I. Course Description: This seminar class will meet for two hours on a biweekly basis. It is intended to provide students with the opportunity to:

1. Express field related concerns in a safe, non-threatening milieu
2. Gain exposure to a wider range of practice situations than their individual field experiences offer
3. Integrate the content of foundation classes with their field experiences
4. Discuss and troubleshoot pragmatic and procedural aspects of field instruction
5. Continue the socialization into the social work profession.

II. Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the responsibilities of everyone in the field instruction process.
2. Complete an Educational Plan with your supervisor.
3. Demonstrate a pro-active approach to supervision and learning.
5. Assess and evaluate the relationship between placement agency and the community it serves.
6. Complete all forms and professional recording required in one’s field placement.
7. Recognize, assess and act upon cultural diversity issues that may arise in placement.
8. Consider the value of joining professional associations.
9. Begin to apply and integrate foundation course material to one’s field experience.

III. 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.

IV. 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.

IV. Seminar Resources: The seminar does not require any assigned reading. In the event you would like to read a practical overview of issues associated with field placement, there are two texts commonly suggested for this course. Both will be available in the library.


If you wish to supplement your field experience and this seminar with some readings, here is my synopsis of the above resources. The Thomlison book is well written and I found it to be the better resource of the two suggestions. I would recommend that you start here. The Royse book is written for undergraduates and I found it too simplistic to be much help. Chapter Six on basic interviewing and clinical skills may be useful if you have questions in that area.

The primary resource for learning in this seminar will be each other. Your experiences in the field and mine in practice over the years will provide the grist for the mill.
V. Expectations:

1. Openness to both personal and professional growth.
2. Be on time.
3. Attend every class. Absences due to illness or personal emergency need to be communicated by phone or email prior to the class period whenever possible. Since there is virtually no academic requirement in this course, your attendance and participation in class are among the only criteria to base a passing grade.
4. Complete all assignments on time.
5. Work together to create a learning environment where conflict can be managed, emotional risks taken, and positive learning outcomes realized.

VI. Assignments:

This seminar will be graded on a pass/fail basis. A passing performance in the class will be determined by your attendance, your participation in class activities and discussion, as well as the completion of the following assignments:

1. Five Reflection papers: These 1-2 page papers are intended to be non-academic, personal reflections on your field placement experience. A suggested topic for each paper is listed below:
   a. Your Point A: That is, what you bring to your field placement
   b. The agency environment. What beliefs and values seem to dominate?
   c. What are you doing to enhance your learning?
   d. Interventions attempted
   e. Your Point B: What are you working to achieve or accomplish?
2. Completion of the educational agreement with your field instructor.

VII. Seminar Topics: Interesting issues and teachable moments that come from your experiences in the field will take precedence over this plan; but, you can expect that I will have something prepared in the topic areas below for each class session.

1. Creating an environment for change. The Experiential Wave: applying it to this class and to your field placement. Connecting with colleagues.
2. Goal setting: Personal Point B. If YOU don’t know where you’re going, how likely are you to get there? Know your strengths and limitations; make a goal out of each of them. Educational Agreements.
3. Conflict Resolution: If you are to survive as a social worker, you MUST develop some tolerance for conflict. Conflict resolution styles and strategies. Consider the role of conflict resolution skills in your field experience.
4. Supervision: What’s happening? What can you expect? What style best suits your learning needs? The nature of the relationship. What you get out of it will be in direct proportion to what you put into it.

5. Interventions and Connections: Social Workers, in general, find themselves connecting with individuals, groups, and communities with the intent of facilitating positive outcomes. What connections have you made in placement? Acknowledge and appreciate the accomplishments in this area. What limitations have you noted about your ability to connect. What cultural or diversity issues have you encountered in your placement? What does all this have to do with interventions?
