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### SW 488.02: Field Work Practicum Seminar

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

**SW 488 PRACTICUM SEMINAR  
FALL SEMESTER 2008**

**Instructor:** Tammy Tolleson Knee  
**Available Hours:** M, TH 1-5 & by appointment  
**Telephone:** Home: 721-6416  
**Classroom:** Liberal Arts, rm. 201  
**Time:** 3:10-5:00pm  
**Credits:** 2  
**E-mail:** tollesonknee@yahoo.com

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

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 understand the meaning 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. Most of the topics to be discussed are related to the questions on the UM School of Social Work Competency Examination. Thus, this seminar will also assist the students in preparing their competency exam paper.

Classes meet every week.

**RELATION TO OTHER COURSES**

The Practicum Seminar builds on all the core social work courses and the knowledge, values, and skills learned therein. Its overall purpose is to prepare students for generalist practice. Students will also develop their competency exams based on information learned in these core courses and the translation of this information into practice in their practicum placement.

**PROGRAM OBJECTIVES RELATED TO THE COURSE**

The following Program Objectives will be met in the Practicum Seminar:

1. Apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice.
2. Understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards and principles, and practice accordingly.

3. Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and apply strategies of advocacy and social change that advance social and economic justice.
4. Practice without discrimination and with respect, knowledge, and skills related to client's age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.
5. Demonstrate understanding of the history of the social work profession and its contemporary structures and issues.
6. Apply the knowledge and skills of generalist social work practice with systems of all sizes, while exhibiting effective practice in a range of professional social work roles.
7. Use theoretical frameworks supported by empirical evidence to understand and apply to practice individual development and behavior across the life span and the interactions among individuals and between individuals and families, groups, organizations, and communities.
8. Demonstrate understanding of the connection between social problems and social policy, as well as demonstration of the ability to accurately analyze, formulate, and influence social policies.
9. Evaluate research studies, apply research findings to practice, and evaluate one's own practice interventions.
10. Use communication skills differentially across client populations, colleagues, organizational settings, and communities.
11. Demonstrate appropriate professional, ethical conduct within practice settings and contribute to positive organizational maintenance, development, and change.
12. Seek supervision and consultation to promote effective social work practice.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

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

1. Prepare an educational plan for practicum learning that lists specific learning objectives and learning activities.
2. Describe practicum setting (agency) in terms of its mission, organizational structure, sources of funding, key programs, evaluating effectiveness, and its relationships with other human services agencies.

3. 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, by the community's economy and demographic, and by specific state and federal social welfare policies.
4. Describe how your agency does, or could, address matters of diversity such as differences in cultural background, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, language, age, class, and disability.
5. Identify conceptual frameworks (i.e. practice perspectives, theories, models) that shape the design of agency programs and services, and guide social work interventions.
6. 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.
7. Describe how values, ethical considerations and specific legal requirements shape and guide agency programs and practice decisions.
8. Describe how a social work student (or a professional social worker) does, or could, evaluate his or her effectiveness as a practitioner, and ability to describe how an agency may evaluate effectiveness of programs
9. 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.
10. Describe how a social work student can make appropriate and effective use of supervision in the learning process.
11. Describe basic precautions that help to reduce risk and increase personal safety in social work settings.
12. Describe leadership and qualities of a leader.

### **GRADING**

Credit/No Credit

### **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance at all classes is required

### **DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS**

Students with disabilities who would like accommodations should notify the instructor and The University of Montana Disability Services as soon as possible. The University of Montana Disability Services for Students will authorize accommodations.

### **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 a 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.

### **TEXTBOOK (REQUIRED)**

Garthwait, C. (2008). *The social work practicum: A guide and workbook* (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.)  
Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2005. (Available in UC Bookstore)

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

Also note that the UM School of Social Work Practicum Manual is available at the School's website. It will be important to access and refer to the manual throughout the practicum experience and the seminar course

### **OTHER SUGGESTED REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Sheafor, B. & Horejsi, C. (2003). *Techniques and guidelines for social work practice* (6<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Many students draw information from this book when they write their competency exam. (Book is available in UC Bookstore.)

Three-volume Encyclopedia of Social Work, 1995. In Reference section of Library (main floor). Call number: 361.303, B255s, 1995.

### **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.**

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**

Students 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. Selections will be made at the first seminar meeting of the semester.

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

1. Describe how the ideas found in the chapter(s) might apply and be relevant to your own practicum setting.
2. Describe what you discovered about your agency or practicum setting as you completed this week's workbook activities.
3. To the extent possible, utilize small group exercises or activities to engage all students in a discussion of this week's topics.

### **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**

For each class session, several 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.

Question 1 Organizational and Community Context of Practice (Oct. 13)

Question 2 Social Problem and Social Policy (due Nov. 3)

Question 7 The Profession of Social work (due Nov. 24)

### **PREPARING YOUR COMPETENCY EXAM**

Toward the end of your practicum experience you will be submitting your competency exam paper. Instructions and exam procedure can be found in Competency Exam Procedure which is available from the School of Social Work office and is also available in the Practicum Manual referenced above. 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. Students are **REQUIRED** to submit to the instructor drafts of responses to competency examination questions as

noted below. These will be returned by the instructor with suggestions for improvement. **Please note that your competency examination is to be handed in on the established due date during the final few weeks of your practicum experience. If late, the overall score will be lowered by .5.**

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

August 25 Introduction and Orientation to Practicum  
Chapter 1 "The Purpose of a Practicum"  
Chapter 2 "School, Agency and Student Expectations"

### **September 1 Holiday**

September 8 Getting Started in your Practicum/Learning Plans  
Chapter 3 "Planning to Learn"  
Chapter 4 "Getting Started"

September 15 Supervision & Safety  
Chapter 5 "Using Supervision"  
Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chapter 6 "Personal Safety"  
Student: \_\_\_\_\_

September 22 Communication  
Chapter 7 "Communication"  
Student: \_\_\_\_\_

September 29 Understanding Your Agency and Community  
Chapter 8 "The Agency Context of Practice"  
Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chapter 9 "The Community Context of Practice"  
Student: \_\_\_\_\_

October 6 Diversity/Comp. Exam Question 1  
Chapter 12 "Diversity"  
Student: \_\_\_\_\_

October 13 Social Problems and Social Policy  
Chapter 10 "The Social Problem Context of Practice"  
Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chapter 11 "The Social Policy Context of Practice"

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

**Draft of Question 1 due**

- October 20      Assessment and Planning  
                    Chapter 16    “Social Work Practice as Planned Change”  
                    Student: \_\_\_\_\_
- October 27      Intervention and Evaluation/Comp. Exam Question 2  
                    Chapter 16    “Social Work as Planned Change” (Continued)  
                    Student: \_\_\_\_\_
- November 3     Professional Social Work  
                    Chapter 13    “Professional Social Work”  
                    Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
                    **Draft of Question 2 due**
- November 10    Ethics and Legal Issues  
                    Chapter 14    “Professional Ethics”  
                    Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
                    Chapter 15    “Legal Concerns”  
                    Student: \_\_\_\_\_
- November 17    Evaluating Your Practice  
                    Chapter 17    “Evaluating Student Performance”  
                    Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
                    **Assignment: Complete Student Self Evaluation**
- November 24    Merging Self and Profession/Leadership  
                    Chapter 18    “Merging Self and Profession”  
                    Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
                    Chapter 19    “Looking Ahead, Leadership and Justice”  
                    Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
                    **Draft of Question 7 due**
- December 1     Professional Issues: jobs, resumes, graduate school