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SW 488.01: Practicum Seminar

Mary Birch

University of Montana - Missoula

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SW 488 Practicum Seminar
Instructor: Birch
Spring 2002
Tuesday, 3-5 PM

PURPOSE: *The goal of the practicum seminar is to enhance the practicum experience by integrating classroom learning and actual practice. Students will gain a better understanding of the roles of the social worker in their agency setting and an understanding of professionalism, social work process, social policy and ethics.*

GRADING: *Pass/Not Pass*

ATTENDANCE: *Students are expected to attend classes regularly. Students are allowed to miss only one class session during the semester. Additional absences must be made up during summer session. If a student misses any sessions, he/she will complete a typed paper on a topic appropriate to the student's professional development.*

***READING MATERIALS:** *Several articles pertinent to professional development and completion of the competency exam are on reserve in the library. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss weekly topics by completing designated readings and written assignments.*

CONFIDENTIALITY: *Given the nature of this seminar and the fact that there will be discussions of concerns and issues faced by students working with real clients in real agencies, it is critically important that client confidentiality be protected. Do not reveal the name of a client or provide descriptive information that might identify the client, even when names are not mentioned. Consult with your instructor prior to the class if you are unsure how you can discuss an important question or issue and still protect confidentiality.*

SEMINAR FORMAT: *Seminar sessions are devoted to discussion of topics relevant to the practicum experience and to exploring issues relevant to the social work profession. Students are expected to bring examples from their practicum experience to develop ideas and questions relating to weekly topics.*

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: *Written assignments are designed to promote written communication skills and to prepare for the competency exam. Written assignments are to be typed.*

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS: *Several seminar sessions are set aside for student presentations which simulate practice situations. These presentations are designed to promote oral communication skills and to assist in completion of the competency exam.*

COMPETENCY EXAM: During the semester, students will discuss competency exam questions and prepare drafts of several questions.

Please note that your comp exam is to be handed in on the established due date. If it is late, the overall score will be lowered by .5.

Those who expect to graduate at the end of the semester in which they finish their comp exams must have their comp turned in during that semester. Students planning to graduate later, can choose a due date during the semester after they have finished practicum.

MAJOR TOPICS AND ASSIGNED READINGS

Week #1 Introduction. Orientation. Review of practicum placements, clarification
Jan. 29 of class expectations and comp exam requirements.

Week #2 The Current State of Social Work
Feb. 5 The unfulfilled mission. Review question #7 of comp exam.
 *Karen S. Hayes, "The hundred year debate: Social reform versus
 individual treatment." Discussion of career goals.

Week #3 Becoming a Professional
Feb. 12 *James W. Gustafson, "Professions as 'callings'"
 *Mimi Abramovitz, "Social work and social reform: An arena of struggle."

Written Assignment #1: Prepare a written draft of question #7 from comp exam.

Weeks #4 & #5 Understanding the context in which you develop your
Feb. 19 professional identity. The Agency and the Community.
Feb. 26

Presentation assignment: Each student will make a brief presentation on their agency program and role play a request for community support and additional funding and/or assistance. Prepare notes from question #1 from comp exam as a resource for this presentation, including information on agency goals/objectives, clientele, funding and assessment procedures.

Weeks #6 & 7

Mar. 5

Mar. 12

Social Justice and Social Policy

**Robert L. Schneider and F. Ellen Netting, "Influencing social policy in a time of devolution."*

**Josefina Figuera-McDonough, "Policy Practice: The Neglected Side of Social Work Intervention"*

**Carol R. Swenson, "Clinical social work's contribution to a social justice perspective."*

Written Assignment #2: Prepare draft of comp exam question #2. Identify and discuss a social policy (federal or state legislation, judicial ruling) that significantly impacts your agency and/or clients. Identify inadequacies in the policy and changes you would propose to improve the policy. Complete workbook activity on "Policy Analysis" and incorporate this information into your written draft.

Week #8 SPRING BREAK

March 18 -22

Week #9

Mar. 26

Ethical Considerations in Professional Practice.

Review the Social Work Code of Ethics and apply principles to hypothetical and actual practice situations. Also consider malpractice and liability issues.

**Excerpts from Frederic G. Reamer, Social Work Malpractice and Liability. pgs 1-24, 57-65 and 232-241.*

Written Assignment #3: Review practicum agency policy on confidentiality and rewrite policy to conform to the guidelines recommended by Reamer. Turn in existing policy and your revised policy. (If agency has no written policy, write one appropriate to that setting.) Include in this written assignment a critique of the current policy, strengths and deficiencies, and the strategy you might employ to heighten awareness of and adherence to confidentiality in your practicum setting.

Weeks #10 & #11

Apr. 2 & 9

Continue with Ethical Considerations in Professional Practice

**Margaret Rhodes, Ch. 7, "Creating empathy and doing good," from Ethical Dilemmas in Social Work Practice. Be prepared to discuss your role with clients served by your agency and the ethical dilemmas related to being a friend and being a professional.*

Presentation Assignment (informal): Each student will identify an ethical dilemma related to their practicum placement and discuss this dilemma with the class.

Week #12

April 16

Competency Exam Review

Written Assignment #4: Two parts to this assignment.

- A. Review The Social Work Practicum: A Guide and Workbook (on reserve). Select one chapter you believe will be particularly useful in preparing comp exam questions (except question #2 already completed for weeks #6 & #7). Complete the workbook section for that chapter, emphasizing items most relevant to the comp exam question you are considering.
- B. Review the professional literature relating to the clients served by your agency. Select one article, published within the past five years, which provides information on "the social work profession's contemporary approach to dealing with these clients." Turn in a copy of the article and a written statement of how this information will be incorporated into question #7 on the comp exam.

Weeks #13, #14 & #15

April 23 & 30, May 7

Presentation/Assignment:

Each student will prepare a 20 minute presentation which demonstrates some aspect of their practicum assignments related to an intervention strategy which you are currently implementing or plan to undertake summer semester. Include in your presentation an assessment of the problem, your plan of action, evaluation strategy and possible ethical or legal issues. (Use questions #3, 4, 5, & 6 from the competency examination as a guide in preparing this presentation.)

