Social Work 531: Foundation Field Seminar
Winter 2005
School of Social Work Building Room 3752
Section 008 Tuesday 5-7

Faculty: Dale Fitch & Melissa Peet
Office: SSWB 2794
Email: dale@umich.edu & ijb@umich.edu

Seminar Description
This one credit seminar occurs concurrently with the Foundation term of field placement and meets for two hours semi-weekly. It is designed to provide support and information to students as they begin to develop the skills of the social work profession and to translate newly emerging skills into an electronic portfolio (ePortfolio). This seminar will explore how to use this experience as a beginning step in building social work skills and provide a safe environment for students to process their field experiences. Students will also have the opportunity to consult with their peer group as part of the problem solving process and their professional social work skill development process.

Seminar Objectives
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the concept of professional ‘roles’ as they gain an understanding of their responsibilities and the responsibilities of other key people in the fieldwork program (i.e., field educator, field instructor/supervisor, and faculty liaison and faculty advisor).
2. Complete a written educational agreement with their field supervisor.
3. Demonstrate the proactive nature of using supervision (e.g., coming prepared to supervisory sessions: bring questions to supervisors regarding practice issues: sharing strengths and weakness regarding their performance in the field placement; actively raising problems and issues of concern and/or clarification with supervisors).
4. Demonstrate an understanding of basic problem solving techniques and how to apply those techniques to field situations.
5. Engage in ongoing assessment of their performance and complete the requisite evaluations for the field.
6. Assess the relationship between their field setting and oppressed clients in the agency’s service area and explore the reciprocal interactions between the agency and its community.
7. Complete all required agency forms and recording procedures as appropriate to their field assignments.

8. Recognize and assess the impact of multiculturalism and diversity in their fields setting.

9. Begin to apply and integrate foundation course material with their field experience.

10. Engage in an ePortfolio process.

11. Demonstrate student-centered learning that includes the identification and practice of personal and professional goals, the use of self-assessments, dialogue and feedback from peers, and the principles of team learning.

12. Develop an awareness and practice of social work knowledge, skills, and competencies through the use of an ePortfolio platform/framework in a team learning environment.

**Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular themes:**

- Multiculturalism and Diversity issues will be part of the field instruction experience - The field seminar will offer a context for the discussion of these issues.

- Social Justice and Social Change - Social workers strive to promote optimal learning opportunities for all client populations we serve. The role of social worker as a change agent will be reviewed and discussed in the seminar. The field seminar will offer a forum for the discussion of these issues and related ethical dilemmas.

- Promotion, Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation - These aspects of social work interventions will be reviewed and discussed as there are or are not manifested in the human services delivery system.

- Behavioral and Social Science Research will provide the knowledge based and theory for the application of interventions and analytic methods being employed in the field.

**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 formation of agency policies and procedures. The NASW Code of Ethics will be used to inform students about the social worker’s conduct and comportment as social worker and the social worker's ethical responsibility to the community, colleagues, employer and society.

**Seminar Expectations**

1. Attend all class sessions. If you expect to miss a session, prior notice is necessary so that alternate arrangements can be made.

2. Be on Time.

3. Complete all assignments on time.

4. Be open to personal and professional growth.

5. Work together to create a learning environment where conflict can be managed, emotional risks taken, and positive learning outcomes realized.

6. Take responsibility to turn criticism into constructive opportunities for change.
**Seminar Design**
While the general design combines focused conversation and open-ended discussions about field placement issues, student input is critical to how particular class sessions will be structured. The seminar will be structured to include material presented on select topics, input from students pertaining to their field experience, and discussion of specific cases and problems.

**Seminar Resources**
The following are supplemental readings pertaining to the field placement experience. They are available in the library:

The following are supplemental readings pertaining to the ePortfolio process:
- P. McIntosh, *Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*
- Excerpts from Peet, et. al. *Personal Skills for Productive Teams*
- J. Banks, *Different Types of Knowledge*
- MLI, *The Process of Goal Setting*
- PODS Group, *Student-Centered Learning & Social Work Education*

**Additional Research Goals**
This section of SW 531 differs from the other 531 sections in that it incorporates the use of ePortfolios as a tool to facilitate student learning. The use of ePortfolios is being researched by the SSW and, as a consequence, students will be consented to participate in various aspects of the seminar. The ePortfolio research project has various goals including:

1. To understand how various dimensions of student learning at the SSW (curriculum, co-curriculum, and field) facilitate and/or create barriers to developing competencies, and PODS competencies specifically, in different practice and methods concentration areas. These dimensions include:
   - Identify the types of questions and issues students struggle with in developing knowledge, about PODS especially, and translating it to field experiences.
   - Understand how students’ backgrounds, social identities, previous learning, etc. influence their development of PODS competencies.
   - Identify the various strengths of students as well as the SSW that are relevant towards developing competencies in different concentration areas.
   - Discover the most relevant and important learning experiences that facilitated their development of critical consciousness.

2. To empower students towards critical consciousness through integrating PODS knowledge with social work practice, self-reflection and dialogue with others.
3. To produce a portfolio process that students can use for ongoing learning, and to generate “products” that can demonstrate their knowledge and skills for others who may be interested.

The objectives of the Seminar and the goals ePortfolio project will be achieved in the following topical outline. As an emerging project, the latter weeks will more fully evolve as we learn about the ePortfolio process together – instructors and students.

**January 11 - Week 1: Introduction & Overview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Content &amp;/ or Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get to know each other</td>
<td>4-Corners exercise used for assessing readiness for group/team learning &amp; interacting across social differences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Share the principles, philosophy, context & goals of the seminar | Review:  
  - Philosophy of Student-centered learning  
  - History & Overview of PODS  
  - History & Overview of the ePortfolio project  
  - Principles of Team Learning  
Share:  
  - Voices of successful portfolio students  
  - Actual analog & digital portfolios |
| Identify strengths and skills within individuals & groups | Exercise: Building a team resume  
  Students learn to ID individual & group strengths, develop action-oriented language, & reflect/reframe each others’ experience from a strengths-based perspective |

**Assignment:**  
Two - three page reflection on your strengths and how they will help you in this course, and reflections on your 1st week of school  
Post reflection on cTools Discussion page and provide feedback to peers.

**Readings:**  
Excerpts from Reed, Lewis, et. al; *Critically Conscious Social Work*

**January 25 - Week 2: Developing Work Teams & Goals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Content &amp;/ or Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Develop Ground Rules that support Conflict, Dialogue, & Team Learning | 1. One-minute paper: *A class I hated was*...  
2. Review types of interactions: dialogue, debate, reflecting, problem-solving, etc..  
3. Brainstorm ground-rules in small groups.  
4. Whole class decides on ground-rules |
| Introduce materials related to:  
  - Goal setting  
  - Social Work Competencies | Discuss  
  - Themes & questions across readings  
  - The process of becoming a student-centered learner  
Connect:  
  - Last week’s team resume to this week’s discussion of skills & competencies |
• PODS knowledge & Skills

Practice identifying:

1. Personal goals
2. Critical learning incidences
3. Potential portfolio artifacts

Exercise: Identifying Critical Incidences
Help each other learn to ID & articulate important learning experiences, personal & group strengths, use action-oriented language, & reflect/reframe each others' experiences from a positive, learning perspective.

Assignments:
Educational Agreement Due
Conduct self-assessment - the taping exercise.
Post to Discussion space: 2 - page self-reflection on the taping exercise
Write personal & professional goals as informed by week 2 discussion,

Readings:
IFCC, Excerpts from PODS materials: Evaluation summary, PODS competencies, etc..
U of M SSW, Objectives and competencies for SSW methods and practice area

February 8 - Week 3: Clarifying Goals & Making a Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Content &amp;/ or Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Share Individual Personal & Professional Goals | 1. Students take PODS assessment survey and share their responses in small groups
2. Individuals in small groups share short & long term overall learning goals for SSW
3. Each group identifies similarities, differences, themes, challenges, & strengths as reflected among each members’ goals |
| Assess individual and group needs for the semester | 1. Students’ ID specific goals they want to work on in the course
2. Identify common goals among class members |
| Generate an action plan for the course | 1. Introduce students to the premise of action planning w/ examples & hand-out
2. Small groups develop course action-plan for the semester that reflects their goals
3. Large-group comes to consensus on action-plan & next steps |
| Tagging student work | 1. Instructions on the process of tagging competencies for later retrieval.
2. Students work in pairs to identify tagged competencies. |

Assignments:
Review, respond and write 2-3 page self-reflection on the following:
The process by which Ground Rules, Individual & Course Goals, and Course Action Plans were developed: What was challenging? Difficult? Surprising? What did you observe about yourself and others in the small and large groups? What further questions do you have?
Prepare past and current SSW assignment/papers for digital access

Readings: TBA

February 22 - Week 4: Enact group's goals & action plans. Assess results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Content &amp;/or Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Field Placement  | 1. Reflection and discussion on the mid-point of the field placement experience.  
                   2. Identify strategies to maximize positive experiences and/or address negative experiences.                                           |
| PODS Competencies| 1. Practice identifying PODS competencies in on-going course & field work.  
                   2. Associate assignments where these competencies are operationalized.                                                         |
| Individual Goals | 1. Connect course work to specific learning goals & competencies.  
                   2. Connect field learning to specific learning goals & competencies.                                                                 |
| ePortfolio       | 1. Digitally tag (using XML) coursework identifying competencies and skills acquired.  
                   2. Begin recognizing and identifying the evolving professional self.  
                   3. Synthesize the tagged competencies and evolving identities into associated professional social work roles.   
                   4. Translate your competencies and associated knowledge of professional social work roles into portfolio artifacts. |

March 8 - Week 5

March 22 - Week 6
- Read each other's shared ePortfolio's and provide feedback.
- Share ePortfolio with field instructor for feedback.

April 5 - Week 7
- Presentation of four portfolios, one from each practice method