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SW 488.02: Practicum Seminar

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SW 488, Section 2 (Practicum Seminar)

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Spring 2002

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PURPOSE: *The purpose of this seminar is to enhance the 450 hour social work practicum experience by facilitating the integration of prior classroom learning and actual social work practice. Students will gain an understanding of the roles of the social worker in various agency settings and come to better understanding of professionalism, the change process, social policy, diversity and professional ethics. This seminar also provides students with an opportunity to further develop their communication skills in their practicum setting. Most of the topics to be discussed are ones related to the questions on the UM Department of Social Work Competency Exam. Thus, this seminar will assist the students in preparing their competency exam paper.*

Upon completing the assignments and activities of this seminar, the student will have demonstrated ability to:

Prepare and educational plan for practicum learning that lists specific learning objectives and learning activities.

Describe practicum setting (agency) in terms of its mission, organizational structure, sources of funding, key programs, and its relationships with other human services agencies.

Explain how the agency and its programs are affected by the agency's image and reputation within the community, by community attitudes and local politics, and by the community's economy and demographics.

Explain how agency programs and services are shaped and impacted by specific state and federal level social welfare policies.

Describe how agency does, or could, address matters of diversity such as differences in cultural background, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and language.

Identify conceptual frameworks (i.e. practice perspectives, theories, models) that shape the design of agency programs and services, and guide social work interventions.

Design an intervention that is built upon the clear identification of specific problems or concerns, data gathering and assessment, and identifies specific steps and actions that will facilitate desired change.

Describe how values, ethical considerations and specific legal requirements shape and guide agency programs and practice decisions.

Describe how the agency does, or could, evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of its services and programs and how the specific interventions by social workers are, or could be, evaluated.

Describe how a social work student (or a professional social worker) does, or could, evaluate his or her effectiveness as a practitioner.

Describe issues and concerns related to the merging of one's own beliefs, values, and interests with the role and responsibilities of a professional social worker.

Describe how a social work student can make appropriate and effective use of supervision in the learning process.

Describe basic precautions that help to reduce risk and increase personal safety in social work settings.

Describe leadership and qualities of a leader.

GRADING: Pass/Fail

ATTENDANCE: Students are to attend all classes. Roll will be taken. If the student misses more than two sessions, he/she may receive an incomplete for the course and be required to attend make up sessions when SW 488 is again offered during Summer or Fall 2002.

If a student misses a class, he/she must write a 2-4 page paper on the topic or work missed.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT: Please arrive on time for class and remain until the class ends. Do not bring dogs (except service dogs) or other pets to class. Do not allow cell phones to ring during class.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Because this seminar will focus on concerns and issues faced by students working with real clients in real agencies, it is important that client confidentiality be protected. NEVER 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 seminar meeting if you are unsure how you can discuss an important question or issue and still protect confidentiality.

INSTRUCTOR ALERT: If a student has a pressing concern or question that he/she wants discussed during seminar time, the student is asked to alert the instructor prior to the session. Please provide enough detail so your instructor will understand your question, concern, or request.

TEXTBOOK (REQUIRED):

Horejsi and Garthwait. The Social Work Practicum: A Guide and Workbook. 2nd edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2002. (available in UC Bookstore)

UM Department of Social Work Practicum Manual by Garthwait, 2000. Available at UC Bookstore.

Note: Bring your copy of The Social Work Practicum to each class session.

OTHER SUGGESTED REFERENCE MATERIAL:

- Sheafor, Horejsi and Horejsi. Techniques and Guidelines for Social Work Practice, 5th edition, 2000. Contains information useful to students in SW 488 (available in UC Bookstore).
- Three volume Encyclopedia of Social Work, 1995. In Reference section of Library (main floor). Call number: 361.303, B255s, 1995.

PREPARING COMPETENCY EXAM: Instructions and an explanation of exam procedure can be found in Competency Exam Procedure which is available from the Department of Social Work office. Soon after beginning the practicum, the student should begin the process of gathering information relevant to the exam questions and begin formulating and writing responses to the questions.

Those who expect to graduate at the end of the semester in which they finish their comp exams must have their competency exam paper turned in on time during that semester. Students planning to graduate later, can choose a due date during the semester after they have finished practicum. Please note that your competency exam paper is to be handed in on the established due date. If it is late, the overall score will be lowered by .5.

SEMINAR FORMAT: Most of the sessions will be devoted to topics relevant to the practicum experience and to integrating social work concepts and theory with actual practice. STUDENTS ARE TO COME PREPARED TO DISCUSS THE WEEKLY TOPIC BY READING THE REQUIRED READINGS AND COMPLETING THE WORKBOOK SECTIONS ASSIGNED, AND BE READY TO DISCUSS THE WEEKLY TOPIC.

Students are expected to bring examples from their agencies, to develop ideas and questions relevant to the topic of the week, and to respond professionally to the concerns

and questions of other students.

LEADING A SEMINAR SESSION: Beginning February 25, a student will be responsible for leading and guiding the other students through a thoughtful examination of the week's topic and the textbook material assigned for the week. Students are to select the session(s) for which they are responsible.

On or before February 11 each student is to submit his/her first, second and third choice of the date on which he/she will be the discussion leader. (Each date comes with an assigned topic. See schedule below.) As preparation for being the seminar leader, study the class handout titled "Leading Small Group Meeting."

When preparing to lead a session, consider the following as possible content and structure:

1. Identify key points and/or concepts found in the chapters you read for this week's seminar.
2. Describe how these ideas apply or might be relevant to your own practicum setting.
3. Describe what you discovered about your agency or practicum setting as you completed this week's workbook activities.
4. To the extent possible, utilize small group exercises or activities to engage all students in a discussion of this week's topics.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: Each week, 1-2 chapters from the textbook are assigned readings. Students are to read the chapters and complete the workbook sections of the chapters. Students are to come to class prepared to discuss what they have written in their workbook.

If students are conscientious about securing answers to the questions listed in the workbook and entering the information into the space provided, they will be creating a record of immense value to the process of writing the social work Competency Examination.

COMPETENCY EXAM DRAFTS: Students are to write a 3-5 page draft of four competency exam questions and submit them to your instructor before the deadline shown below. The four questions are:

Question 1: Organizational and Community Context of Practice. (Deadline Feb. 25)

Question 2: Assessment of Existing Social Policy (Deadline March 25)

Question 3: Problem Identification and Assessment (Deadline April 15)

Question 7: The Profession of Social Work (Deadline April 29)

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS (Spring 2001):

January 28	Introduction/Orientation
February 4	Getting Started in Your Practicum Chapter 1 The Purpose of a Practicum Chapter 2 School, Agency, and Student Expectations Chapter 4 Getting Started
February 11	Learning Plans Chapter 3 Planning to Learn Chapter 17 Evaluating Student Performance
February 18	HOLIDAY
February 25	Supervision and Communication Chapter 5 Using Supervision Chapter 7 Communication
March 4	Safety in the Practicum Chapter 6 Personal Safety
March 11	Understanding Your Agency Chapter 8 The Agency Context of Practice
March 18	SPRING BREAK
March 25	Your Community and Cultural Diversity Chapter 9 The Community Context of Practice Chapter 12 Cultural Diversity
April 1	Social Problems and Social Policy Chapter 10 The Social Problem Context of Practice Chapter 11 The Social Policy Context of Practice
April 8	Social Work Practice Chapter 16 Social Work Practice as Planned Change
April 15	Professional Social Work and Ethics Chapter 13 Professional Social Work Chapter 14 Values and Ethics
April 22	Legal Issues Chapter 15 Legal Concerns
April 29	Merging Self and Profession Chapter 18 Merging Self and Profession

May 6

Looking Ahead, Leadership, and Social Justice