COURSE TITLE: Foundation Field Seminar

SEMESTER: Winter 2005
COURSE NUMBER: SW 531, Section 006, Tuesdays 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
LOCATION: 1804 SSWB

FACULTY: Betsy Voshel, MSW, CSW, ACSW
Assistant Clinical Professor/Director of Field Instruction

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OFFICE HOURS: By Appointment

SEMINAR DESCRIPTION

Foundation Field Seminar (SW531) is a 1 credit required course that is offered concurrently with Foundation Field (SW515) in the first term of a student's field placement. It meets for 2-hour sessions seven times during the term.

The purpose of the seminar is to:

- Provide a mechanism for the integration of foundation course content.
- Expose students to a wide range of practice situations.
- Provide opportunities for discussion of field related issues.
- Provide opportunities for trouble shooting of pragmatic and procedural aspects of field instruction (e.g. field related paperwork including the Placement Verification Form and the Educational Agreement and Evaluation).
- Provide a forum for the development of the "professional self" and skills necessary to participate in professional consultation.

SEMINAR OBJECTIVES:

After completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand their responsibilities and those of all of the major players (i.e. student, field instructor, field educator, field liaison, seminar instructor, and advisor) in the field instruction process.

2. Understand how to develop a professional Educational Agreement in consultation with the field instructor.
3. Demonstrate the ability to negotiate supervision in a proactive manner by:
   • Scheduling a weekly supervision time.
   • Engaging in supervision by being prepared to discuss practice issues and projects and learn how to effectively use an agenda.
   • Demonstrate an understanding of basic problem solving techniques and how to apply these to field placement situations.
   • Learn how to actively raise problems or issues of concern or seek clarification by focusing on and being invested in solutions.
   • Being prepared to introspectively start to identify and subsequently share one’s strengths and weaknesses.

4. Engage and participate in the ongoing assessment and evaluation of their field placement performance.

5. Be familiar with the agency’s mission, population served, policies, procedures, relationship to the community, and be able to complete required agency documentation.

6. Be able to apply the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics to their professional practice.

7. Recognize and assess the impact of multiculturalism and diversity in the field placement setting.

8. Begin to apply and integrate foundation course material with their fieldwork.

9. Consider joining NASW or another professional association.

**RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO FOUR CURRICULAR THEMES:**

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity** issues will be part of the field instruction experience and the field seminar will offer a context for the discussion of these issues. In particular, discussion will focus on demographic barriers between students, field instructors, other agency personnel, and agency clients and how to work with these differences. Access to services and discussion regarding populations “at risk” will be given attention.

- **Social Justice and Social Change** issues will be addressed by helping students to critically assess agency policy manuals and procedures and the impact of social forces on the setting and its clients. Relevant legislation and policies that seek to promote an egalitarian view will be reviewed and discussed. The role of social
worker as a "change agent" will be reviewed and discussed. The field seminar will offer a forum for the discussion of these issues and related ethical dilemmas.

- *Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation* approaches will be addressed within the context of the field assignments and through supervision between the student and the field instructor. The field seminar will offer an opportunity to discuss, review, compare, and contrast alternative strategies.

- *Behavioral and Social Science Research* will provide the knowledge base and theory for the application of interventions and analytic methods being employed in the field. Relevant theories and outcomes regarding accountability, empirical validation of interventions and evaluation of practice will be discussed.

**RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO SOCIAL WORK ETHICS AND VALUES:**

Social work ethics and values will be addressed within the seminar as they pertain to the delivery of services and the formulation of agency policies and procedures. The NASW Code of Ethics will be used to inform students about professional conduct expectations and comportment as a social worker. Each social worker’s ethical responsibility to clients, to colleagues, in practice settings, as professionals, to the social work profession, and to the broader society as a whole will be reviewed. In particular, the seminar will provide a vehicle for the discussion of value laden issues and ethical dilemmas.

**RESOURCES**

The following texts are available in the SSW library and suggested for supplementary reading.

**Field Instruction Manual**, revised June 2004 (on-line: [www.ssw.umich.edu/ofi](http://www.ssw.umich.edu/ofi)).
ACCOMODATIONS

If you need or desire an accommodation for a disability, please let me know right away. Many aspects for this seminar including the assignments, the in-class activities and the way that the seminar of taught can be modified to facilitate your participation and progress throughout the term. The earlier you make me aware of your needs, the more effectively we will be able to use the resources available to us, such as Students with Disabilities, and the like. If you do decide to disclose your disability, I will (to the extent permitted by law), treat that information as private and confidential.

SEMINAR EXPECTATIONS

As Seminar Facilitator:
- I will come to class on time and be prepared to present and facilitate discussion on the course objectives.
- I will participate, as best I can, in the challenges presented by the class.
- I will strive to develop a safe and caring classroom environment.
- I will reflect on student feedback and apply it as appropriate.
- I will offer learning opportunities that will challenge the development of each student’s “professional self.”
- I will offer constructive feedback.

As Seminar Participant you will be expected to:
- Attend every seminar. Absences due to illness or personal emergency need to be communicated by telephone or E-mail to the seminar instructor PRIOR to the seminar period whenever possible. ALL absences will require a make-up assignment to be determined by the instructor.
- Arrive on time for every seminar.
- Arrive prepared and willing to actively participate in all seminar activities.
- Complete all assignments in a timely fashion.
- Help maintain a safe, caring and respectful environment in the classroom.
- Actively and appropriately give constructive feedback to classmates and the seminar facilitator.
- Actively and appropriately receive constructive feedback from classmates and the seminar facilitator.
- Be open to professional and personal growth.

WE ALL AGREE TO WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT WHERE CONFLICT CAN BE MANAGED, EMOTIONAL RISKS TAKEN, AND POSITIVE LEARNING OUTCOMES REALIZED.
SEMINAR DESIGN

While the general design combines focused conversation and open-ended discussions about field placement issues, student input is critical to how particular seminar sessions will be structured. The seminar will be structured to include material presented on select topics, guest speakers where feasible, input from students pertaining to their field placement experience, and discussion on specific cases and problem solving.

SEMINAR REQUIREMENTS

1. The satisfactory completion of this seminar will be determined by attendance, participation, and completion of all required assignments. This seminar will be graded on a pass/fail basis (S, M, and U), and attendance is mandatory. Class discussion requires all participants to review and openly discuss examples from their field placement experiences and to participate in providing constructive feedback to colleagues and the seminar facilitator.

2. If you are not able to attend class for extenuating circumstances only, you are required to contact the instructor as soon as possible. Consequences for absences will be determined by the instructor. Only extenuating circumstances will be approved and all absences will result in additional assignments.

IMPORTANT DATES IN FIELD EDUCATION

Field Instruction Begins: January 5
Placement Verification Forms due to Faculty Liaison: January 27
Educational Agreement due to Faculty Liaison: February 7
Spring Break: February 26 – March 6
Evaluations due to your assigned Faculty Liaison: April 15
Classes End: April 20, 2005
Field Instruction Ends: April 22
## CLASS MEETING TIMES

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>SESSION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-11-05</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Getting started, introductions, expectations, and connecting with colleagues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-18-05</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Developing the Educational Agreement, goal setting, and looking at your strengths and areas for improvement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-25-05</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Supervision, learning styles, communication, problem solving and developing tolerance for conflict.</td>
<td>Assignment #1 Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-1-05</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>SEMINAR</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-8-05</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Professional development, making connections, time management, and taking care of yourself.</td>
<td>Assignment #2 Due (Educational Agreement due to your field liaison this date)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-15-05</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>SEMINAR</td>
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<td>2-22-05</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Agency policies/laws, procedures, documentation tools and diversity.</td>
<td>Assignment #3 Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-1-05</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>SEMINAR (Spring Break)</td>
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<td>3-15-05</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>SEMINAR</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-22-05</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Social Work values and ethical dilemmas</td>
<td>Assignment #4 Due</td>
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<td>3-20-05</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<td>4-5-05</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-12-05</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Evaluation, wrap-up, and moving forward.</td>
<td>Assignment #5 Due</td>
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ASSIGNMENTS
ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE TYPED AND DOUBLE SPACED.

Assignment #1 (Due January 25)
Write a description about your agency which includes the following information:
• Mission statement and population served.
• Organizational Chart
• History of the agency (e.g. when was it founded, etc.).
• Identify all programs and services of the agency and specifically describe the program you are assigned to.
• Describe funding sources and legislative mandates
• How does the agency get client referrals? Are there demographic barriers?
• Are services accessible for “at risk” populations?
• What are the mandatory reporting policies?
• How is confidentiality protected?
• Describe staff (e.g. how many, credentials, ethnic mix, etc.).
• How has the agency changed over the past decade? (e.g. more/less staff or services, change in client groups, new location, new name, etc.)
• Assess the informal structure/systems that are operating in the organization.
• What beliefs/values seem to dominate? How do these fit with yours?
• Describe how you were oriented to the agency.
• Reflect on the type of cases or community problems that you will encounter during your field placement. Get on the internet and make a list of any appropriate resource material.
• Include any other pertinent information.

Assignment #2 (Due February 8): Work with a partner opportunity
Turn in a copy of the first two pages of your Educational Agreement that you completed in conjunction with your Field Instructor. Be sure to include at least one professional development goal. The original should be turned into your assigned field liaison.

Make a list of as many fields of service you can identify where social workers are typically employed. Check this list against the areas of service identified in Social Work Abstracts, published by the National Association of Social Workers.

Ask to review a copy of your field instructor’s resume. What stands out to you in terms of the richness, diversity and special expertise? Do you see yourself having a similar resume in another eight to ten years? Why or why not.
Assignment #3 (Due February 22)
Assess at least one form that your agency uses such as an intake, an assessment, a progress note, release of information, treatment/service plan, discharge/termination or any other documentation form. Discuss when and how the form is used. Evaluate the form for the following:
- Does it reflect diversity and is it sensitive to socioeconomic, gender, and cultural differences?
- How does it capture the needs presented by the agency’s clients?
- Does it seem to be an effective tool? Why or why not?
- If you were to suggest revisions, what would those be?

Assignment #4 (due March 22)
Submit a brief description of a value dilemma that you have experienced or think could potentially develop in your field placement. Interview staff at your field placement and describe some of the ethical dilemmas that they have encountered over the years. Describe the process that you think should be used to address these dilemmas. What section of the NASW Code of Ethics applies?

Assignment #5 (Due April 12)
*What would you say is the most important think that you learned from working with clients this term?
*What is the most important thing that you learned from working with your agency’s staff members?
*Discuss where are you now in your professional development in relationship to where you started at the beginning of the term.
*Briefly describe your most celebrated accomplishment as well as one thing that didn’t occur according to your ideal plan.
*What kind of work environment works best for you?
*What kind of administrative structure works best for you?
*What kind of supervisor/supervision works best for you?
*Think about being professional. What is your operating definition of professional? What behaviors and values do you associate with being professional? Think of a person at your field placement that meets your definition of professional and describe what it is about this individual that you find particularly admirable.
*What more you can do to enhance your learning?