

**UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK**

**Social Work 542 - Foundation Field  
(3 Credit Hours)  
Fall 2009**

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**Code of Conduct**

It is the student's responsibility to have read the College of Social Work Ethical Academic and Professional Conduct Code that is in the College of Social Work MSSW Handbook. ([www.utk.csw.edu](http://www.utk.csw.edu)) Students are also expected to sign and adhere to the Social Work Field Placement Code of Conduct.

**The 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*, 2007).

**Disability**

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 (865-974-6087). This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

**Course Description**

This is a required foundation course. The focus is on the application of social work knowledge, values, ethics, and skills to the practice setting. SW 542 is the first of a sequence of four field practicum courses in the MSSW curriculum. For the first portion of the semester, students attend an intensive field seminar which includes content on safety, client interviewing skills, professional documentation, boundaries, ethics, and diversity. This segment of the seminar is intended to prepare students for their first field agency experience. During the second portion of the semester, students commence the agency experience and continue with a weekly seminar. The focus of the seminar shifts to processing and integration of the field agency experience and academic coursework.

Foundation Field draws upon the content of all other foundation courses as the student uses the field agency experience to identify, apply, practice, and integrate generalist social work knowledge and skills. Through provision of client services students refine direct practice skills. In the field agency setting, students are also able to identify and

integrate knowledge of social, economic, and political environments, social welfare policy, and develop advocacy skills to advance social justice for at-risk populations. This course enables students to develop a beginning awareness of issues of diversity and oppression in direct and indirect practice contexts and activities.

### **Course Rationale**

Foundation Field is critical to the students' capacity to integrate the broad knowledge base required for effective generalist social work practice regardless of setting. The field practicum experience enables students to identify and respond to issues of social justice and diversity and use an ethical, ecological approach to solving real client problems. The foundation field courses lay the essential groundwork of generalist practice competencies preparing students to progress to concentration field experiences within specific areas of focus.

### **Course Competencies**

By the completion of this course:

- 1. Student will be able to articulate the field agency mission, scope of service, organizational structure, and relationship to the community and social service delivery network.** (Field F.4, F.9)
- 2. Student will be able to demonstrate beginning skills in client interviewing that reflect awareness of and respect for cultural differences.** (Field F.3; Diversity F.1)
- 3. Student will be able to demonstrate beginning engagement skills across diverse clients and diverse client systems.** (Field F.3; Diversity F.1)
- 4. Student will be able to develop client assessments using cultural, ecological, transactional, and developmental frameworks reflecting an awareness of multiple cultures within client systems, client worldview, cultural strengths and resources, and natural support systems.** (Field F.1; Diversity F.3, F.4; Pops at-Risk & SJ F.2)
- 5. Student will be able to demonstrate professional conduct and boundaries in accordance with NASW and IFSW Codes of Ethics, applicable laws, professional standards, and organizational policies and procedures; identify ethical and value conflicts in the agency setting; seek and use supervision; and develop strategies for resolution.** (Field F.7, F.8, F.9, F.11; Values/Ethics F.1, F.3, F.4)
- 6. Student will be able to identify and evaluate local, state, federal, and international policies that impact agency clients.** (Field F.6)
- 7. Student will be able to complete client notes, records, and agency documentation in a clear, complete, organized fashion and in accordance with agency policies.** (Field F.5)

**8. Student will be able to assess client access to basic human rights and social and economic justice and resources and apply beginning advocacy skills with agencies, communities, and policy makers to increase client access to needed resources.** (Field F.4, F.10; Pops at-Risk & SJ, F.4, F.5)

## **Seminar Course Outline**

### **Course Requirements**

Attendance at field seminar is required. If a student must miss a seminar session, s/he must contact the seminar instructor on his/her campus to arrange for completion of a make-up assignment.

Students are expected to arrive at seminar on time. Each session is packed with information and the time must be used efficiently and effectively. Students who arrive late delay and/or disrupt the schedule of activities.

Students must treat the online sessions of the seminar just as they do the face to face meetings. It is expected that the student complete all assigned readings, discussion boards, worksheets, and case studies within the week that they are assigned. It is vital that students begin the online component as soon as possible, as the online discussions will serve to prepare for and enhance the face to face meetings. While it is difficult to equate the time spent completing online content with that of actual class time, efforts have been made to provide assignments that are comparable to the in-class work.

Each student is expected to actively and fully engage in seminar discussions and activities. Students do not need laptops in seminar and are asked to turn them off at the beginning of class.

Each student is required to complete all regular and make-up assignments in order to receive credit for the seminar.

### **Grading Information**

The SW 542 Field Seminar is a component of the SW 542 Foundation Field Practicum. Grading for SW 542 is Satisfactory/No Credit, including the Field Seminar. Students must receive a Satisfactory in Field Seminar in order to receive a Satisfactory grade for SW 542.

Requirements for a Satisfactory grade are as follows:

- Attendance at all seminar sessions and/or completion of makeup assignments for missed sessions.
- Punctual arrival.
- Active participation in seminar discussions and activities.
- Adequate completion of all written and discussion board assignments, with attention to content, clarity, depth of thought, and organization.

Students who fail to meet the requirements of Field Seminar will receive an Incomplete or No Credit grade for SW 542. Students who receive an Incomplete will be required to meet with the seminar instructor to develop a plan for successful completion of the seminar. The work to resolve the Incomplete must be completed satisfactorily before the start of the Spring semester.

### **Written Assignments**

There are two written assignments for Field Seminar. Assignments are intended to enable students to integrate their academic and field experience and to demonstrate mastery of the competencies for the field practicum. **Although students will need to gather information regarding assignments at field and in supervision, field agency time should not be used to write the assignments.**

#### **Assignment One (Due at your seminar the week of September 21)**

Complete a written analysis of your field agency responding to the following questions:

- What is the mission and scope of service of your field agency? What services does your agency provide and who is eligible to receive services?
- Identify the agency's client population and referral sources, including cultural identities of clients,
- Describe the organizational structure. You may want to include an organizational chart.
- Describe your agency's relationship to the larger community and to the social service delivery system (other social service agencies with whom your agency collaborates, competes, and shares client populations.)
- Identify your agency's primary sources of funding (e.g. government, grants, contracts, donations, fees for service, etc.).
- Is the agency a not-for-profit, for-profit, or public/government agency?

**Note:** Most students will complete this written assignment before beginning the agency experience. Students should schedule meetings with field instructors and/or other agency personnel to gather the information needed to complete the assignment. Although the agency website is an appropriate source of information, **this assignment also requires the student to interview at least one agency staff person.**

#### **Assignment Two (Due at your seminar the week of November 17)**

In consultation with your field instructor, identify an ethical problem or dilemma that occurs within the field agency setting. Then address the following issues in a 2-3 page paper.

- Describe the ethical problem or dilemma, referring to relevant section(s) of the NASW Code of Ethics. **(Be sure to identify and reference the specific standard.)**
- Select and apply a strategy for evaluating and resolving the problem or dilemma (e.g. Reamer's Ethics Decision Making Framework).

- Discuss your analysis with your field instructor at supervision and summarize the discussion.
- Identify and discuss your personal response to the ethical issue and whether it brought up any personal values, attitudes, and biases that might have influenced your evaluation of the issue.

### **Seminar Calendar and Schedule of Topics**

**Week of August 19** – Seminar structure and expectations. Foundation field competencies, the learning plan, competency evaluations, time sheets, Alcea IPT. Introduction to topics of interviewing skills, engagement, helping relationships. Social Work Mission – social justice and work with oppressed populations

**Week of August 24** – Starting the interview, attending skills, effective and sensitive use of questions, cultural issues around questions.

**Week of August 31** – Listening skills (restatements, paraphrases, summaries; reflective, empathy and empathic listening)

**Week of September 7** – Structuring an interview; Influencing skills

**Week of September 14** – Assessment; Professional documentation

**Week of September 21** – Making a good start in the field setting, making effective use of field supervision. Safety in social work settings

***\*Written assignment one due at the beginning of seminar***

**Week of September 28** – First week in field agency.

**Week of October 5** – Social work mission revisited, working with multidisciplinary teams in the field setting

**Week of October 12** – Fall break (NO CLASS)

**Week of October 19** – Agency Assessments – the written assessment and professional documentation revisited

**Week of October 26** – Suicidality assessment and response

**Week of November 2** – The micro-macro interface in social work practice. The impact of policy.

**Week of November 9** – Evidence-based practice in the field setting

**Week of November 16** – Ethics. Student discussion of ethics assignment. Wrap up.

***\*Written assignment two due at the beginning of seminar***