

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

Course Number: SW 444

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Semester: Fall 2009

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Meeting Time/Place:
School of Social Work, Room 2.130
Tuesdays, 5:30-9:30 pm

Office Hours: Tuesdays 4:00-
5:00 p.m., and by appointment

Field Seminar

I. Standardized Course Description

The BSW degree program is designed to educate professional social work practitioners at the beginning level of professional competence. A guiding perspective of the program is the generalist model of practice that includes a core of knowledge, skills, and values required of a social worker in any setting. In addition, students are expected to develop skills in the application of the problem-solving model regardless of setting or client population served. Additional emphasis will be placed on intervention and practice evaluation.

Within this context, SW 444, Field Seminar, is a 4 credit hour course that is taken concurrently with SW 640/641, Social Work Practicum. This course is restricted to social work majors. All other required course work must be completed before entering the Field Seminar. The overall goals of the seminar are to assist the students with the field experience and to strengthen the relationship between the classroom content and field. In addition, the seminar emphasizes the processes common to all social work practice and gender and cultural issues and their impact on service delivery.

Issues related to social and economic justice, populations-at-risk, cultural diversity, alleviating social problems and the enhancement of human well-being will be addressed in micro, mezzo, and macro level assignments, course readings, bibliography, and special topics designated in the course schedule (Section IX) of this syllabus.

II. Standardized Course Objectives

The course objectives include the ability of the student to:

- I) Demonstrate an understanding of social work processes which are common in the practice with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations;

- 2) Demonstrate an understanding of social work values as encompassed in the NASW Code of Ethics and their ethical implications in relation to their professional practice within field;
- 3) Develop an understanding of diverse populations with which social workers are in contact as represented in their field settings;
- 4) Demonstrate an understanding of race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief or spirituality, family structure, physical and mental ability, age, national origin or other issues related to diversity and how these factors impact the client systems in their field settings;
- 5) Develop practice skills common to intervention with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and community systems including: data collection, identification of needs, resources, and assets, assessment, planning, intervention, and evaluation;
- 6) Achieve an understanding of the community resources which impact their client populations in their field settings;
- 7) Develop self awareness as beginning level, generalist social work practitioners;
- 8) Utilize empirical research for knowledge acquisition in relation to their practice and for evaluation of their practice in field.

III. **Teaching Methods**

A variety of teaching methods will be used in this course, including lecture, class discussion, guest speakers, in-class exercises, self-reflection assignments and student presentations. To broaden students' exposure to a wider variety of agencies and client populations, team teaching with other field seminar groups may be utilized. Students are expected to share their observations and questions about their field work with classmates. A portion of each class will be devoted to discussion of practice issues from field. The topics will be identified by the professor and/or will be suggested by students.

Group Processing: One class activity where your participation will be especially important is group processing. One to 1½ hours of each 4 hour class will be devoted to group processing, during which students will be encouraged to share their feelings, successes, frustrations, values conflicts, ethical dilemmas and other experiences from field. The instructor will facilitate the group process, but students are expected to take a collaborative role by actively participating, leading discussions at times, and respecting the confidentiality of each student member.

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

Required:

Sweitzer, F., & King, M. (2009). *The successful internship: personal, professional, and civic development*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Recommended:

Hepworth, D., Rooney, R., Rooney, G., Strom-Gottfried, K., & Larson, J. (2010). *Direct social work practice: Theory and skills*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Lukas, S. (1993). *Where to start and what to ask: An assessment handbook*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Roberts, A. (Ed.). (2009). *Social workers' desk reference*. New York: Oxford University Press.

NOTE: Readings other than those from the required text will be made available on Blackboard.

V. Course Requirements

A. Assignments

The following is a brief description of the assignments for the semester. Detailed guidelines for the following assignments will be posted on Blackboard and may be handed out in class.

1. Private Troubles/Public Issues Paper – 20 points

This assignment demonstrates the student's understanding of the impact of policy on clients with whom the student is working. Students will draw from direct experiences with clients on a caseload and as a member of an agency to examine the links between client's private troubles and the policies that affect them. Detailed guidelines for this assignment will be posted on Blackboard and may be handed out in class.

Due September 29, 2009

2. Agency Field Fair - 5 points

Each student will complete a poster presentation of an aspect of his or her field agency and complete a reflection on the process of doing this assignment. Posters will be displayed in class during an Agency Field Fair. Students will have the opportunity to learn about area agencies and the services provided through this activity. Detailed guidelines for this assignment will be posted on Blackboard and may be handed out in class.

Due October 20, 2009

3. Case Assessment – 30 points

A case assessment on a client from the student's field caseload is required. The client chosen must be one with whom the student has worked. If possible, the client should be from an ethnic minority group or other vulnerable population. A draft of the case assessment will be prepared for class discussion and feedback. The draft is worth 5 points; the final completed assignment is worth 25 points. Also, students will complete a reflection on the Case Assessment process. Detailed guidelines for this assignment will be posted on Blackboard and may be handed out in class.

Draft Due October 27, 2009

Due November 10, 2009

4. Community/Cultural Immersion Activity – 5 points maximum

This assignment will give students an opportunity to learn about the Austin community and the cultural diversity of the area. The assignment should be completed in small groups of 2 - 3 students. The small group will visit community sites related to social work and social justice. *This assignment is*

in lieu of the class scheduled for November 3, 2009. Students may earn 2.5 points per agency visited (maximum of 5 points). Students will submit individual field notes for each agency visit for evaluation. Detailed guidelines for this assignment will be posted on Blackboard and may be handed out in class.

Due November 10, 2009

5. Closure of the Field Experience Letter -- 5 points

As a way to formally mark the end of the field experience, each student is required to write a letter reflecting on the experience and making note of personal and professional growth occurring throughout the semester. These letters may also serve to guide and encourage the following semester's class of BSW students about to enter field.

Due December 1, 2009.

6. Quizzes – 25 points total

During the semester, three quizzes will be given to encourage timely reading of the course material. The quizzes will focus mainly on the readings assigned for each class day. Quizzes will be given on random dates and will be announced in the previous class so that students are advised of an upcoming quiz.

7. Optional Bonus Assignment – 2 points maximum

In order to encourage identification with the social work profession, up to two (2) bonus points may be earned for attending professional social work meetings and trainings. One point may be earned for attending trainings, such as NASW conferences, play therapy workshops, etc. The instructor may suggest appropriate activities for earning bonus points, and will approve appropriate activities as suggested by students. The bonus points will be added to the total points earned for the semester. Complete the form entitled "Documentation of Bonus Points for Seminar Class" and submit it to your instructor no later than the last class day. Please note that attending agency staff meetings and trainings is an expected part of the internship and does not earn bonus points.

NOTE: Because SW 444 and SW 640/641 are companion courses, requirements for SW 640/641 are relevant to SW 444. For instance, journals are due weekly and process recordings are due in class periodically. Make note of due dates for SW 640/641 assignments and plan accordingly.

B. Professional Accountability – 10 points

Since the overall goal of this course is to help you apply knowledge and theory to practice, your achievement of the learning objectives for both SW 444 *and* SW 640/641 is dependent on your regular attendance and active participation in weekly class activities. Attendance and participation in the full four hours of seminar each week is expected of all students. Excessive absences may result in a student being dropped from the course or in the loss of a letter grade. You are expected to notify the professor prior to class if you cannot attend due to illness or an emergency. You may be asked to document your illness or emergency.

Another overall goal of this course is to enhance and encourage student professionalism. One aspect of professionalism related to social work is the effective use of supervision. Effective use of supervision includes, among other things, identifying areas for growth and understanding and utilizing the appropriate processes for communication regarding concerns. At the field agency, this must include going directly to your Field Instructor and the Faculty Liaison as concerns or needs arise. More about problem solving in field can be found in the *Student Guide to Undergraduate Field*. For concerns arising in the context of the classroom, the student is expected to meet with the professor on an individual basis, and come prepared to discuss the issue with possible solutions in mind.

The full 10 points for professional accountability will be awarded to students who are consistent and timely in attendance and who participate in class; complete journals, process recordings, and class assignments on time; and actively contribute to the positive functioning of the class. Students who are absent, tardy to class, leave class early, fail to submit assignments on time, or do not fully participate in the class will lose professional accountability points accordingly.

Each student will begin the semester with 10 points. Points will be deducted for each absence and tardy (1 point per absence, ½ point for each tardy). Absence from more than two classes may result in a loss of half of the total professional accountability points. Late Process Recordings and journals will also result in the deduction of professional accountability points.

VI. Class Policies

Attendance: Regular and punctual attendance to each class is expected for this course. More than 2 absences may result in a deduction of half of the points from the professional accountability grade. Excessive absences may result in a student being dropped from the course or in the loss of a letter grade. Students are expected to contact the professor in a timely manner about absences, and alert the professor about late arrivals or early departures.

Late Assignments: It is expected that all assignments will be turned in on time. Assignments, including papers, are due at the beginning of the class on the due date indicated. Late assignments will be penalized 5% of the assignment point value for each day late. On days subsequent to the due date, papers must be submitted before 5:00 pm to avoid an additional deduction. Late papers may be submitted to the front office; staff will place them in the professor's box. The front desk in the school closes daily at 5:00 pm; make plans accordingly. After 10 days, late assignments will not be accepted. Students should contact the professor before the assignment is due if they anticipate a late assignment. A new deadline may be negotiated, at the instructor's discretion.

Papers: Students are expected to produce high quality written work in terms of appearance, style, and content (see individual assignment guidelines for details). Papers submitted after the start of class on the due date or subsequent to the due date will be penalized (see above). When using information from other sources to complete a paper, references and the bibliography should conform to current APA style (refer to School of Social Work handout). Instances of

plagiarism will be dealt with according to University policy (see below). If a student decides to contest a grade, this concern should be raised with the instructor within one week of receiving the grade.

Use of Computers/Cell Phones in the Classroom: Field Seminar is a practice course, and class participation is essential. Generally, it will not be necessary to take detailed computer notes on material in this course, and only occasionally will the use of a laptop computer be warranted. When laptops are being used in the classroom, it is considered unprofessional and disrespectful to use the computer for anything other than note-taking or relevant data search that will benefit the entire class. Internet surfing, instant messaging, working on material outside of the BSW Seminar, etc. is not permitted and will result in lowered professional accountability grades and possible disciplinary action. Additionally, cell phones should be turned off when class begins and remain off throughout the duration of the class.

Use of Blackboard: 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.

Confidentiality: Information shared in class about agencies and clients is considered to be covered by the NASW Code of Ethics regarding the sharing of information for supervisory purposes. Agencies are aware that information is shared in class for this purpose. However, discussions outside of class with individuals outside of the seminar or with other members of the seminar regarding information shared in class about clients, supervisors, or agencies is considered a breach of confidentiality. Breach of confidentiality is grounds for removal from field.

VII. University Policies

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 professor regarding any safety concerns.

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.

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

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/>).

Documented Disability Statement: The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. 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/>.

Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students: 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 Department, the UT Austin Police Department, 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: 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.

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.

VIII. Grading and Evaluation

A minimum grade of C is required to pass this course. Students will be graded on performance in the following areas for a possible total of 100 points (102 if you choose to earn bonus points):

DUE DATE	ASSIGNMENT	POINT VALUE
September 29, 2009	Private Troubles/Public Issues	20
October 20, 2009	Agency Field Fair	5
October 27, 2009	Draft Case Assessment	5
November 10, 2009	Case Assessment	25
November 10, 2009	Cultural Immersion Field Notes	5
Random	Quizzes	25
December 1, 2009	Closure of Field Letter	5
	Professional Accountability	10
	Bonus Points	2
	Total Points:	102

The following scale will be used to determine your final letter grade:

- 100 – 94 points = A
- 93 – 90 points = A-
- 89 – 87 points = B+

86 – 84 points = B
 83 – 80 points = B-
 79 – 77 points = C+
 76 – 74 points = C
 73 – 70 points = C-
 69 – 67 points = D+
 66 – 64 points = D
 63 – 60 points = D-
 59 and below = F

IX. Course Schedule

Date	Description	Text / Readings
Sept. 1	Orientation to Undergraduate Field Practicum Overview of the course	Kabat-Zinn, Chapter 2, The foundations of mindfulness practice: attitudes and commitment, p. 31-46
Sept. 8	Development of the Professional Self—Values, Ethics, and Supervision	Sweitzer and King, Chapter 1, Surveying the landscape, pp. 3-20; Chapter 2, Essentials for the journey, pp. 22-47 Lowenberg, Dolgoff, & Harrington, Chapter 3, Guidelines for ethical decision making, pp.43-77
Sept. 15	Organizational culture Linking Micro to Macro: Policy and Advocacy	Sweitzer and King, Chapter 7, Getting to know the placement site, pp. 132-156; Chapter 8, Getting to know the community, pp. 158-166 Johnson, Chapter 14, Indirect practice action, p. 349-382

Sept. 22	<p>Communicating with Empathy and Authenticity</p> <p>Culturally Competent Practice</p>	<p>Shulman, The skills of helping individual, families, groups and communities, Chapter 3, p. 52-73</p> <p>NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice</p> <p>Sweitzer and King, Chapter 3, Framing the experience: the developmental stages of an internship, pp. 49-61; Chapter 4, Understanding yourself, pp. 62-87</p>
Sept. 29	<p>Relationship Building in Strengths-Based Practice</p> <p><i>Private Troubles/Public Issues DUE</i></p>	<p>DeJong & Miller, How to interview for client strengths, pp. 729-736</p> <p>Weick, Kreider, Chamberlain in Saleeby, Solving problems from a strengths perspective, pp. 116-127</p> <p>Miller & Rollnick, Chapter 4, What is Motivational Interviewing, pp. 33-42</p>
Oct. 6	<p>Exploration and Assessment</p> <p>Proposed class meeting: Class will consider meeting for the Dean Jack Otis Social Problems and Social policy Lecture, presented by Dr. Stephen Hamburg of the Environmental Defense fund. Lecture is from 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm, in Utopia Theatre.</p> <p><i>Process Recording #1 DUE</i></p>	<p>Hepworth, Rooney, et. al. Chapter 8, Assessment: Exploring and understanding problems and strengths, pp.171-197</p> <p>Lukas, Chapter 8, How to determine whether a client might hurt somebody—including you; Chapter 9, How to determine whether a client might hurt herself</p>

Oct. 13	Assessment and Goal Setting	<p>Poulin, Chapter 6, Developing goals, objectives and the intervention and evaluation plan, pp. 135-142</p> <p>Hepworth, Rooney, et. al. Chapter 9, Assessing Intrapersonal and Environmental Systems pp. 199-226</p>
Oct. 20	<p>Using Empirical Research in Practice— Intervention Planning</p> <p><i>Agency Fair</i></p>	<p>Sweitzer and King, Chapter 9, Getting to know the clients: A chapter of special relevance for helping and service professionals, pp. 169-185.</p> <p>Cournoyer, Chapter 1, Evidence based social work, pp. 1-19</p>
Oct. 27	<p>Intervention Planning, Case Management and Tools for Evaluation</p> <p><i>Process Recording #2 DUE</i></p> <p><i>Draft Case Assessment DUE</i></p>	<p>Sweitzer and King, Chapter 10, Taking stock and facing reality: the disillusionment stage, pp. 191-224; Chapter 11, Breaking through barriers: The confrontation stage, pp. 227-245</p> <p>Sheafor, et. al. Chapter 14, pp. 469-497</p>
Nov. 3	<p>Community/Cultural Immersion</p> <p>Class will not be held on this date. The Community/Cultural Immersion assignment is to be completed in lieu of class.</p>	

Nov. 10	<p>Child Welfare Issues in Social Work Practice</p> <p>Working with Involuntary Clients</p> <p>Secondary Trauma/Resilience/Preventing Burnout</p> <p><i>Cultural Immersion Field Notes DUE</i></p> <p><i>Case Assessment DUE</i></p>	<p>Social Work Desk Reference, Chapter 91, Trans-theoretical model for families with child abuse and neglect</p> <p>Bell, Kulkarni, & Dalton, Organization prevention of vicarious trauma, pp. 463-470.</p> <p>Sweitzer and King, Chapter 12, Riding High: The Competence Stage</p>
Nov. 17	<p>Culmination/Termination</p> <p>Professional Development and Sustaining Social Work Practice</p> <p>Exit Surveys</p> <p><i>Group Process Recordings DUE</i></p>	<p>Social Work Desk Reference, Chapter 89, Terminating with clients</p> <p>Sheafor, Chapter 16, Techniques for Sustaining Social Work Practice, pp. 609-630</p>
Nov. 24	<p>Looking Ahead and Moving On—Integrating Social Work Practice</p> <p>Exit Surveys</p>	<p>Sweitzer and King, Chapter 14, Traveling the last mile: the culmination stage, pp. 263-282</p>
Dec. 1	<p>Course Wrap-Up/Celebration</p> <p><i>Closure of Field Experience Letter DUE</i></p>	

Happy Graduation!

X. Bibliography

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