

OHIO UNIVERSITY
Department of Social Work

SOCIAL WORK 591 & 592, FOUNDATION FIELD PRACTICUM, I & II

This is a supervised field placement for first-year graduate students for winter and spring quarters.

INSTRUCTORS AND OFFICE HOURS

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COURSE SUMMARY

These two field practicum courses for the first-year of the graduate program assist the student in progressively building a solid substructure of knowledge, skills, values, and ethics in the area of social work practice. Utilizing the department's associations with community social service agencies, the field experience creates a context for the student for personal and professional development and provides structured opportunities for the student to apply content from the four primary curricular areas.

During the foundation field practicum, the student will be professionally supervised within an agency setting to apply social work theory to practice and to develop the roles and interventions of generalist practice. Within this context, the student will be laying the foundation for what is to come in the second year of the program—advanced social work training in a selected area of concentration.

The foundation field practicum is required for all students in the graduate program (except advanced standing), and the number of field hours that are required are outlined in the *Field Education Manual*. These two courses are designed to address most of the educational objectives of the social work program, and by its nature, includes a commitment to community service.

Utilizing the structure of the seven goals of field education, as incorporated into the student's individual learning contract, the student is guided through the field practicum, which incorporates theories of human behavior and social work practice; issues of diversity, cultural competence, societal prejudice, and social justice; social work values and ethics; organizational and policy analysis; research; and practice evaluation. Additionally, the specific practicum learning objectives subsumed under each goal are progressive and

comprehensive in terms of providing a complete learning experience at the foundation level. These objectives are specific to each quarter of the field experience and, along with the seven goals, are presented in the *Field Education Manual*.

These elements come together to form the basis of the student's learning contract. Into this outline, the student will incorporate actual learning activities or tasks. This integration of goals, objectives, and tasks leads to an individualized contract, which spells out the expectations for the student for each quarter separately. The student's actual learning tasks and activities chosen for a given quarter will be derived from the following: the student's learning goals and interests, the student's level of knowledge and skill, the opportunities available at the agency, and the availability of appropriate supervision.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The seven goals of field education, as outlined in the field manual, are indeed the objectives for the course. These seven goals of field education, along with subsumed learning objectives and inclusive of the learning tasks selected by the student and the field instructor, make up the field curriculum and address most of the social work program objectives. The seven goals of field are as follows:

1. Pursue professional self-development with a commitment to social justice and professional values and ethics (relates to Program Objectives A1, A2, A4M, A5, A6, A7M, A8, B5, and C1).
2. Illustrate "use of self" in relation to client systems, the field instructor, and agency personnel with a particular appreciation for cultural and social diversity in rural environments (relates to Program Objectives A1, A2, A3, A4M, A5, A7M, and A8).
3. Promote integration of the agency and the community human service delivery systems as resources to perform social work roles (relates to Program Objectives A1, A3, A4M, A5, A7M, A8, and B5).
4. Formulate and utilize the professional helping relationship in engaging and working with the client system to identify strengths and goals (relates to Program Objectives A1, A2, A3, A4M, A5, and A7M).
5. Develop interventions which are culturally and age appropriate and which are sensitive to potentially vulnerable and/or oppressed groups, while working with individuals, families, small groups, organizations, and communities in rural environments (relates to Program Objectives A1, A2, A3, A4M, A5, A6, A7M, A8, and B5).
6. Demonstrate the importance of and the implications of transitions as they relate to diverse populations in multiple practice settings, particularly those in rural environments (relates to Program Objectives A1, A2, A3, A4M, A5, A7M, A8, and B5).
7. Support evaluation and develop research skills and methods as important components of social work practice (relates to Program Objectives A4M A5, A6, A7M, B3, B4, and B5).

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Weekly attendance in the field is required for completion of the field courses and for course credit. The field practicum consists of 360 hours: 160 hours for 4 credits for winter quarter and 200 hours for 4 credits for spring quarter. These hours must be completed within the quarter. In conjunction with his or her field instructor, each student arranges a schedule for field hours in at least half-day blocks of time. Following the concurrent model, the student's field schedule should include field hours for each week of classes, and hours should not be stockpiled, completed early, nor extended into finals' week or inter-quarter breaks.

All field hours that are missed must be made up within the quarter. Once the field practicum begins, scheduling issues are to be resolved with the field instructor, and such resolutions should be congruent with the previously stated guidelines. Unresolved scheduling issues must be brought to the attention of the field director. Any deviation from the above policies, no matter how slight, must be brought to the attention of the field liaison.

GRADING POLICIES

The field practicum is graded as **Credit or Fail** and reflects the student's performance in social work practice, ethical behavior, and professional development. The grade is assigned by the field liaison and is largely based on a written evaluation generated by the field instructor with the help of the student. The individualized evaluation, which is based on the learning contract, documents actual completion of the student's learning tasks as well as the quality of the work and exceptional achievement; it also identifies areas for further growth and learning. In addition, information obtained from field visits or other contacts with the field instructor or student may be considered in determining the grade.

Both the learning contract and the evaluation are signed by the field instructor, the student, the augmented field instructor (if applicable), and the field liaison and become part of the student's permanent record in the department.

Note: The student must complete all field hours for the applicable quarter. Failure to complete the required field hours for the quarter will impact the student's grade. No student who sustains a single failing grade in the field practicum will be retained in the program. Students may also be placed on academic probation or be terminated from the program for academic misconduct or a violation of the NASW Code of Ethics in the field or in the classroom (see *Field Education Manual*).

ASSIGNMENT REQUIREMENTS

1. Field Practicum Hours: The student must complete and document 360 hours of social work practice in a local or regional agency, under the supervision of a field instructor at that agency that is currently affiliated with the social work department. Refer to the *Field Education Manual* for complete details.

2. Learning Contract: Field activities and assignments are dictated by the student's learning contract. Each student must generate a learning contract based on the seven goals of field education, program-level objectives, and learning tasks available at the agency. Field goals, program-level objectives, and directions for constructing the learning contract can be found in the *Field Education Manual*. The student has the responsibility to consult with the field instructor regarding activities available at the agency and to prepare the learning contract, which is to be submitted to the field liaison by the due dates outlined in the calendar section of the *Field Education Manual*. It is the student's responsibility to fulfill the learning contract and to notify the field instructor or the field liaison immediately if fulfillment is not possible.
3. Evaluation: The evaluation, "Evaluation of Student in the Field," is due at the end of the quarter. Consult the *Field Education Manual* for a description and directions. This document, which is a periodic evaluation of the student's fieldwork and which provides recommendations for the student's growth, is initially formatted by the student and submitted to the field instructor for preparation. After discussion of the contents of the evaluation with the field instructor, the student submits the document to the field liaison by the due date outlined in the *Field Education Manual*.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Academic misconduct is a Code A violation of the Ohio University Code of Student Conduct. Academic misconduct refers to dishonesty or deception in fulfilling academic requirements. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, un-permitted collaboration, forged attendance (when attendance is required), fabrication (e.g., use of invented information or falsification of research or other findings), using advantages not approved by the instructor (e.g., unauthorized review of a copy of an exam ahead of time), knowingly permitting another student to plagiarize or cheat from one's work, or submitting the same assignment in different courses without the consent of the instructor. If you are found to be involved in academic misconduct, you may receive a grade penalty for academic misconduct and/or a referral to the university judiciaries, which may subject you to the full range of sanctions (reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion from the university).

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY AND DISABILITY SERVICES

During the field placement process, the student is given opportunities to declare a disability situation and to discuss accommodations with both the field liaison and the field instructor. This early disclosure should be taken advantage of. Therefore, in order to obtain accommodations pertaining to agency assignment; to the field placement site, field activities and projects; or to assignments which are due to the field liaison (e.g., learning contract or evaluation), it is the responsibility of the student to notify both the field instructor and the field liaison, well in advance of the course, of his or her registration with the Office of Disability Services and of the particular accommodations that are needed and recommended.

The office is located at the Office for Institutional Equity (OIE), Crewson House, corner of Court and Mulberry Streets; telephone is as follows: 740-593-2620.

REQUIRED READING

Other than the *Field Education Manual*, no specific readings are required by the field office. Individual field instructors may suggest or require articles or books for that particular agency setting, and, of course, readings from the foundational and practice classes would be relevant to the field practicum.

COURSE OUTLINE FOR WINTER QUARTER

In each agency setting, students begin as observers. They are provided with an orientation to the agency, to the community, and to client systems. This orientation usually covers about half of the quarter, but this will vary among the agencies, depending on the agency's size and complexity. Students are actively involved in this process and seek and obtain sufficient information to understand and analyze the setting and its relationship within the community's network of services and with state and local policies.

Following orientation, the student begins a process of sharing selected practice assignments with appropriate agency staff. In this phase, the student is working in pairs with a seasoned worker or as part of a team with identified beginning-level responsibilities. Later, depending on the student's ability and readiness, as determined by the field instructor and the student, the student assumes increased responsibility and more challenging assignments. This may occur towards the end of winter quarter or at the beginning of spring quarter. All student activities throughout the quarter are outlined in the student's learning contract. The activities for the field practicum address Program Objectives A1, A2, A3, A4M, A5, A6, A7M, A8, B4, B5, and C1.

Integration with academic classes: During winter quarter, the student is learning various theories pertaining to social work practice, assessment techniques, and intervention strategies. For SW 542, Social Work Practice II, Assessment and Intervention, the student selects a case from his or her work in the field and presents the case to the class, along with relevant research for the particular needs of the client.

COURSE OUTLINE FOR SPRING QUARTER

By the beginning of this quarter, students assume increasing responsibility pertaining to assignments from the field instructor and/or other agency members. Students also receive an appropriate level of supervision from the field instructor or others, which is provided based on the student's level of independence and the level of risk related to the practice assignments. These assignments are outlined in the student's learning contract and usually continue throughout the remainder of the academic year. They are oriented toward offering the student experiences in applying the problem-solving model to various clients and

systems. Thus, students are involved in assessment, problem definition, goal formulation, planning and implementation, and practice evaluation.

The nature of the student's assignments varies according to the practicum setting, but in each setting, the student is offered the opportunity to carry out various social work roles and interventions. At the beginning of the quarter, the student may be functioning in a professional role similar to other agency social workers but is performing fewer and less difficult work assignments. Towards the end of the quarter, student assumes greater responsibility for practice assignments that are aligned with steadily decreasing supervision. The quality and quantity of the student's work increases accordingly throughout the quarter as the student builds knowledge and skills. The activities of the field practicum address Program Objectives A1, A2, A3, A4M, A5, A6, A7M, A8, B4, B5, and C1.

Integration with academic classes: Coordination with the practice classes consists of various assignments that are integrated with the field experience. One such assignment, for SW 543, Social Work Practice III: Community-Based Practice, a community-based practice class, is an organizational analysis. This is a rather comprehensive analysis of the student's placement agency. Another assignment, for SW 523, Social Welfare Policy and Services II: Special Topics in Social Welfare, a social welfare policy class, is an analysis of agency policies that govern and direct the student's work at the field placement.