad knowledge-base, code of ethics, and professional values. Social workers are educated and trained to do things right as well as to do the right thing.

The mission of the BSSW Program is to develop generalist social workers who are strategic thinkers, life-long learners, and opinion shapers. The knowledge-base, skills, and values necessary for generalist practice are taught in an environment that fosters professional development and prepares students for critical thinking throughout their careers. We are dedicated to preparing practitioners for the challenges of the twenty-first century. Since the amount of knowledge doubles approximately every five years, what is taught today may soon be obsolete. Our challenge, therefore, lies in the on-going development and implementation of a curriculum that prepares and energizes students for generalist practice today and in the future.

BSSW PROGRAM GOALS

Provision of education and training that enable students to become generalist social work practitioners who:

- are committed to advancing social and economic justice and the principles, values, and ethics that guide the social work profession
- are grounded in systems theory and operate within a person-in-the-environment framework
- use the problem-solving process to intervene in multiple-level client systems
- have an understanding of human diversity and special populations that informs practice interventions
- use critical thinking, evaluative, and leadership skills to address the needs of a complex, changing society
- are committed to continuous development of professional self

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sixteen-hour-per-week supervised agency field practicum for integration of theory and practice and critical examination of oneself as a professional helping person. Concurrent field seminar on integration of knowledge with practice experiences. **Prerequisite: Full progression.**

The two-hour weekly seminar is comprised of senior students and the seminar leader who also acts as consultant to the students' field practice agencies. The active participation of the student is required since the seminar supports and supplements field instruction. Emphasis in the fall seminar is on: the organizational context of practice, the community context of practice, the social work problem solving process, and the professional context of practice.

RESOURCE TEXTBOOK

Horejsi, C.R. & Garthwait, C.L. (2001). The social work practicum: A guide and workbook for students. Needham Heights: Allyn & Bacon.

Westerfelt, A. & Dietz, T.J. (2001). Planning & conducting agency based research: A workbook for social work students. Needham Heights: Allyn & Bacon.

SEMINAR RATIONALE

The seminar facilitates integration of classroom learning with knowledge gained in field practice settings. The seminar encourages students to discuss their different agency settings, wide variety of client populations, and numerous field practice roles and field activities. The understanding of the professional role is strengthened and is enhanced beyond the individual student's own experience.

SEMINAR OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the seminar is to create a safe environment that fosters group collaboration/cooperation and provides students with opportunities to use critical thinking, self-reflection, and oral/written communication skills. Within this learning context, the objectives of this seminar are to promote an experiential understanding of:

- the organizational context of practice
- the community context of practice
- the social work problem solving process
- the professional context of practice

In this second field seminar, the expectation is that students will be able to demonstrate ability to process their field experience.

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES

The behavioral objectives are found in the Senior Fall Field Practice Evaluation Form.

SEMINAR OUTLINE

- I. Introduction**
 - A. Seminar structure and function**
 - 1. review syllabus
 - B. Field Practice**
 - 1. identification of field agency settings
 - 2. student concerns
 - 3. agency expectations
 - 4. learning plan
 - 5. behavioral objectives (see field evaluation form)
 - C. Field Practice Roles**
 - 1. field consultant/seminar leader
 - 2. field instructor
 - 3. task instructor
 - 4. student
 - D. Review Field Manual**

- II. The Organizational Context of Practice**
 - A. Knowledge of the agency**
 - B. Representing the agency**

- III. The Community Context of Practice**
 - A. Awareness of community needs and concerns**
 - B. Assessment of existing social policies and programs**
 - C. Knowledge of formal and informal resource networks**

- IV. The Problem Solving Process**
 - A. Preparation for the client contact**
 - B. Relationship skills**
 - C. Clarification of role and purpose**
 - D. Interpersonal communication skills**
 - E. Information gathering and recording**
 - F. Definition of the problem**
 - G. Analysis of the information collected**
 - H. Contracting**
 - I. Termination of service**
 - J. Evaluation of the intervention**

- V. The Professional Context of Practice
- A. Knowledge of the profession
 - B. Handling of work expectations
 - C. Use of supervision
 - D. Integration of the professional role

ASSIGNMENTS

These assignments are designed to help the student integrate classroom learning with field practice. Please keep in mind that writing quality, originality, creativity, critical thinking, clarity, and organization of ideas will be considered in the grading process of these assignments. All assignments, with the exception of the field journal, must be typed and double-spaced.

1. The first assignment is a field journal which provides students with an opportunity for thinking and writing about their field practice experiences. The journal offers glimpses of concerns, insights, doubts, and issues. Students ask and answer critical, reflective questions about events, persons, or themselves. This reflective process enables students to learn from themselves; to contemplate on what they have seen, felt, and experienced. Please remember that a field practice journal is *NOT* just a log of tasks, events, times, and dates.

Some of the questions listed below may assist you in your reflective, critical thinking. However, do not allow these questions to constrain your thoughts, excitement, and expressions.

Examples of Reflective Questions

- What have I learned about myself through this experience?
- How has this experience influenced my thinking about my values?
- How has this experience challenged stereotypes or prejudices I have?
- What realizations or insights were gained through this experience?
- Does the experience compliment or contrast what has been learned in the classroom?
- What have I learned about the agency, clients, and/or community through this experience?
- If you were in charge, what would you have changed or done in this situation?
- What are some of the broader social, economic, and political issues that are influencing this situation/problem?

Each student will keep a daily field practice journal which specifically discusses what was attempted, experienced, accomplished, discussed, read, etc. It should reflect the integration of social work course material and field practice. The journal should include a field practicum log of the student's daily field tasks/activities. The journal will be handed in to the seminar leader each week. Students must use a two or three-ring binder to hold their journal entries. These journals are private and will only be read by the seminar leader. **(10%)**

2. The second assignment is a written and oral presentation on the student's field practice agency/program. Read chapter 8, The Agency Context of Practice, in Horejsi and Garthwait in preparation for this assignment. The 2-3 page report will be turned into the seminar leader with copies for seminar participants approximately one month after the beginning of field. The oral presentations will be made throughout the semester and will be scheduled in class. The presentations should include the following information: (5%)

- history and philosophy of the agency/program
- mission and goals
- administrative structure and staffing patterns
- legal and/or policy mandates
- funding
- primary client group; voluntary or non-voluntary
- eligibility requirements
- description of available services
- program evaluation mechanisms
- community needs and linkages

Use the Horejsi and Garthwait text to address the questions related to human diversity in your agency. See pages 143-145 and answer questions 3-9, and 11. Include staff members in question 11.

3. The third assignment is an oral discussion of an ethical problem at your agency. Identify an ethical problem, or potential problem, that you have become aware of, affecting some aspect of service delivery at your agency. Read chapter 13 on Professional Social Work and chapter 14 on Professional Ethics from Horejsi and Garthwait in preparation for this assignment. The following issues need to be addressed: (1) the underlying personal and professional values in this situation; (2) specific issues related to the Code of Ethics; (3) identify any relevant legal codes and your own moral code pertinent to this practice issue; and (4) discuss how you would handle this situation if you were in charge. The purpose of this assignment is to encourage you to critically evaluate formal and informal policies and practices at the agency, and/or the behavior of individuals, that may represent ethical problems. Seminar discussions of ethical problems will begin sometime in October. (5%)
4. A fourth assignment is a research project which spans both semesters. This term you will be responsible for the completion of the first half of a research project. The purpose of the research project is to learn to measure change in some aspect of your agency's services or organizational processes. This assignment seeks to provide students an opportunity to integrate research knowledge with field practice. At the same time, another major purpose of this assignment is to provide agencies with needed information about some aspect of service provision or agency functions. The Westerfelt and Dietz text, Planning & Conducting Agency-Based Research, is a helpful guide for this assignment.

It is expected that students will spend approximately 2-3 hours per week of field time on their research projects. After-hours work on project will also be necessary, especially when major sections, such as the background discussion are due.

The assignment is divided into six sections. The first three are expected to be completed in fall term, and the last three in spring term. The grade for the project for fall term will be based on the final version of sections A-C turned in on December 3. Points will be taken off, however, if sections A-C are not completed or not turned in on their individual due dates. The sections are:

A. Background of the problem area

This section is a short (3 to 5 pages) literature review of the problem area you are interested in. Use this section to learn more about an important issue at your agency or affecting your client population, to find out about efforts that have been made to address the issue, including efforts made by your agency, and to acquire a focus for your specific research question. Find a minimum of three current, scholarly publications that address your problem area. You may use readings from other classes, if they are relevant. This first section will, hopefully, provide a sort of funneling effect to section 2. From the broader discussion of the problem area presented in section 1, you will arrive at a sharply focused research question representing the part of the problem area that you want to know more about. Read section IV of the research text, The Literature Review.

B. Problem definition/identification of research question

What problem or activity, relating to service provision or agency function, do you want to know more about? Possible examples include: What happens to clients after they terminate services at this agency? How satisfied are clients with our services? What are some of the needs of clients of our agency that go unmet? Do our services improve our clients' lives in the way we think they do? What are opinions held by service providers (within or outside the agency) about the needs for services for clients in the community, or about treatment strategies currently used? Has there been a difference in stress levels of family members of clients who receive our services? As you conceptualize your study, consider whether it has a cultural bias in terms of: age, race, gender, social class, physical/mental or emotional ability, or sexual orientation.

Problem or question identification can take a surprisingly long time, often because of the requirement that questions be measurable in some way. Read section III in the research text, The Research Question. Seminar time may be used to assist students to develop research questions and designated faculty members will be available for consultation. Parts A and B will be due October 17.

C. Methods for evaluation of the problem.

In this section, include information about your plans for your study sample, recruitment of subjects (if this is relevant to your project), measurement instruments, specific data collection instruments, data collection strategy, and the evaluation of your data. Read sections V, VI, and X in the research text relative to methods, survey research and sample design.

Virtually any study design is acceptable (e.g., pre- and post-test is welcome, but not required; either quantitative or qualitative approaches are welcome, as is single-subject design), as long as there is some systematic measurement of some aspect of the problem or service. Please review sections VII, VIII, IX in the research text to assist you in your selection. Students may gather original data, or use existing data

(e.g., data on file or in agency records). The emphasis is on the use of systems for empirical observation and evaluation of service-related phenomena. Seminar leaders and faculty consultants will assist students with study design, and make determinations of the suitability of proposed projects. Part C will be due November 14.

Parts A-C (20%)

Data collection can begin as soon as the student has received approval from the seminar leader on the first three sections. It is expected that data collection will be intensive in the first part of spring term. Parts D - F will be completed in spring semester.

D. Analysis of results of data collection.

E. Interpretations and discussion of results.

F. Recommendations for future work in this area.

SEMINAR PARTICIPATION

Each student is expected to attend seminar every week and each is expected to actively and fully engage in seminar activities and discussions.

FIELD PRACTICUM

It is understood that each student is assigned to a specific field setting and is responsible for meeting with his/her field instructor in order to become informed of the specific parameters and expectations in this setting. Punctuality, dependability and willingness to engage in this experience are some of the basic expectations for performance.

Learning Plans will be completed by the student and field instructor, highlighting specific tasks which will facilitate the student's professional competence as designated by the plan. The learning plan will be collected on September 12. Column one should be completed. The plan will be collected again on December 3. At this time column two should be completed.

The final evaluation will be completed by the field instructor with the student for the purpose of providing feedback to the student on his/her practice performance. Performance expectations may be discussed in class and students are encouraged to seek clarification when needed. It is advisable for students to review the evaluation form with the field instructor early in the semester.

GRADING:

The grade for SW 480 will be assigned by the seminar instructor. Sixty percent (60%) of the grade will be based on the student's performance in field practice as evaluated by the field instructor in collaboration with the seminar instructor. Seminar assignments are worth forty percent (40%) of the final grade. The student may check with the seminar leader at anytime to ascertain his/her standing. The following scale will be used for determination of the final grade:

A	100–90
B+	89–85
B	84–80
C+	79–75
C	74–70
D	69–60
F	59 and below

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Absences and tardiness **are not permitted** in this seminar. If you are absence and/or tardy **four or more times**, your course grade will be lowered one letter grade level.

HONOR STATEMENT

An essential feature of The University of Tennessee is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the University, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

“If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability or if you have emergency information to share, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 191 Hoskins Library at 974-6087. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.”

SEMINAR CALENDAR

August 22 First Seminar Meeting

August 26 Senior field begins

August 29	Seminar
September 5	Seminar
September 12	Learning Plans Due Agency Presentations Due
September 19	Seminar
September 26	Seminar
October 3	Seminar
October 10	FALL BREAK - NO SEMINAR
October 17	Mid Term Evaluations Due Research Parts A/B Due Ethical Problem Assignment Due
October 24	Seminar
October 31	Seminar
November 7	Seminar
November 14	Seminar Research Part C Due
November 21	Last Seminar for Fall Semester
November 28	Thanksgiving - NO Seminar
December 2	Senior field ends for fall
December 3	Research Parts A/B/C/ Due - Final Copies Learning Plans Due Final Evaluation Due