

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK
BSSW PROGRAM

Field Practice Seminar
Social Work 481
Spring, 2003

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 spring 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.

TEXTBOOKS

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.S. (2001). Planning and conducting agency based research: A workbook for social work students. Needham Heights: Allyn & Bacon.

SEMINAR RATIONALE

The seminar facilitates integration of classroom learning with the 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:

1. the organizational context of practice
2. the community context of practice
3. the social work problem solving process
4. the professional context of practice

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

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES

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

SEMINAR OUTLINE

- I. Introduction
 - A. Seminar structure and function
 - 1. review syllabus
 - B. Field Practice
 - 1. behavioral objectives (see field evaluation form)

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

- III. The Community Context of Practice
 - A. Awareness of the community needs and concerns
 - B. Assessment of existing policies and programs
 - C. Knowledge and utilization of community resources

- 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. 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. The field practice provides an opportunity for thinking and writing about your 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 will be an oral presentation of a case from your field practice. Please be sure to protect the client's identity in your presentation. The intention of this assignment is for the student to have the experience of orally presenting case material in a professional, succinct manner and to discuss the case considering the agency, community and individual provider as they come to bear on the service. You will need to address the following list in order to complete your presentation:
 - a. Briefly describe the agency's mission, goals, client population, and the function of this agency relative to the community.
 - b. Client description including: brief psycho-social, identified problem, service plan, intervention(s), and the outcomes of the intervention.
 - c. Discuss any theoretical material from HBSE and/or practice classes that guided you in your assessment and intervention with this client.

- d. Your assessment of the case outcomes including your recommendations for different or additional services
- e. An assessment of your strengths and weaknesses in working with this client. Identify such limitations as biases or fears you may have experienced while working with this case; in addition, identify the basis of any success(es) you may have experienced while working with this case.
- f. Discuss how your client's situation is reflective of the vulnerable population group of which your client is a member including issues of prejudice, discrimination, and limited opportunities.
- g. Discuss any ethical issues which may have arisen while working with this case; or, discuss how treatment was professionally ethical.
- h. Address the organizational context of the case, including barriers to service, gaps to service, or other program constraints for this case.
- i. Identify one policy that has significant impact on the operation of your agency and on this client in particular.
- j. Other comments in regard to professional social work practice relevant to this case.

These presentations will begin on March 13 and continue on consecutive Thursdays. (10%)

3. The third assignment is the completion of the research project begun in fall term. This term, the final two sections are due: Part D is the report on your findings; and Part E is the interpretation and discussion of findings, with recommendations for future research. These two sections are explained in more detail in the following sections. The Westerfelt and Dietz text is an excellent resource for this assignment, especially sections X, XII, and XIII.

Part D - Results

In this section, you will report on your data, what you found and how you found it.

Sample

Begin with a summary of important characteristics of your sample, starting with the number of subjects, and include key demographic information such as age, gender, race, social class, and any other variables relevant to your research question.

Procedures

Report on the procedures you used in collecting your data. How did you find your subjects? Did you encounter any obstacles that limited your access to subjects? How did you administer instruments, if you used them? What other procedures were used to collect your data (e.g., selection of data from agency files)?

Organization of Findings

Organize your findings to make them understandable. Center the organization of your findings around the main variables of study that you identified in your methods section. For example, if you used a client satisfaction

questionnaire, organize your findings, first, by identifying the main issues reflected in the questions you asked (the main things you wanted to know). Then, you could organize what you found by showing the main types of responses you obtained to your questionnaire. Organization of findings involves some form of data analysis. This will usually involve the use of statistics, such as reporting percentages of people sharing certain characteristics, tests of relationships between groups of people on some important characteristic (t-test), or relationships between characteristics (correlation). It is strongly recommended that you use graphs to illustrate key variables, and/or relationships between key variables, that you have studied.

Part D should be approximately 2-3 pages in length (possibly more, depending on the amount of graphs you use). It is due February 27.

Part E - Interpretation and Discussion of Findings, with Recommendations for Future Research

In part E you tell the story of what your findings mean and why they are important: Discuss your interpretation of the findings by referring to your original research question and discussing what you learned about it. Thinking back to the literature you reviewed, comment on how your findings relate to that body of literature. What do the findings of your study mean for the agency, staff members, the participants, and/or the social work profession. Based on your study, what policies, programs, and/or practice actions do you think should be taken by your agency or social work practitioners. Report the limitations of your study relative to measures, data collection procedures, and sample design. What would you recommend to the next researcher who wants to study this topic. List questions that emerged from the study that you think future research should address. Part E is due April 10. It should be 2-3 pages in length. (Sections D and E together should not exceed 6 pages.) On that date, turn in your entire research project, sections A through E, in their final form. At the same time, provide a copy of your final project to your field instructor. Parts D and E are worth 20% of the seminar grade.

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 January 30. Column one should be completed. The plan will be collected again on April 24. At this time column two should be completed.

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. Final evaluations are due on April 24.

GRADING

The grade for SW 481 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 any time 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 absent 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.

COURSE CALENDAR

January 13	Field Practice Resumes
January 16	Field Seminar Resumes
January 16	Seminar
January 20	Martin Luther King Holiday - No Classes
January 23	Seminar
January 30	Learning Plans Due
February 6	Seminar
February 13	Seminar
February 20	Seminar
February 27	Research Paper Part D Due
March 6	Mid Term Evaluations Due
March 6	Seminar
March 13	Case Presentations Begin
March 17-21	Spring Break - No Classes
March 27	Seminar
April 3	Seminar/Research Fair
April 10	Complete Research Paper Due
April 17	Seminar
April 24	Last Field Seminar Field Evaluations Due Learning Plans Due
April 30	Last Day of Field

Instructors:

Dona E. Diftler

Phone: 588-0488

Office Hours: Thursdays 5:15 - 6:15 p. m.

By appointment

Sharon Hammat

Phone: 974-3351 (O)

675-5045 (H)

E-Mail: GHAMMAT@aol.com

Office Hours: Thursdays 5:15 - 6:30 pm.

By appointment

Marty Pryor

Phone: 974-3351

Voice Mail: 558-6499

E-Mail: Martyp10@aol.com

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.

By appointment