

OHIO UNIVERSITY
Department of Social Work

SOCIAL WORK 492A, B & C, FIELD PRACTICUM, I, II & III

This is a supervised field placement for seniors for fall, winter, and spring quarters and is taken concurrently with SW 491A, B & C and SW 396/7/8.

INSTRUCTORS AND OFFICE HOURS

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COURSE SUMMARY

The field practicum involves three quarters of hands-on experience in a social service agency and is taken concurrently with SW 491A, B & C and SW 396/7/8. During the field placement experience, the student begins with observation and gradually progresses toward independent social work practice. The student learns and practices the social work roles of teacher, broker, counselor/clinician, and advocate in generalist practice.

The field practicum is required for all senior social work students for graduation in the major. The course is designed to address most of the educational objectives of the undergraduate social work program and to assist the student in building generalist practice skills at the professional competency level. The course also provides a context for student research projects and includes a commitment to community service.

Throughout the field practicum sequence, the student applies theory to practice, while under the supervision of a competent practitioner. Utilizing the seven goals of field education, as incorporated into the student's learning contract, the student is guided through the field practicum, which incorporates the following elements: professional development, cultural and social diversity within the practice setting, social work practice with disadvantaged groups and social justice, professional relationships and supervision, social work values and ethics, practice implementation and evaluation, organization and policy analysis, and research.

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 all of the social work undergraduate 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, A4B, A5, A6, A7B, 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, A4B, A5, A7B, 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, A4B, A5, A7B, 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, A4B, A5, and A7B).
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, A4B, A5, A6, A7B, 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, A4B, A5, A7B, A8, and B5).
7. Support evaluation and develop research skills and methods as important components of social work practice relates to Program Objectives A4B A5, A6, A7B, B3, B4, and B5).

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Weekly attendance in field is required for completion of the field courses and course credit. The field practicum consists of 440 hours: 120 hours for fall for 4 credits and 160 hours each for winter and spring for 4 credits each. 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, precluding making short visits to the agency between other classes. 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 extend into final-exam week or inter-semester breaks. All field hours that are missed must be made up within the quarter, and after the field practicum begins, scheduling issues are to be resolved with the field instructor. Unresolved scheduling issues must be brought to the attention of the field director. Any deviation from the above, no matter how slight, must be brought to the attention of the field liaison.

GRADING POLICIES

The field practicum is graded Credit/Fail, and the grade is assigned by the field liaison. It is largely based on a written evaluation, “Evaluation of Student in the Field,” generated by the field instructor. The individualized evaluation is the final product of the student’s learning contract, in which he or she contracts for a variety of learning experiences and participation in agency projects. This evaluation reflects the student’s performance in social work

practice, in ethical behavior, and in professional development. The evaluation documents actual completion of a learning task as well as the quality of the work and exceptional achievement, and it identifies areas for further growth and learning.

In addition, information obtained from field visits or other contacts with the field instructor or student or information obtained from the student's documented work and reflections in the field journal may be considered in determining the grade. Failure to complete required field hours for the quarter will impact the student's grade. Note: a failure in any of the senior-level field or practice courses (491A,B,C; 492A,B,C; or 396/7/8) will eliminate the opportunity of continuing in the sequence until the grade is a "C" or higher.

ASSIGNMENT REQUIREMENTS

1. **Field Practicum Hours:** The student must complete and document 440 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*.
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*.

This course coordinates with SW 491A, B & C, Integrative Seminar, I, II & III, and SW 396, 397 & 398, Social Work Practice, I, II & III, as the practice and seminar assignments are based on field experiences and agency information and resources.

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 either the field liaison or the field instructor. This early disclosure should be taken advantage of. Therefore, in order to obtain accommodations pertaining to agency assignment, to the actual field placement site, 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 for this course. Individual field instructors may suggest or require articles or books for that particular agency setting, and, of course, readings for the practices classes (SW 396, 397, and 398) would be relevant to the field practicum at all levels.

COURSE OUTLINE FOR FALL 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.

The orientation activity is reinforced in the integrative seminar; for instance, a required assignment for seminar is the completion of an organization analysis. This written analysis allows the student to learn a moderate level of detail about his or her agency, since developing an understanding of this information will be useful throughout the entire year, not only for practical purposes within the agency but for other seminar assignments.

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 fall quarter or at the beginning of winter quarter. All student

activities throughout the quarter are outlined in the student's learning contract. Field practicum activities address undergraduate social work program objectives A1, A2, A3, A4B, A5, A6, A7B, A8, B4, B5, and C1.

COURSE OUTLINE FOR WINTER 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 this point, the student may be functioning in a professional role similar to other agency social workers but is performing fewer and less difficult work assignments.

Coordination with the integrative seminar class consists of a current case scenario or practice controversy which is presented by each student within the group format, as a way of relating practice experiences to learned theories, to the organization of social services in the local community, and to social policy frameworks. Field Practicum activities address undergraduate social work program objectives A1, A2, A3, A4B, A5, A6, A7B, A8, B4, B5, and C1.

COURSE OUTLINE FOR SPRING QUARTER

During spring quarter, students assume greater responsibility for practice assignments that are aligned with steadily decreasing supervision. Experiences continue to be oriented to application of the problem-solving model and, thus, the student remains involved in assessment activities, goal formulation, planning and implementation, and evaluation. The nature of these assignments varies according to the practicum setting, but in each setting, the student is offered the opportunity to carry out alternative social work roles and interventions. All assignments are documented in the student's learning contract.

By the end of this quarter, the student is expected to be functioning in the same professional role as other social workers in the agency. The quality and quantity of the student's work increases accordingly throughout the quarter as the student builds knowledge and skills. Finally, at the end of the quarter, the student reviews and analyzes his or her professional growth over the year via a structured essay, which is completed for the integrative seminar class. Field practicum activities address undergraduate social work program objectives A1, A2, A3, A4B, A5, A6, A7B, A8, B4, B5,