

**The University of Texas at Austin
School of Social Work**

RUBIO, WALSH

Course Number: SW 640/641
Unique Number: As Assigned
Semester: Fall 2009
Meeting Time/Place: Arrange w/ agency

Instructor's Name: See Above
Office Number: Refer to 444 Syllabus
Office Phone: Refer to 444 Syllabus
Office Hours: Refer to 444 Syllabus

Social Work Practicum

I. Standardized Course Description

SW 640/641, Social Work Practicum, is a twelve credit hour course, which provides students with experience in applying knowledge and theory from the professional foundation and developing practice skills. The practicum assists in producing a professionally reflective, self-evaluating beginning level practitioner. This is accomplished through a 480-hour practicum in a human service agency under the supervision of an agency-based field instructor and faculty from the School of Social Work.

II. Standardized Course Objectives

The educational objectives for field represent the minimum expectations for the semester. The purpose of these objectives is twofold. The first is to serve as a guide to learning and field instruction throughout the semester. These objectives also provide a guide to the evaluation of the student's performance.

1. Student examines practice dilemmas from the perspective of personal values, client system values, agency and societal values and professional values.
2. Student carries out professional social work role(s) within the agency setting and community.
3. Student utilizes the principles of professional relationships, effective communication, and accountability in his/her interactions with client systems, the agency, other organizations, and communities.
4. Student demonstrates skill in use of supervision and consultation for professional development and practice evaluation.
5. Student utilizes the principles of a systematic approach to problem solving and client involvement in study, assessment, goal formulation, implementation, and evaluation in intervention at the individual, family, group, organization, and community levels.
6. Student utilizes community resources relevant to client systems.
7. Student demonstrates knowledge of behavioral and practice theories in understanding human behavior, interactions between the individual and the environment, and adaptation of approaches with respect to diverse populations at the individual, family group, organizational, and community levels.
8. Student examines organizational performance in relation to stated mandate, demonstrates understanding of the agency as part of a system

and as a system itself and identifies ways in which agencies can be responsive to their constituencies.

9. Student demonstrates understanding of basic concepts of research as it relates to evaluating own practice and assignments within the agency.
10. Student utilizes knowledge of the scope of social welfare policies and services at the local, state, and national levels in work with clients and, with assistance, plans interventions that can be used to improve policies and services to the agency's constituency.

III. **Teaching Methods**

Teaching methods will include: Structured supervision; case review and discussion; small group exercises; journaling; educational contracts; orientation to agency policies and procedures; process recordings; role play; role modeling; and training necessary to perform the duties required by the agency. Methods will be individualized to each agency

IV. **Required and Recommended Texts and Materials**

- A. *Student Guide to Undergraduate Field*
- B. Individualized readings, as assigned, focusing on special populations served by the field agency and specialized problem areas.

V. **Course Requirements**

A. Hours

A minimum of **480 hours** at the field placement agency during the semester is required. Students are to report to field at the time arranged by the agency Field Instructor. Students must communicate with the agency, Field Instructor and Faculty Liaison promptly about absences from field (see class policy on attendance below). Undergraduate students should complete all field hours by the last class day. This means that students will clock approximately **34-36 hours a week** in field. A maximum of 2 hours per week may be accrued (and credited toward completion of the total hours required) for writing journals and process recordings either at the field agency or outside the field agency. Documentation of the use of this 2-hour allowance must appear on your time sheet.

B. Time Sheets

Students are responsible for keeping a time sheet documenting hours logged in field. A suggested format for tracking field hours can be found in the *Student Guide to Undergraduate Field* manual. Also, an electronic copy of the form is available at <http://www.utexas.edu/ssw/apss/forms/>. Time sheets are to be available for review during the on-site visits by the Faculty Liaison.

C. Supervision with Agency Field Instructor

Two hours a week (for each 35 hours of field) of scheduled educationally focused supervision with the agency-based Field Instructor is required. Direct

observation by the Field Instructor of the student's group experience is strongly recommended.

D. Service Giving Assignments

Students must meet the same field requirements regardless of agency placement or assigned seminar. To meet these requirements, all students are provided with a minimum set of educational experiences under the supervision of their Field Instructor. A brief description of the expected minimum field assignments includes:

1. Students must work directly with the client populations served by their agencies. It is expected that each student will carry a "learner's" load of between 5 and 10 cases throughout the semester. Students are expected to participate in the intake process, to participate in the assessment process and to carry ongoing cases. Identification and assessment of clients' needs and linkage to appropriate resources should be emphasized. Various forms of case documentation are required including process recordings, social histories, case assessments, ongoing case recordings, etc. Students must have opportunities to work with a diversity of clients including women, ethnic minorities, gay/lesbian and other disadvantaged populations.
2. Students must have an opportunity to co-plan and co-facilitate a group within their agency setting. The identification of this assignment is done in conjunction with the field instructor and faculty liaison in order to ensure that the type of group that is co-facilitated is consistent with the level of intervention skills of a beginning level practitioner.
3. Students must have an opportunity to identify, plan, and carry out an indirect practice project within their agency - for example, a project focused on social and economic justice issues or service delivery. This assignment should involve the types of administrative, policy, and social justice issues, which the agency would ordinarily assign to staff. This assignment should include the use of research knowledge and skills within some aspect of the project.
4. Students must also
 - Participate in staff meetings within their agencies
 - Attend board meetings during the semester
 - Participate in community events and/or inter-organizational meetings
 - Present a case in a case staffing forum used by the agency

NOTE: For further elaboration about minimum service giving assignments, refer to the *Student Guide to Undergraduate Field*.

E. Educational Contract

A written educational contract with your agency-based Field Instructor is required. Field assignments are individualized and elaborated for each student within the student's educational contract. Details of the educational contract are to be negotiated with your Field Instructor during the first week of field and can

be renegotiated during the course of the semester. The contract should incorporate relevant readings and specific means of meeting the educational objectives. The educational contract, signed by the student and Field Instructor, is due at the initial liaison visit. An electronic copy of the form is available at <http://www.utexas.edu/ssw/apss/forms/>.

F. Process Recordings

A minimum of three process recordings are to be utilized for educational supervision with the Field Instructor, and shared with the Faculty Liaison. For this reason, it is important to complete and turn these in to the Field Instructor on a regular basis throughout the semester beginning with first client contacts in the agency. Additional process recordings may be required by the Field Instructor or Faculty Liaison. The format for process recordings and due dates will be provided by the Faculty Liaison. The format is also available on-line at <http://www.utexas.edu/ssw/apss/forms/>.

G. Journals

Students should make daily entries consisting of a description of activities in the field placement for that day and an analysis of those activities. Journal entries should reflect the following: an awareness of your feelings, attitudes, and values; your observations and thoughts about the organizational operation of the agency; linkage of theory/knowledge in field practice; utilization of a systematic approach to problem solving; any value dilemmas observed and/or experienced; growth over time in awareness of use of self as a professional social worker; and appropriate use of supervision. It is important to be explicit in making observations relevant to diversity and social justice. In general, the field journal should demonstrate your growth and progress as a practitioner, as well as the attainment of the course objectives. The field journal is a learning tool to be shared with the Faculty Liaison and is not meant to be shared with the agency-based Field Instructor.

H. Agency Documentation:

Documentation required by the agency, such as client progress notes, assessments, social histories, etc., is to be considered part of your field requirements. Agency documentation needs to be available to your Faculty Liaison at the time of your scheduled liaison visits. If agency documentation is minimal, your Faculty Liaison may require additional written assignments such as social histories and comprehensive assessments. These assignments are an important part of field as they demonstrate your achievement of the educational objectives for this course.

I. Self Evaluation:

Self-evaluation is an ongoing process and will facilitate your professional growth during the practicum. You will be asked to write a self-evaluation at two points during the semester. At mid-semester, you must complete the form entitled *Evaluation For SW 640/641: BSW Social Work Practicum*, found in the *Student Guide to Undergraduate Field*. This self-evaluation will be part of the mid-semester evaluation process. At the end of the semester, a formal, typed self-evaluation is required. This self-evaluation must be written in narrative form and be about 5 pages in length. Please use the format in the BSW Student Guide entitled *Student Final Self-Evaluation Narrative Outline*. This outline provides a

starting point for your self-evaluation. You should also take into account each of the competencies for SW 640/641, your educational contract, and the feedback you received during supervisory sessions. A copy of your narrative should be given to your Field Instructor and to your Faculty Liaison prior to your final scheduled liaison visit. Electronic versions of the forms are available at <http://www.utexas.edu/ssw/apss/forms/>.

NOTE: Because SW 444 and SW 640/641 are companion courses, some information relevant to your field work will be found in the syllabus for SW 444.

VI. Class Policies

Attendance: Attendance in field must be punctual and regular. If, due to an emergency, you are unable to report to field, the appropriate agency personnel must be informed as early as possible and you must plan to cover your scheduled responsibilities for that day. Also, the Field Instructor must know the reason for your absence. The Faculty Liaison must also be fully informed by the student about any irregularities in attendance to field practice. There is no “sick time” built into the required minimum of 480 hours of field work; all time missed due to illness must be made up. It is your responsibility to be a punctual, assertive, well-prepared and accountable participant in your field experience.

Faculty Liaison Visits: The Faculty Liaison will visit the agency three times a semester to confer with you and your Field Instructor about workload and performance. If the format needs to be varied due to learning needs, that decision will be made with the student’s and the Field Instructor’s participation. The School has a commitment to provide additional field visits when a student or agency is having difficulties.

Grading: The grade for this course will be assigned by the Faculty Liaison, and will be a Pass/No Pass grade. In determining your final grade, the Faculty Liaison will take the following into account: evaluations and observations of your performance in the field (including those of your Field Instructor); attainment of your educational contract objectives; the quality of participation in your field seminar; your self evaluation as reflected in your assignments; your attainment of the course learning objectives; and BSW grading policy. Extended absences from field may require that you be withdrawn from field with an incomplete or a failing grade. All work in field must be completed in a timely manner but no later than the last class day. An incomplete in field, or a failing grade, will be given if work is not completed by this date. Students must adhere to all field policies and are responsible for the content in the *Student Guide to Undergraduate Field*.

Use of Blackboard in Class: In this class the professor uses Blackboard—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://courses.utexas.edu>—to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to submit assignments, and to give students online surveys. Students can find support in using Blackboard at the ITS Help Desk by calling 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Please plan accordingly.

VII. University Policies

Adhering to Field Policies: Students are responsible for the content in the *Student Guide to Undergraduate Field*.

The University of Texas Honor Code: The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Safety: As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should notify the Field Instructor and the Faculty Liaison regarding any safety concerns as soon as they arise.

Professional Conduct in Class: The professor expects students to act like professionals in class. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another's opinions. We will not, nor should we, always agree with one another. In this environment we should be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometime we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. However, the professor does require that students engage one another with respect and professionalism.

Absence for Religious Holidays: By UT Austin policy, you must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Documented Disability Statement: Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty: Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and /or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further

information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (<http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/>).

Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence: Email is recognized as an official mode of University correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible to keep the University informed about changes to their e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin’s policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

Emergency Evacuation Policy: Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor’s instructions.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you’re given instructions by the Austin Fire Dept., the UT Austin Police Dept., or the Fire Prevention Services office.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL): If students are worried about someone who is acting differently, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about another individual’s behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

Feedback Statement: During this course the professor will ask students to provide feedback on their learning in informal as well as formal ways, including through anonymous surveys about how the professor’s teaching strategies are helping or hindering student learning. It is very important for the professor to know the students’ reactions to what is taking place in class, so students are encouraged to respond to these surveys, ensuring that together the professor and students can create an environment effective for teaching and learning.

VIII. Course Schedule

Students will schedule their hours with their field instructors to meet the needs of the agency and to fulfill each student’s requirement of working 34-36 hours per week in field.

IX. Bibliography

1. Student Guide to Undergraduate Field. (Also see individual instructors' SW 444 syllabi. The agency Field Instructor may assign additional readings.)