THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
School of Social Work  
SOCIAL WORK 531: FOUNDATION FIELD SEMINAR  
Winter, 2002, Section 004  

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Seminar Description

Field seminar attendance is expected to occur concurrently with the first term of placement in the field. This seminar will meet for two hours on a biweekly basis and will provide students the opportunity 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.

Seminar Objectives

Upon completion of this seminar, students are expected to:
1. Understand their responsibilities and those of the other major players (i.e., supervisor, liaison, advisor, and field placement office) in the field instruction process.
2. Complete a professionalization plan and a written educational contract with their supervisor(s).
3. Demonstrate the proactive nature of supervision (e.g., coming prepared to supervisory sessions; bringing questions to supervisors regarding practice issues; sharing strengths and weaknesses regarding their performance in the field placement; actively raising problems and issues of concern and/or clarification with supervisors).
4. Engage in ongoing evaluation of their performance and complete the requisite evaluations for the field.
5. Assess the relationship between the field setting and oppressed clients in the agency’s catchment area and explore the reciprocal interaction between the agency and its community.
6. Complete agency forms and recording procedures as appropriate to their field assignments.
7. Recognize and assess the impact of multiculturalism and diversity in their field setting.
8. Understand the value of joining professional associations.
9. Apply and integrate foundation course material with 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 from/to class members.
5. I expect you to actively and appropriately give and receive feedback from/to me.

### Seminar Requirements

The satisfactory completion of this seminar will be determined by your completion of the following:

1. **Attend 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. **Participate in class discussions and exercises.** This is considered an important part of your learning experience.
3. **Complete the following assignments:**

Assignments are to be handed to me at the beginning of the each class session when they are due. There will not be a paper expected at the final class.

**Assignment #1:** Assess at least one of your practicum agency’s recording forms (e.g., intake, assessment, progress/goal notes, interim, discharge/termination) and discuss when/how each form is used as well as your reflections on ways in which the forms (and implementation) do and/or do not demonstrate sensitivity to cultural differences. (Due 1/28)

**Assignment #2:** Turn in a copy of the educational agreement you plan to use this semester. (Due 2/11)

**Assignment #3:** Assess your practicum agency from a systems perspective. How is the agency structured? How are boundaries determined? - by function or by problems addressed or by some combination? Do you consider the agency relatively stable (maintaining homeostasis)? How is the effectiveness of service provision (output) measured? What types of feedback are solicited from consumers, such as clients or other agencies purchasing services? Has the agency recently received any positive or negative feedback about its effectiveness? Over time has the agency become more complex (e.g., added more staff, added new services, served new client groups, or added new staff position)? (Due 3/4)

**Assignment #4:** Interview a community member from the surrounding community in which your practicum agency is located. What does this person know about the agency? According to this one person what kind of a reputation does the agency have? Did you expect these responses? Would agency personnel expect this response? What is your reaction to this information? What do you think the agency reaction would be? (Due 3/18)

**Assignment #5:** How does change happen within your field placement? How would you go about advocating for a change in policy or procedure within your field placement agency? Would this be a feasible action for a social work intern? Why or Why not? Discuss how you would go about affecting a change within your placement, include target of this intervention, potential allies in this process, strategies you would employ and anticipated outcome if this intervention were implemented. Would this intervention enhance the agency’s cultural competence? (Due 4/1)

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**Units of Study: Summary**

1/14  Introduction
1/28  I.  Beginnings (Assignment #1 Due)
2/11  II.  Supervision (Assignment #2 Due)
3/4   III. Recording and Documentation (Assignment #3 Due)
3/18  IV.  Community Assessment (Assignment #4 Due)
4/1   V.  Professionalization (Assignment #5 Due)
4/15  VI.  Evaluation and Wrap-up