THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

SOCIAL WORK 531: FOUNDATION FIELD SEMINAR
FALL, 2003, Section 001

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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 expose students to a wider range of practice situations than their individual field experiences. It will also provide a mechanism for the integration of foundation course content with the students. 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. It will provide students the opportunity to discuss field-related issues.

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
The following texts will be available in the library for supplementary reading:
Topics from the Field Instruction Manual will also be used for discussion. Students' experiences in the field will offer valuable material for class discussion.

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 a 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.

**NOTE:** You may substitute any of the following assignments with a topic of your choice related to your field experience.

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 9/22)

Assignment #2: Turn in a copy of the first two pages of the educational agreement you plan to use this semester. (Due 10/6)

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 10/27)

Assignment #4: Interview a community member from the surrounding community in which your practicum agency is located. If this is not possible choose a person from another community to which you belong like the School of Social Work or students enrolled in SW 531. 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's reaction would be? (Due 11/3)

Assignment #5: What have you learned about yourself and the kind of social work environment that you work best in? What kind of administrative structure best suits you? What would you like in a supervisor? Will future jobs require specific features that you will look for in terms of a work schedule, available resources, etc.? (Due 11/17)

**Units of Study: Summary**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Introductions</td>
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<td>I. Beginnings (Assignment #1 Due)</td>
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<td>II. Supervision (Assignment #2 Due)</td>
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<td>III. Recording and Documentation (Assignment #3 Due)</td>
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*NOTE: NO CLASS 10/20, THIS CLASS HAS BEEN CHANGED TO 10/27.*