

Department of Social Work
University of North Carolina -Wilmington
Social Work 496, Fall 2009

Jeanne Denny, ACSW, CSW/IP
Director of Field Education
Office Hours: Tues. 3:30-5:30, Thur. 1-2:30 PM, Other times by appointment

215 Leutze Hall
Office: 910-962-7428

SWK 496: SEMINAR FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICUM I

Course Description:

This seminar is the first in a two-semester sequence which is taken concurrently with the field practicum. Designed to draw upon and enhance agency field practice, the seminar provides opportunities for students to integrate beginning generalist theory and practice, discuss issues and concerns, and identify insights regarding self and practice. Providing a forum for students to identify and discuss the diverse mission statements and services addressed within the different field placement settings, the seminar will also provide opportunities for students to discuss diverse styles of management and administration while exploring the appropriate use of supervision within their respective placement sites. Students will explore the importance of effective communication, professional boundaries, fundamentals of case management, alternative practice techniques, and ethical dilemmas encountered in the various practice settings, all essential for beginning generalist social work practice. By listening respectfully, and reflecting on the information or experiences shared, students will utilize the group technique of mutual aid to learn about alternatives that enhance practice while gaining experience in collaborating with peers.

The field seminar meets weekly for two hours. Each student is asked to attend the seminar that s/he is registered for in order to establish continuity and confidentiality within the discussion group. The seminar provides a forum where students can discuss practice questions, feelings about practice, and engage in support and mutual aid to strengthen their professional identities. Attendance is expected in order to effectively utilize the seminar and develop a safe environment for sharing and discussion. Confidentiality is essential as it pertains to agency practice, case discussions, and student concerns.

Effective student performance depends on successful completion of all seminar assignments as well as a positive evaluation of the student's practice experience. Seminar assignments include providing proof of liability insurance, signing a confidentiality statement, preparing a learning contract, maintaining a journal, writing an agency profile paper, completing a process recording with an active client at the agency, reading the appropriate articles for seminar, and participating in seminar exercises. Student field performance is assessed collaboratively by the agency field

instructor, the student, and the faculty liaison when completing the performance evaluation. Emphasis is placed on a strengths perspective, while articulating areas requiring further growth.

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of two semesters of Field Practicum Coursework (consisting of both the practicum and the seminar), the student is expected to exhibit knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are consistent with beginning generalist practice. The student should be able to:

Knowledge:

1. articulate techniques for engaging client systems of differing sizes, especially individuals, families, and groups (communities and organizations will be addressed second semester when students concurrently enroll in SWK 443: Social Work Practice with Communities and Organizations); *Program Objectives: 1, 2, 4, 6.*
2. articulate agency mission, goals, policies, and procedures. *Program Objectives: 1, 2, 6.*
3. identify biological, psychological, sociological, spiritual, political, and economic theories which apply to the assessment of specific client needs for delivery of agency services: *Program Objectives: 1, 2, 4, 6.*
4. identify issues of oppression and racism as they impact the lives of those with whom the student is working, both clients and staff; *Program Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 6.*
5. recognize personal values and beliefs and their congruence with the cultural, socioeconomic, and political views of the clients served, the agency, and the prevailing culture. *Program Objectives: 1, 2, 5.*
6. identify alternative techniques for data gathering, assessment, and documentation; *Program Objectives: 1, 2, 7.*

Skills:

7. assume personal responsibility for successfully engaging in the learning process; *Program Objectives: 1, 2, 5.*
8. use basic relationship skills to develop empowering working relationships; *Program Objectives: 1, 2, 6.*
9. develop a working relationship with the field instructor to facilitate the discussion of basic elements of beginning practice and build confidence to enhance the learning process through successful use of supervision; *Program Objectives: 1, 2, 5, 6.*

10. identify the concerns and ordeals confronted by clients, using the generalist strengths perspective in assessment, planning and goal setting, interventions, and evaluation; *Program Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7.*
11. participate in the creation of a safe environment which fosters honest, yet respectful expression of perspectives, concerns, and questions; *Program Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.*
12. perform as a change agent, utilizing appropriate supervision, addressing the complexity of social problems and concerns for oppressed populations; *Program Objectives: 1, 2, 3.*
13. identify the agency's techniques for evaluating practice, program, and policy effectiveness; *Program Objectives: 1, 2, 7.*
14. recognize one's own biases and values that impact practice effectiveness and gain self-awareness regarding one's own practice skills; *Program Objectives: 2, 5.*
15. gain self-confidence in presenting and discussing case material in a confidential manner in order to facilitate professional peer consultation; *Program Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 5.*
16. write measurable criteria to facilitate learning and evaluate the development of practice skills; demonstrating the ability to manage time and workload; *Program Objectives: 1, 2, 5.*
17. follow professional standards of competent, ethical behavior, as set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics; *Program Objectives: 2, 5.*

Attitudes:

18. recognize the diversity of ethnic, racial, gender, and cultural perspectives that impact practice; *Program Objectives: 2, 3, 5.*
19. respond professionally and personally with sensitivity to client and staff views and concerns; *Program Objectives: 1, 2, 4, 6.*
20. recognize the importance of contributing to the knowledge base that guides practice and contributes to the general welfare of society; *Program Objectives: 1, 2, 5, 7.*
21. recognize the importance of collaboration and consultation as techniques to enhance effectiveness of practice; *Program Objectives: 1, 2, 5.*
22. demonstrate sensitivity for cultural diversity among seminar participants, clients, and agency personnel, demonstrating an appreciation for diverse viewpoints and concerns.; *Program Objectives: 2, 3, 5.*

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STUDENT PROFICIENCY IN MEETING THESE OBJECTIVES WILL BE REFLECTED IN THE LEARNING CONTRACT AND PERFORMANCE EVALUATION FORM.

Prerequisites: SWK 235 Introduction to the Social Welfare System
 SWK 240 Basic Working Relationship Skills and SWK 240L Skills Lab
 SWK 320 & 321 Human Behavior and the Social Environment I & II
 SWK 335 Social Welfare Policies
 SWK 341 Generalist Social Work Practice with Individuals and Families
 SWK 355 Issues in Diversity for Generalist Practice
 SWK 396 Pre-field Seminar

Co-requisites: SWK 406 Research Methods for Social Work Practice I
 SWK 442 Generalist Social Work Practice with Groups

Required Texts, Materials, and Websites:

Berg-Weger, M. & Birkenmaier, J. (2007) *The practicum companion for social work: Integrating class and field work*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Denny, J. (2009) *BSW Social Work Field Education Manual*. Unpublished manuscript. Department of Social Work, University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

Grobman, L. (2002) *The field placement survival guide*. Harrisburg, PA: White Hat Communications. (text from pre-field)

NASW Code of Ethics (1996 Revision) www.naswdc.org

NASW North Carolina Website: www.naswnc.org

NASW (national) www.socialworkers.org

Assignments:

Student Journal:

Each student is expected to maintain a journal for both semesters. A journal entry should be made **each day you work at your agency**. Entries should include a summary of the day's events and activities, your reflections (with professional candor) about these events and activities, new insights, concerns, questions, and feelings about practice and placement procedures. This journal should be kept in a binder or folder so that pages do not get separated when you submit new entries to the instructor for review. All information included in your journal will be read by your faculty liaison and kept confidential. Your final entries are due the last day of field seminar and will be returned to you for continued use during the spring semester.

Your faculty liaison, who teaches the integrative seminar, will review your journal and make comments to assist you in your learning process. Comments might include: issues that need to be discussed with your field instructor, additional resources that might be helpful, affirmations of insight, validation of practice techniques, etc. This assignment is intended to heighten self-awareness and foster dialogue between you and your faculty liaison. This information is shared with the field instructor at the agency if **you** wish to share it. Each student is also expected to include **plans for the forthcoming weeks in placement**. Your journal entries are due every four weeks, with the first journal section due as indicated on your schedule of assignments. (See the schedule of seminars and assignments for the specific due date for your field section.) *Course Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22.*

Learning Contract:

The quality of your field education experience depends upon the clarity of your focus and your effective use of time management as you engage in the learning process. Consequently, you are required to develop a learning contract that addresses the goals and objectives that you want to address to demonstrate competency for beginning generalist practice. There are eleven goals with designated objectives that are applicable to all practicum settings; these reflect the objectives for BSW field education. You are also required to identify at least one additional learning goal that addresses a specific area of practice interest or special learning opportunity that may be available at your placement site. In other words, your contract should reflect what you **need** to know (program goals, agency policy, state law, etc.) as well as what you **want** to learn (personal goals) from your practice experience. A handout, that articulates these goals and objectives for all students enrolled in field education, will be distributed in seminar. In addition, there will be a workshop that you and your field instructor will attend to begin the articulation of the learning tasks and evaluation criteria.

To focus the learning needed to achieve identified goals and objectives, you will need to identify learning strategies that will assist you in meeting your objectives, the standards for measuring successful mastery of your objectives, and identified time frames. The contract must be written in **measurable terms**. This assignment, while challenging, will serve as a map to guide you through the field placement and will provide beginning experience in the evaluation of your own practice. In addition, it will assist you in learning to write measurable goals and objectives, essential for writing client care plans, grants, and program evaluations. The specific format of the learning contract will be discussed further in seminar as well as in the workshop with your field instructor (check the schedule of seminars and assignments for the due date for your seminar section). *Course Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22.*

Agency Profile Paper:

Understanding the agency mission, policy, and procedures is essential for service delivery as these elements help to focus agency services and set boundaries for your practice responsibilities. Resources for data gathering, to help you become better acquainted with your agency (which is critical for effective practice as well as the successful completion of this assignment), should include: interviewing your supervisor, interviewing other staff members, shadowing staff as they deliver services, attending unit team meetings, attending managerial and Board meetings, reading policy manuals, reviewing organizational charts, etc. After collecting this data, organize your

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thoughts into a short paper (complete with introduction and conclusions) that describes your agency so that agency policies, services, etc. can be understood by someone unfamiliar with your agency. Be sure that your 6-8 page paper articulates the following information:

- a brief history of the agency, including when it began, how it has grown/evolved, etc.
- a brief description of the agency's mission or mandate for service and a summary of the services provided (this should also include whether services are consistent with the mission)
- a brief description of the agency's setting that includes location, accessibility for clients, number of workers, target population(s), number of clients served, community perceptions of the agency and the client population(s), etc.
- the value base of the services provided by the agency and whether it is consistent with social work values
- the agency's methods of evaluating the effectiveness of service delivery, both client satisfaction and service outcomes
- the agency's funding source(s).

Use of **APA formatting** is required for the completion of this assignment.

Course Objectives: 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15, 17, 18, 21, 22.

Process Recording:

One process recording is required for this semester of field seminar; however, some of your field instructors may require additional process recordings. If this is the case, you may use one of the process recordings you submit to your field instructor to meet the requirements of this assignment (you may NOT submit a process recording completed for a previous Social Work Methods course). In addition, this assignment requires an **interview with a client**; a family member or friend is NOT an option. A process recording provides an opportunity to reflect on a specific interview, or purposeful exchange, with your client by analyzing the flow of the interview, reflection on the techniques used in the interview, the theory or rationale behind the selection of specific techniques, and your feelings encountered in the exchange.

When used constructively, a process recording is a valuable learning tool. In addition to providing an opportunity to enhance listening skills and reflect on client issues and concerns, the recording can provide insight into your own style and effectiveness in the interview and help you focus on techniques of intervention while fostering self-awareness. While you may want to attempt this assignment several times to enhance your learning, you only need to select one interview session with **an individual, family, or group** (with clients or staff) for this assignment. After documenting the factual exchange, identify feelings (both yours and the client's) encountered in the interview process and analyze your interview/discussion techniques

for strengths. In addition, be sure to identify areas that could be improved, be sure to include strategies for conducting the session differently if you had the opportunity to redo the session. You will want to consider such things as:

- what was the purpose of this interview/exchange?
- how many interviews/contacts have you had with this client?
- how well did you engage the client?
- what were the significant transitions in the interview process?
- what strengths did you identify with the client?
- what issues and concerns did you identify with the client?
- were your interview questions open or closed? Which was most beneficial? Why?
- what techniques did you use at various times in the interview to guide the helping process?
- what theories guided your choice of techniques?
- what would you like to do differently in this interview if you had an opportunity to redo?
- what will you address in the next interview with this client/client system?

Since you will need to document the actual exchange (often called a verbatim), before beginning your analysis, consider the use of a **tape recorder or video recorder** to accurately and objectively record the interview. While the use of these recording devices is recommended, they are not required to complete this assignment. Generally the first interview with a client is not conducive to taping, although it can provide material for a constructive process recording. Be sure to identify agency policy about taping before approaching your client. If agency policy permits taping, be sure to obtain a signed consent from your client before taping begins.

The format for this assignment will be explained in seminar with a handout provided. Be sure to draw from the theories discussed in your practice courses as you analyze your work. You will be graded on your ability to **analyze** the interview process, not whether the interview was the best possible. Check your assignment sheet for the due date. *Course Objectives: 1, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22.*

Reading Assignments:

Each student will be responsible for the assigned course readings found under the specific units of study (see list of assignments). Readings may vary as the course progresses and if so students will be advised of changes in time to prepare for class discussions. Assigned readings are available on electronic reserve at the UNCW Library and can be accessed from your home when proper library procedures are followed. These readings will assist you with issues that arise in placement as well as prepare you for discussion of practice issues and concerns so be sure to review these reading assignments to enhance class participation. **A short reflection paper is required for each reading assignment and should identify 3 pertinent issues/points that you identified in the reading as well as 2-3 questions that you would like to bring up in the seminar discussion.** *Course Objectives: 2, 7, 9, 11, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20.*

Class Participation:

Each student is expected to contribute to class discussion and participate in class activities. The seminar format provides a practice arena where the student can begin to demonstrate the skills necessary for professional interaction. Through participation you will gain confidence in articulating your position on specific issues, learn to critically examine practice techniques, and explore appropriate alternatives for practice. In order to effectively participate, **attendance is essential** and indicative of your commitment to

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the professional learning process. Special emphasis will be placed on the importance of confidentiality and each student will be required to sign a **confidentiality statement**.

Course Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22.

Time Sheets:

You will be required to record your work hours for each week and maintain a cumulative record of your field hours. Ask your field instructor to sign off weekly on your time sheet to minimize any confusion between you and your field instructor as to the exact number of hours worked for the semester. Hours completed by attending the weekly field seminar are **not** included in the total of 225 hours for the semester. Your time sheet is due at the last seminar session for the semester. **Any exceptions must be negotiated with the faculty liaison prior to the last day of seminar.** *Course Objectives: 16, 17.*

Proof of Insurance:

Each student is required to purchase her/his own liability insurance for student practice. This insurance is purchased through NASW Insurance Trust as a student member of NASW. A copy of the certificate of insurance must be kept on file with the field office. Students must have insurance coverage before beginning field placement. The certificate should be presented to your faculty liaison by August 27, 2009. Do NOT leave the original insurance policy with the field office; please keep that with your personal files. *Course Objectives: 7, 9, 17.*

Grades:

The grade for the practicum is a combination of the student's work in the field practicum and the seminar and is determined through collaboration and discussion involving the student, the field instructor, and the faculty liaison. All seminar assignments are evaluated for quality and timeliness and must be completed for course credit. The seminar performance is evaluated by the faculty liaison. Both you and your agency field instructor will collaboratively evaluate your field practice performance, utilizing the evaluation criteria established on your learning contract. Upon completion of the practice evaluation, each student will meet with the field instructor and the faculty liaison to participate in an evaluative conference which will evaluate current field performance and identify areas for focus for spring semester. Hence, each student is expected to **evaluate her/his practicum performance** along with the field instructor, in order to enhance self-awareness and encourage clear assertive communication surrounding the evaluation process. These two components are combined to develop a comprehensive grade for field performance.

- practicum =50% (based on evaluation criteria on the Learning Contract & Evaluation Form)
- seminar = 50%
 - journal =25%
 - learning contract = 25%
 - agency profile paper = 20%
 - process recording=15%
 - class participation =15% - attendance and the required reflection papers.

FIELD SEMINAR TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE
Fall, 2009

- R 8/20/09 Overview of Seminar**
- feelings about placement
 - what want from seminar
 - expectations of field instructors
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- R 8/27/09 Shared Leadership and Mutual Aid in Learning**
- * role of a student practitioner (handout from FI)
 - * group collaboration
 - * peer consultation
 - * guidelines for seminar

Assignment:

Berg-Weger & Birkenmaier, chapter 1: Getting Started on Your Social Work Practice Career, pp.1-26.

STUDENT CONFIDENTIALITY FORM

- R 9/3/09 Building Effective Working Relationships**
- * agency communication
 - * engaging coworkers
 - * use of supervision

Assignment:

Berg-Weger & Birkenmaier, chapter 2: Socialization into the Social Work Profession, pp. 27-55.

Article # 1: Drake (1994) Relationship Competencies in Child Welfare Services. *Social Work*, 39 (5), 595-602.

September 4, 2009 Annual Field Luncheon

Students and field instructors attend together

12:00-2:00pm at the **Madeline Suite**, parking available there

R 9/10/09 Getting to Know Your Agency Setting: the Context of Practice

- * mission * goals * services
- * work environment * funding * community environment
- * organizational structure

Assignment:

Berg-Weger & Birkenmaier, chapter 5: Organizational Issues, pp. 97-120.

DUE: Journal #1

R 9/17/09 Taking Responsibility for Learning

- * developing a road map
- * learning objectives
- * writing criteria for a learning contract

Assignment:

Program Objectives from UNCW Social Work Field Manual

Berg-Weger & Birkenmaier, chapter 1: Getting Started on Your Social Work Practice Career, pp.1-26. (you do not need to do another reflection paper for this reading)

W 9/23/09 Learning Contract Workshop
Student and Field Instructor attend together
9:00-11:30, Room TBA

R 9/24/09 Managing the Workload

- * assertiveness
- * telephone etiquette
- * organizational skills
- * setting boundaries

Assignment:

Berg-Weger & Birkenmaier, chapter 6: Micro Social Work Practice in the Field, pp.121-155.

Article #2 "Put First Things First." *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.
New York: Simon and Shuster, 1990, 145-182.

DUE: Agency Profile Paper

R 10/1/09 Safety

- personal safety guidelines
- considerations for home visits
- de-escalating client anxiety and hostility

Assignment:

Berg-Weger & Birkenmaier, chapter 3: Safety in Social Work Settings, pp. 56-74.

10/05/09-10/05/09 Fall Break – field optional**R 10/8/09 Confidentiality**

- * basic concepts and common violations
- * privileged communication
- * testifying in court

Assignment:

Berg-Weger & Birkenmaier, chapter 9: Social Work Practice and the Legal System, pp. 226-250.

Article # 3: "Presenting Testimony as an Expert Witness." Barker and Branson. *Forensic Social Work, Legal Aspects of Professional Practice*. New York: The Haworth Press, 1993, 13-24

DUE: Journal #2**F 10/9/09 Mid-term Evaluation due
Same date as field instructor's training on supervision)****R 10/15/09 The Nature of Professional Relationships and Practice**

- defining professional demeanor
- setting boundaries
- use of supervision
- process recording: analysis of technique

Assignment:

Berg-Weger & Birkenmaier, chapter 2: Socialization into the Social Work Profession, pp. 37-55.

Article #4 "Dual Relationships and Professional Boundaries."
Kagle and Giebelhausen. *Social Work*, (39)2 (March, 1994), 213-220.

DUE: Learning Contract DUE

R 10/22/09 Child Protective Services

- definitions
- reporting
- investigations

Assignment: Article #5 "Conditions Defined: Neglect, Abuse, Dependency, and Maltreatment." Mason. *Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect in North Carolina.* Chapel Hill: Institute of Government, 1996, 17-23.

Article #6: "Responsibilities and Rights." Mason. *Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect in North Carolina.* Chapel Hill: Institute of Government, 1996, 27-43.

R 10/29/09 Performance Evaluation

- purpose of evaluation
- collaborative process
- scheduling appointments
- PROCESS RECORDING

Assignment: Article #7 "Evaluation Time." Rogers, Collins, Barlow, and Grinnell. *Guide to the Social Work Practicum, A Team Approach.* Itasca, IL: F.E. Peacock, Inc., 2000, 97-108.

R 11/5/09 Engaging Clients: Children

- * effective communication
- * use of play

Assignment: Article #9 Lukas. (1993) How to conduct the first interview with a Child. *Where to start and what to ask.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 58-77.

Article #10 Thompson & Rudolph. (1992) Children's conflicts with others. *Counseling children, 3rd ed.* Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 483-508.

Due: Journal #3

REVISED LEARNING CONTRACT DUE

(optional if earned a grade of B or better on the initial draft)

11/11/09 End of Semester site visits begin

R 11/12/09 Engaging Clients: Teenagers
* engaging in activities
* building trust

Assignment: Article #11 Gilmore. (1996) General principles in working with abused adolescents. *Treating abused adolescents*. New York: The Guilford Press, 155-186

W 11/18/09 Hunger Banquet - field credit

R 11/19/09 Discussion and wrap-up

DUE: Process Recording

11/27/09-11/28/09 Thanksgiving Break, no field

12/2/09 Last day of classes and field placement

DUE: Time Sheets

DUE: Journal #4

(Place in my mailbox or slip under my office door if I'm not in my office.)