SOCIAL WORK 531
FOUNDATION FIELD SEMINAR
Fall Term, 2001

Roberta Walker, MSW, CSW, ACSW
Work Phone: 313-895-1816
Home Phone: 734-572-9861
E-Mail: rcwalker@umich.edu
Office Hours: By appointment only or after class

Seminar Description:
This one credit seminar will meet for two hours on a biweekly basis during the first semester of your field placement. It is designed to provide support and information relevant to your beginning in the field of social work. It will provide you the opportunity to express concerns in a safe, non-threatening environment. You will have the chance to share and discuss both pragmatic and procedural aspects of field instruction.

Seminar Objectives:
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:
Understand the responsibilities of everyone in the field instruction process.
Complete an educational agreement with their supervisor.
Demonstrate a proactive approach to supervision and learning.
Engage in ongoing assessment of their performance.
Understand the relationship between agency and community.
Complete all required documentation for the agency.
Recognize and assess the impact of multiculturalism and diversity in the field setting.
Consider the value of joining professional organizations.
Begin to apply and integrate foundation course material to field experience.

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 further discussion of these issues. In particular, discussion will focus on demographic barriers between students, supervisors, other agency personnel, and agency clients and how to work with these differences.
• 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. 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 in the field. The field seminar will offer opportunities to discuss and compare 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.

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 the social worker’s conduct and comportment as a social worker and the social worker’s ethical responsibility to clients, colleagues, employers, employing organizations, and society. In particular, the seminar will focus on client issues such as the primacy of clients’ interests, rights and prerogatives of clients, confidentiality, and privacy. Students will also be given an opportunity to discuss ethical and value dilemmas they are experiencing in their field placements.

Reference Materials:
There is no required reading for this course. Students may supplement their class work with the following resources available in the School of Social Work Library:
Field Instruction Manual, University of Michigan School of Social Work.
Seminar Design:
The course is a combination of focused conversation and open ended discussion about field placement issues. It is critical that all students participate in discussion in order for the class to be meaningful. The seminar is graded on a pass/fail basis. The grade will be based on mandatory attendance and participation. If you are unable to attend a class, you must notify the instructor.

There will be 5 reflection papers, due at the beginning of each class. More information will be given at the first meeting. Also, the educational agreement and evaluation for your field placement must be completed. For the last session, an assessment of your first semester field placement and personal growth will be expected.

The papers will be returned at the beginning of each class.

Seminar Topics:
The following topics will be covered in the course of the semester. I would welcome your input into specific topics that you would like to see covered.
Session I: Introductions to each other and the field placement process; the roles and responsibilities of everyone in the field placement process.
Session II: Completing the educational agreement; setting goals; how to get what you want and need from the field experience.
Session III: Supervision: how to create a successful supervisory relationship; conflict resolution; learning styles.
Session IV: Understanding Community: the relationship between the community and agency.
Session V: Diversity and Multiculturalism in the Field: assessing and working in the agency and community culture.
Session VI: Professionalism: working with others in the field; organizations that promote connection.
Section VII: Evaluation and closure.