

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

**B.S.S.W. Program**

**SW 481 - Field Practice Seminar  
Spring 2005**

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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, critical thinking, and leadership and prepares students to take appropriate action guided by the best available scientific evidence. 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 committed to evidence-based practice
- 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 skills, and leadership skills to address the needs of a complex, changing society; and
- 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.

### **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:

- a. the organizational context of practice
- b. the community context of practice
- c. the social work problem solving process
- d. 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 Field Practice Evaluation Form.

### **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. (*Hilltopics, 2004*)

### **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 University of Tennessee Office of Disability Services at 191 Hoskins Library at (865) 974-6087. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services. (*Hilltopics, 2004*)

### **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.

## **TEXTBOOKS**

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

## **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 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 written agenda developed for the weekly supervisory conference, and the amount of time spent for your weekly supervisory conference. The journal will be handed in to the seminar leader each week except for the last week of the semester. 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. **(20%)**

### Grading Information and Submission Dates for the Journal

The journal assignment is worth twenty percent of the grade for the course. Journal entries will be graded weekly except for the first two weeks, which are only one day per week, and they will be graded together. Journal entries for each week will be worth eight points for a total of 104 points. Twenty percent of the possible 104 points for the journal entries will reflect the point value for the journal grade. The point value will be determined as follows: six points for reflective and critical thinking, one point for content, and one point for writing. Daily journal entries must be reflective of your experience. Use the questions in the syllabus as a guide to assist you in this process. The seminar leaders will provide written comments on your journal entries when appropriate. You do NOT need to journal or submit journal entries for the last week of field practice (April 25 & 27).

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 items on 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 February 17 and continue on consecutive Thursdays. **(10%)**

This oral case presentation will be graded as follows: coverage of content = 8 points, and oral presentation = 2 points. Content will be evaluated based on how well the student has addressed all the items in the assignment. The oral presentation skills will be evaluated on the following: posture, engagement of audience (including eye contact), volume of voice, and pace of speech. Students may use notes when presenting but may not read from prepared material. Use of multi-media is encouraged if appropriate (this includes handouts, charts, PowerPoint, etc).

3. The third assignment is a self-assessment of your leadership skills. The UTCSW-BSSW Program encourages and promotes the development of leadership skills for all of our students because social workers are persons who strive to foster change at both the micro and macro levels. Initiating and managing change does require leadership and a willingness to lead.

Refer to the material in the text, *The Social Work Practicum*, pages 237-238, and use this as a guide to assess the development of your leadership skills while you were in this program. The text mentions several characteristics of leaders. Select at least five characteristics that you feel are strengths for you and give two examples of how you have developed or enhanced that strength while in the program. Then, select two leadership characteristics that you feel require more growth and development in order for you to become a more effective leader. Give examples of persons/situations where you received feedback indicating these were areas that needed further growth. This 4-6 page paper is due by April 14. **(10%)**

This assignment will be graded as follows: coverage of content = 8 points; and writing quality = 2 points. Content will be evaluated based on how well the student has addressed all the items in the assignment. Writing quality will be evaluated based on the organization and clarity of ideas, grammar, and punctuation.

### **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 **January 27**. Column one should be completed. The plan will be collected again on **April 21**. 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 21**.

Spring semester has twenty-eight days of field practice or 224 clock hours.

### **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

**COURSE CALENDAR**

January 12	Senior field resumes
January 13	Field seminar resumes
January 17	Martin Luther King Holiday – No classes/field
January 20	Seminar
January 27	Seminar – Learning Plans due
February 3	Seminar
February 10	Seminar
February 17	Seminar – Case presentations begin
February 24	Seminar – Mid-term evaluation due
March 3	Seminar
March 10	Seminar
March 17	Seminar
March 21-25	Spring Break & Spring Recess No classes or field practice
March 31	Seminar
April 7	Seminar
April 14	Seminar – Leadership paper due
April 21	Last seminar day Learning Plans and Field Evaluations due
April 28	Last day of field Classes end