



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

SWK 425 - Field Practicum I

INSTRUCTOR:	Carla Cleeton
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Students enrolled in this course participate in an educationally-directed field experience under the supervision of a BSW or MSW in a social service agency. Students must complete **160** clock hours of field practicum in the agency and attend a weekly seminar, on campus, which is designed to help students integrate their field experiences with what they have learned in the classroom. Prerequisites are: SWK 325, 329, 331, 348 and 350. Students must also be concurrently enrolled in SWK 422. This course is restricted to social work majors and permission of the instructor is required.

GOALS AND COMPETENCIES:

1. Prepare BSW graduates for entry-level professional social work practice that reflects generalist social work knowledge and skills. Graduates will be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

- 1.1 Apply critical thinking and effective communication (2.1.3)
- 1.2 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research (2.1.6)
- 1.3 Apply knowledge of HBSE to practice (2.1.7)
- 1.4 Apply knowledge of policy to practice (2.1.8)
- 1.5 Apply change strategies with all levels of systems (2.1.10)

2. Enable BSW graduates to practice ethically and apply social work values to promote equality and justice. Graduates will be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

- 2.1 Apply social work ethics & principles (2.1.2)

- 2.2 Engage diversity in practice (2.1.4)
- 2.3 Promote human rights and social and economic justice (2.1.5)

3. Provide meaningful contexts through which BSW students engage in leadership, service, and professional excellence. Graduates will be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

- 3.1 Identify and respond as a professional social worker (2.1.1)
- 3.2 Respond to professional contexts that shape practice, demonstrating qualities of leadership for the profession. (2.1.9)

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To help students understand and apply the problem solving approach with individuals, families, groups, organization and community systems in a supervised practice setting.
2. To help students understand how to apply theories of human development and the bio-psycho-social model with all levels of systems.
3. To help students demonstrate practice skills necessary for effective intervention across client systems.
4. To help students understand and utilize productive supervision and self- evaluation.
5. To help students understand the principles of research and critical thinking in evaluating practice.
6. To help students develop the ability to work effectively with clients who are diverse in ethnicity, culture, gender, social class, mental and physical disabilities, and sexual orientation.
7. To enable students to examine practice dilemmas from difference perspectives and value systems, including personal, societal, and professional.
8. To help students demonstrate the application of social work values, ethics and principles of social work practice from the NASW Code of Ethics.
9. To help students become aware of community resources that may benefit clients.
10. To assist students to meet the objectives of their learning plans as evaluated by their field instructor.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER COURSES

TEXTS:

Berg-Weger, M. and Birkenmaier, J. (2007). *The Practicum Companion for Social Work*, (2nd Ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Field Packet available online (www7.tamu-commerce.edu/socialwork/programs-field-bsw.htm)

GRADING:

The Field Practicum is graded based on multiple outcomes. Each student will be evaluated by their Field Instructor, Task Supervisor (If required), Field Liaison and other Agency or TAMU-Commerce Faculty as assigned to the student. The grading will also include seminar/class attendance and participation based on input from the Field Liaison, as well as timely submission of required paperwork. Each of the above required factors will be used to determine a letter grade for the student's performance during the semester. The final grade shall be determined by the assigned Field Faculty Liaison.

If the final field evaluation is lower than a "C", then the field liaison is responsible for determining if the student will be allowed to pass the field practicum and continue into Field II.

***** Failure to complete the required 160 clock hours in the practicum setting automatically constitutes a failing grade. *****

OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS:

- a. Weekly Time Sheets and Field Journals (due weekly at the beginning of class) - See Field Packet
- b. Schedules due June 16
- c. Learning Contracts & Job Descriptions (due June 30) - See Field Packet
- d. Agency Analysis due July 7th
- d. Evaluation Visits – scheduled throughout the semester
- e. Last Class Day- August 4th
- f. Class Assignments – each student will be assigned one chapter from the required text. The student's responsibility will be to summarize and present the chapter to the seminar group. The group will maintain responsibility for discussing and applying the summarized content. This is not a major presentation or power point assignment. This affords each student with the opportunity to lead the seminar discussion and serve as the group facilitator.

FIELD JOURNAL

This log or journal is a tool to help you integrate your field experience and your classroom learning. This method of journaling will enable you to explore your reactions to the agency, to your clients, and to your professional development.

The journal is also a mechanism for two-way communication. It allows you to share information with me and for me to give you feedback directly. This information will not be shared with your Field Instructor (unless there is a concern and I ask your permission first).

You will not be grade on writing mechanics, but I may make corrections as a part of my feedback. The more descriptive you are, the more useful your journal will be. However, do not write “the great American novel”. Be direct and succinct if possible! You should have an entry for each day you are in the field.

The following questions are intended to guide your thinking and entries into your journal:

- 1. Summarize the activities or tasks in which you participated during the week. Does this summary reflect tasks and goals established in your learning plan? Can you identify them?**
- 2. Select a social work skill (eg listening, observing, record keeping, interviewing, problem solving, confronting, facilitating a group) discussed in class. Were you satisfied with your skill level? Explain.**
- 3. What happened during the day that was important? Challenging? Forced you to use creativity or judgment?**
- 4. What were your feelings about the day’s events? Were there particularly strong emotions as a result of something someone said or did?**
- 5. What questions do you have unresolved about the day? About a client situation, agency policy, or a value dilemma?**
- 6. What did you discover about yourself – your strengths, weaknesses, skills, or personality?**

The journal entries should reflect thought and insights about yourself while clearly depicting professional growth through the learning experience.

PREREQUISITES AND EXPECTATIONS OF FIELD STUDENTS

Students must have completed the following prerequisites: SWK 325, 329, 328 & 350. A field application and pre-placement conference are also required.

Students must have a 2.5 overall grade point average, a 2.5 grade point average in all required courses for the major, and at least a “C” grade in all social work courses.

The student’s advisor must find that the student has made up any deficiencies identified and that the student is not on probation. The student must have demonstrated good judgment, appropriate behavior, and emotional maturity during his/her previous coursework.

Students must be members of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). The University will provide liability insurance through a blanket school policy through the American Professional Agency.

SEMINAR COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Social work in the field is genuine social work practice with supervision from the agency/organization and the university. Prior to student placement, he/she is interviewed by the field coordinator and a prospective field instructor. Based on their mutual approval, the student begins professionally-focused field work at an approved social work agency/organization.
2. This course requires that students demonstrate effective time-management skills. Students must keep a weekly time sheet and social work journal. The purpose of this journal is to help the student and the faculty liaison analyze the student's use of time and to evaluate experiences in the field. The journal describes the student's accomplishments and tasks, and also includes student's feelings and thoughts about the daily experience. It may be hand-written or typed. It must be legible.

The journal is a confidential document which will only be read by the faculty liaison. However, it is expected that students may need or want to discuss confidential information about the practicum setting during the seminar class. In class discussion, as well as in the journal, client and agency personnel names are to be changed to protect their identity.

Blank copies of the time sheet are available online. Students must complete a total of 160 clock hours during the summer field. Journals and timesheets are to be submitted weekly at the beginning of each class period. Students are responsible for obtaining their field instructor's signature on the timesheets, and that they have a cumulative record of all previous hours on each. Students should keep a photocopy of their timesheets in a file at home for reference.

3. Students' responsibilities and rights as field practicum students in their agencies are similar to those of any "regular social worker" in that agency. Dependability, reliability, appropriate hygiene and professional dress are essential characteristics of professional agency practice, and are expected. If, for any reason whatsoever, a student must miss scheduled field time in the agency, he/she is responsible for making arrangements in advance. Remember, clients, as well as staff, will be depending on your presence and service.
4. Requirements also reflect the agency/organization in which the student practices. Students are expected to abide by the Code of Ethics (NASW, 1997) as well as the Department of Social Work's (SWD) Code of Conduct.
5. Record-keeping procedures required by the agency will be outlined by the field instructor.
6. If questions arise about responsibilities, check with your field instructor and faculty liaison. It is imperative that students realize they are responsible for making sure their needs are being met in the field. Effective, on-going communication and feedback are essential to a

successful practicum experience. Field students are required to assume an active role in their own learning process.

Faculty liaisons should be alerted immediately if problems arise that cannot be resolved between the field instructor and the student. When in doubt, ask yourself, “Who else needs to know?”

7. Students enter into a “Learning Contract” with the faculty liaison. Students are expected to utilize their experiences in the field agency/organization and in the field seminar class to fulfill the terms of the contract.

8. Each week, the seminar will cover a topic of relevance to the field practicum experience. These topics are discussed in the syllabus under “Semester Schedule” and will require that each student come to class prepared to discuss the topic and to bring questions or comments about the topic to class each week. **This requirement will be included in the class participation grade for the semester.**

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

Students are expected to attend class, reflecting responsibility which is inherent in the development as a social work professional. Roll will be taken regularly. Students are expected to be on time and prepared to participate when class begins as well as be present throughout the entire class meeting. Classroom exercises, discussions, role plays, guest speakers and other in-class experiential exercises are essential for a student’s professional learning and continued development of self-awareness. Tardiness (or early departure) of more than 15 minutes will count as .5 absence (2 tardies/early departures = 1 absence). A student is considered absent if he/she arrives more than 30 minutes late to class, leaves 30 or more minutes early or does not come to class.

The following penalties for absences (unexcused, or excused, according to university policy) will be administered:

Weekly	Up to 2 absences No penalty	3 absences 1 letter grade drop	4 absences Class grade of “F”	
Bi-weekly	Up to 3 absences No penalty	4 absences 1 letter grade drop	5 absences 1 letter grade drop	6 absences Class grade of “F”
Summer 10-week	Up to 1 absence No penalty	2 absences 1 letter grade drop	3 absences Class grade of “F”	

ONLINE OR WEB-ENHANCED CLASSES: Just as students are required to attend face-to-face classes, students are required to log in and participate in online components. To receive credit for attendance online via eCollege, students must log in and complete assignments in a timely manner. Not logging in to eCollege (which can be monitored by the instructor) and completing assignments online during the appropriate time is the equivalent of an absence for each week this occurs.

Final evaluation and grades depend on both presence and participation. Students’ grades will be significantly impacted by inadequate participation or lack of required time commitment each

week. Students are expected to spend a comparable amount of time in the online learning environment as they would in class (3 hours a week in the classroom). In addition, just as in traditional F2F classrooms, students are expected to spend time reading and studying class materials.

NOTE: PROBLEMS WITH YOUR INTERNET CONNECTION AND/OR COMPUTER ARE NOT CONSIDERED AS REASONS FOR LACK OF PARTICIPATION. You have access to the university's computer labs (in the social work department AND other campus facilities, including the library) as well as local libraries and other access to computers and ISPs. If you believe that you are unable to fulfill the requirements for the course you should talk with your instructor about the possibility of dropping or withdrawing.

Class participation has three components: (1) Appropriate interactions with classmates, (2) Attentiveness, and (3) Active involvement in class activities. Evaluation of class participation is based on instructor observation. Students will be given feedback if problems are evident.

POLICY ON DUE DATES:

POLICY ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Every student is expected to do his/her own work. Law, ethical standards, university policy, and departmental policy demand that students refrain from plagiarism and any form of cheating. Plagiarism is the "Act of appropriating the literary composition of another, or parts of passages from of his [or her] writings, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as the products of one's own mind." (Black's Law Dictionary, Abridged Fifth Edition, 1983). When using others' words, phrases, or ideas in writing, the original author should be given proper credit.

Cheating may take different forms. These include, but are not limited to, copying others' answers during an exam, using notes or other forms of help during an examination or quiz, except when explicitly permitted by the instructor, giving or receiving help on exams or assignments, or submitting work for one class which has already been submitted for another class for credit. Use of citations from the Internet without paraphrasing content AND proper referencing is regarded as plagiarism. Professors have the right to use electronic review programs (such as Turn It In™) to identify plagiarism.

The department does not tolerate plagiarism or cheating. A student found to be engaging in such illegal and unethical conduct may receive a failing grade in the course and may be subjected to further disciplinary proceedings. Any assignment or exam that lacks honesty will be given a grade of "0".

ACCEPTABLE CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR:

“Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to obey all federal, state, and local laws, in addition to the regulations of the University. The standards of Student Conduct including disciplinary rules and procedures are designed to provide and conform to the basic tenets of due

- June 22 Discuss your assignment at the agency, role as a student, role of your supervisor where you fit into the work team, and relations with co-workers.
- Text: Ch 2**
Due: Journals and Time Sheets
Weekly Schedule
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- Week Four
June 29 **Topic: Safety in Social Work Settings**
Discuss safety issues present in your field setting, implications for work with angry or aggressive clients, handling crises, issues related to sexual harassment
- Text: Ch. 3**
Due: Journals and Time Sheets
Learning Contracts and Job Descriptions
- Week 5
June 30 **Topic: Dealing with Diversity**
Discuss dealing with clients, co-workers, and supervisors who are different than you; what elements of diversity are important to know and be aware of? How does diversity affect your work as an intern and a future social work professional?
- Text: Assigned readings and discussion
Due: Journals and Time Sheets
- Week 6
July 6 **Topic: Values, Ethics, and Legal Issues in Social Work Settings**
Discuss what ethical dilemmas you have observed in your field setting; what legal issues have arisen or could arise; how are social work values reflected in the field
- Due: Journals and Time Sheets**
Agency Analysis
- Week 7
July 13 **Topic: Supervision**
Discuss styles of supervision & styles of "being supervised"; discuss issues of interpersonal relationships & how these affect supervision & the work setting; strategies for maximizing your field supervision
- Text: Ch 4**
Due: Journals and Time Sheets
- Week 8
July 20 Special Topic
Final Evaluations – conducted during the week
Due: Journals and Time Sheets

Week 9
July 27 **Topic: Organizational Issues**
Discuss styles of supervision & styles of "being supervised"; discuss issues of interpersonal relationships & how these affect supervision & the work setting; strategies for maximizing your field supervision

Text: Ch 4
Due: Journals and Time Sheets

Week 10
August 3 **Last Day of Class**
All Paperwork Due

ALL TIME SHEETS, EVALUATIONS AND HOURS MUST BE COMPLETED NO LATER THAN AUGUST 7th.

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