THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

S.W. 531 - Foundation Field Seminar
Fall Term 2001
Room 3752 SSWB

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Seminar Description

This one credit seminar will meet for two hours on a biweekly basis. This seminar offers an opportunity for students to express field related concerns in a safe, non-threatening milieu. It will expose students to a wider range of practice situations than their individual field experiences and will also provide a mechanism for the integration of foundation course content with the students’ field experiences. Students will have an opportunity to discuss and troubleshoot pragmatic and procedural aspects of field instruction (e.g. educational contracts, evaluation mechanisms, etc.) This seminar, along with other foundation courses in the classroom, will provide students with a forum to begin their socialization to the social work profession.

An experiential approach to teaching will be the primary teaching tool in this section.

Seminar Competencies

Students will:
- understand their responsibilities and those of the other major players in the field instruction process.
- complete a professional plan and a written educational contract with their supervisor(s).
- demonstrate the proactive nature of supervision
- understand the value of an ongoing evaluation of their performance and will attempt it
- assess the relationship between the field setting and oppressed clients in the agency’s catchment area and will explore the reciprocal interaction between the agency and its community
- be able to complete forms and recording procedures as appropriate to their assignment
- be able to recognize and assess the impact of multiculturalism and diversity in their field setting
- understand the value of joining professional associations
- begin to apply and integrate foundation course material to their field experience

Seminar Resources

Relationship of the Seminar to Four Curricular Themes:

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity.** Special attention will be given to assessing the agencies represented in the class around their availability and access by all populations, including those populations considered "at risk."
- **Social Justice and Social Change.** Social Workers strive to promote optimal learning opportunities for all client populations that we serve. The role of the worker as a change agent will be reviewed and discussed in the seminar. Relevant legislation and policies that seek to promote this egalitarian view will be reviewed and discussed.
- **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation.** This seminar will offer the perspective that intervention can occur with all client systems, namely with the individual, the family, the agency and the community. Approaches will be demonstrated for all levels of practice. System-wide prevention programs will be reviewed and discussed.
- **Behavioral and Social Science Research.** Relevant theories and findings regarding service accountability, empirical validation of interventions and evaluation of practice will be covered.

**Seminar Expectations**

As seminar facilitator:
1. I will come to class on time and be prepared to present and discuss course information.
2. I will participate, as best as I can, in the challenges of the class
3. I will strive to develop a safe and caring classroom environment
4. I will reflect on your feedback and, if I am in agreement, do what is necessary to apply it.
5. I will offer learning opportunities to challenge you
6. I will offer feedback

As seminar participants:
1. I expect you to arrive on time for every session, prepared and ready to actively participate in classroom activities
2. I expect you to complete all assignments in a timely fashion.
3. I expect you to help maintain the safe, caring and respectful environment of the classroom
4. I expect you to actively and appropriately give and receive feedback to class members

**Seminar Assignments**

The **satisfactory completion of this seminar** will be determined by your attendance, your participation and the completion of the following assignments.

1. **Attendance of all class sessions.** If you expect to miss a session, prior notice is necessary, so that we can discuss consequences to your missing the class. Otherwise an I or U grade is earned at the end of the term.

2. **Reflection papers.** These are two page papers, designed to:
   a) give me feedback about the sessions we are having;
   b) give you opportunity to “converse” with me, privately about placement concerns
   c) offer you the opportunity to expound on topics of interest, and
   d) allow us ongoing dialogue about seminar topics.

   **I expect one per class session** to be handed to me at the beginning of the next class session. There will not be a paper expected for the final class. *The topic for these papers are provided under separate cover.*

As incoming students, you are responsible for completing an educational agreement and an evaluation of your field experience. *This seminar offers an opportunity for you to receive feedback from the seminar facilitator of your completed forms, should you desire it.*
Possible discussion topics

Creating ideal social work environments...how do I do it? what will it take?
Record Keeping- what really is confidential and what isn’t?
Supervision...how do I optimize my learning opportunity?
How do I learn "the ropes"?
Who teaches me the practical stuff: dressing, parking, lunch, work space, telephone, insurance
How do I access clients?
Is my supervisor a friend or a foe?
How am I doing so far? How do I know?
I need help quick. How do I get it?
Termination...when do I start? Do I have to?
Here’s the client. Now what? How do I engage?
What exactly do I do as a social worker?
But they don’t want to talk to me!! What now?
Schedules; how much are they really "written in stone?"
How do I find these things out?
The Code of Ethics!! Where does my value system fit? What about agency policy?
So much to do! How do I budget my time?
Not much to do! How do I spend my time wisely/effectively?
I feel like I'm doing such x&*$%@%^ work! What do I do?
How do I tell my supervisor that her/his teaching style isn’t working for me?
Are these practices ethical? honest? legal?
What to do about conflicts- of interest, of values, of styles, of direction?