

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

**SW 481 - Field Practice Seminar  
Spring 2007**

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**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 world without borders. 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 today's complex pluralistic world. 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.

**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, special populations, and domestic and international challenges, that informs practice interventions;
- use critical thinking, evaluative skills, and leadership skills to address the needs of a complex, changing global world; 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 weekly two hour 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.

### **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 manual on the Field Practice Evaluation Form(s).

### **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*)

### **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 2227 Dunford Hall at (865) 974-6087. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

You are expected to **attend every session on time**. If you are absent two or more times, your course grade will be lowered one letter grade. Tardiness is defined as arriving 10 minutes after class scheduled start time

### **TEXTBOOKS**

**\*\*\* This text is required for 380, 480 and 481. Do Not Sell this Book!!! \*\*\*\***

Garthwait, C.L. (2005) Third Edition . The social work practicum: A guide and workbook for students. Needham Heights: Allyn & Bacon.

## **SEMINAR OUTLINE**

- I. Review of Syllabus
  - A. Assignments
  - B. Field Practice - Behavioral Objectives (see field evaluation form)
  - C. Learning Plan (Field Manual)
  - D. Purpose of Supervision - **Chapter 5**
  - E. Diversity - **Chapter 12**
  
- II. The Community Context of Practice - **Chapter 9**
  - A. The impact of the community on social functioning of clients served
  - B. Analysis of community resources and needs
  - C. Community forces that impede/support social change
  
- III. The Social Problem Context of Practice - **Chapter 10**
  - A. Conditions, needs and problems faced by clients
  - B. Human and social conditions that result in programs/services provided by various agencies
  - C. Various theories regarding cause of social problems
  - D. Influence of theories on policies and programs
  - E. Influence of theories on operation and administration of services
  - F. Political power and influence that elicit community efforts or minimize social conditions
  
- IV. Social Work Practice - Planned Change - **Chapter 16**
  - A. Fundamental beliefs about change guiding services and programs
  - B. Various perspectives, models and theories that plan/guide interventions
  - C. Data gathering and assessment tools used in agency
  - D. Effectiveness of social work interventions
  - E. Use of evaluation tools in field practice
  
- V. Merging Self and Profession - **Chapter 18**
  - A. Clarify motivation in choosing a social work career
  - B. Types of social work practice you prefer
  - C. Impacts of social work practice on physical and mental health of worker
  - D. Impacts of social work practice on family, friends and economic situation of worker
  
- VI. Leadership and Social Justice - **Chapter 19**
  - A. Containment, Compartmentalization, Personal Culpability, Individual Remediation
  - B. Social Technician, Traditional Reformer, Social Interventionist, Social Revolutionary

## **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 weekly field reflection which provides students with an opportunity for thinking and writing about their field practice experiences. The reflection 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 reflection is NOT a log of tasks, events, times, and dates.

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.

Reflective Questions:

- A.
- 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?
- B.
- 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?

The reflection 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 reflection will be handed in to the seminar leader each week except for the last week of the semester. These reflection are private and will only be read by the seminar leader. **(10%)**

**Grading Information and Submission Dates for the Reflections**

The reflection assignment is worth 10% (twenty percent) of the course grade. Entries will be graded weekly except for the first two weeks, which are only one day per week, and they will be graded together. Entries for each week will be worth one point for a total of 10 points. Ten percent of the possible 10 points for the entries will reflect the point value for the grade. Entries must be reflective of your experience. The seminar leaders will provide written comments on your entries when appropriate.

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 15 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 5th. (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. Class participation is worth 10% or 10 points of your seminar grade.

### **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 25**. Column one should be completed. The plan will be collected again on **April 19**. 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 19**.

**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 10	Senior field resumes
January 11	Field seminar resumes
January 15	Martin Luther King Holiday – No classes/field
January 18	Seminar
January 25	Seminar – Learning Plans due
February 1	Seminar
February 8	Seminar
February 15	Seminar – Case presentations begin
February 22	Seminar – Mid-term evaluation due
March 1	Seminar
March 8	Seminar
March 11-15	No Seminar – Spring Break
March 22	Seminar
March 29	Seminar
April 5	Seminar - Leadership Paper Due
April 12	Seminar – Learning Plans and Field Evaluations Due
April 25	Last seminar of field
April 26	Last day of seminar Classes end April 27 <sup>th</sup>