Social Work 531 - Foundation Field Seminar
Winter Term, 2004

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SEMINAR DESCRIPTION:

Students will be expected to attend a field instruction seminar that runs concurrently with their 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. The seminar 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, will provide students with a forum to begin their socialization to the social work profession.

SEMINAR OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Understand their responsibilities and the responsibilities of the other major players (i.e., supervisor, liaison, advisor, and field placement office) in the field instruction process.
- Complete a professionalization plan and a written educational contract with their supervisors.
- Demonstrate the proactive nature of supervision (e.g., coming prepared to supervisory sessions; bringing questions to supervisors regarding practice issues; sharing strengths and weakness regarding their performance in the field placement; actively raising problems and issues of concern and/or clarification with supervisors).
• Engage in ongoing evaluation of their performance and complete the requisite evaluations for the field.
• Assess the relationship between the agency and its community.
• Complete agency forms and recording procedures as appropriate to their field assignments.
• Recognize and assess the impact of multiculturalism and diversity in their field setting.
• Join NASW or one other professional association.
• Apply and integrate foundation course material with their field experience.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO FOUR CURRICULUM 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.
SEMINAR RESOURCES:

There is no required reading for this class. Texts will be available in the library for supplementary reading:

- The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook, M. Davis, E. Robbins Eshelman, M. McKay, 2000
- The Internship, Practicum, and Field Placement Handbook by B. Baird. 3rd edition 2002
- Topics from the Field Instruction Manual will also be used for discussion. Students’ and instructor’s experiences in the field will be the primary resources.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES:

This seminar will be graded on a pass/fail basis (S,M, U). The grade will be based on your attendance in class and your participation in discussions, both of which are mandatory. Class discussion requires all participants to provide examples from field, and constructive feedback to colleagues. Notice must be given to the instructor if there are extenuating circumstances that prevent your attendance at one of the seminars and arrangements will be made for make up.

There will be 5 reflection papers, due at the beginning of each class (3-7). Class 2 will require that you bring in a copy of your educational goals. More information will be given at the first class meeting. Also, the educational agreement and evaluation required for your field placement must be completed in a timely fashion. For the last session, an assessment of your first semester field placement and integration with classes will be expected.

I will provide written comments and feedback related to each of the reflection papers. The papers will be returned at the beginning of each class. Last papers can be picked up from my office.

SEMINAR TOPICS:

All of the topics listed below will be covered during the course of the seminar. The order may change or be expanded depending on the issues that students raise in class.

January 27: Educational agreements. Goal setting, getting what you need from
placement. Understanding yourself in relationship to your profession, your
placement, and the school.


March 2: Assertiveness, time and stress management, ongoing issues of field

March 16: Understanding community. Connections, resources, policies, who is
served and who is left out. Diversity and multiculturalism in the field and school.

March 30: Values and ethical dilemmas, professional and personal compromises

April 13: Evaluation, wrap up, moving forward.

Other possible topic areas include record keeping, budgeting time, client interventions,
termination issues, and other issues that are raised by students.

SEMINAR EXPECTATIONS:

• Be open to personal and professional growth.
• Student and instructor will be on time for class. Class will begin at 15 past the
  hour with no break.
• Attend all classes. (Attendance and participation, along with reflection papers,
  will form the basis of the passing grade.)
• Participate by speaking up and allowing others to also speak.
• Complete all assignments.
• Work together to create a positive learning environment where conflict can be
  managed, emotional risks taken, and positive learning outcomes realized.
• Take responsibility to turn criticism into constructive opportunities for change.