

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

**ASSEFF, MULVANEY, SPARKS**

**Course Number:** SW 640/641

**Instructor's Name:** as assigned

**Unique Number:** as assigned

**Office Number:** Refer to 444 Syllabus

**Semester:** Spring 2015

**Office Phone:** Refer to 444 Syllabus

**Meeting Time/Place:** as assigned

**Office Hours:** Refer to 444 Syllabus

**SOCIAL WORK PRACTICUM**

**I. 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 School of Social Work has been continuously accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) since 1952. In order to maintain our accreditation status, the School engages in ongoing curriculum assessment to demonstrate compliance with CSWE's Education Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Several required courses in our curriculum are part of this ongoing assessment, including this course. Below is a list of the specific Practice Behaviors (PB) that are assessed in this course. The complete EPAS can be optioned from your online *BSW Handbook for Social Work Pre-Majors and Majors*. All identified Practice Behaviors will be assessed in the comprehensive field evaluation.

The educational objectives for field represent the expectations for the semester. They serve as a guide to learning, teaching, and evaluation of the students' competence.

1. Student examines practice dilemmas from the perspective of personal values, client system values, agency and society values, and professional values. (PB 7, 8, 9 10, 14, 15, 16)
2. Student carries out professional social work role(s) within the agency setting and community. (PB 3, 26)
3. Student utilizes the principles of professional relationship, effective communication, and accountability in his/her interactions with client systems, the agency, other organizations, and communities. (PB 4, 5, 13, 17, 27, 28, 30, 36)
4. Student demonstrates skill in use of supervision and consultation for professional development and practice evaluation. (PB 2, 5, 6, 17)
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. (PB 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41)

6. Student utilizes community resources relevant to client systems. (PB 1, 29)
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. (PB 11, 16, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 38)
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. (PB 12, 27, 28, 29, 36)
9. Student demonstrates understanding of basic concepts of research as it relates to evaluating own practice and assignments within the agency. (PB 22)
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. (PB 18, 19, 20, 25, 28, 36)

### **III. Teaching Methods**

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

### **IV. Course Requirements**

**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 **32-35 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. In addition, a maximum of one hour per week may be credited toward completion of the total hours required by attending the one-hour group processing portion of the weekly field seminar. Documentation of this hour must appear on your time sheet.

**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/field/forms/>. Time sheets should be completed and reviewed by the Field Instructor and available for review during the on-site visits by the Faculty Liaison.

**SUPERVISION WITH AGENCY FIELD INSTRUCTOR.** Two hours per week of scheduled educational supervision with the agency-based Field Instructor is required. Direct observation by the Field Instructor of the student's group experience is strongly recommended.

**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 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 5 to 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, case assessments, ongoing case recordings, etc. Students must have opportunities to work with diverse clients, including women, ethnic minorities, GLBTQ, or other specialized 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 a macro practice project within their agency. This assignment should involve the types of administrative, policy, and social justice projects which the agency would ordinarily assign to staff.
4. Students should be encouraged to:
  - Participate in staff meetings
  - Attend board meetings during the semester
  - Participate in community events and/or inter-organizational meetings
  - Present a case in a staffing forum used by the agency

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

**EDUCATIONAL CONTRACT.** A written educational contract with the 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 the 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/field/forms/>.

**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/field/forms/>.

**JOURNALS.** Students should make 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 feelings, attitudes, and values; 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 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.

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

**MIDTERM EVALUATION.** The midterm evaluation enable students to self evaluate and to receive feedback from their Field Instructor. The evaluation process assists students in planning for demonstrating growth in the competencies. Expectations and further instructions will be conveyed by the Faculty Liaison.

**FINAL EVALUATION.** The final evaluation process involves both student self-reflection and completion of the evaluation instrument by the Field Instructor. The final evaluation must include a completed Evaluation for Undergraduate Field Instruction SW 640/641 by the Field Instructor, which is available at <http://www.utexas.edu/ssw/field/forms/>. The final evaluation document is maintained in the student's folder at the School of Social Work.

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

## **V. 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 the student's responsibility to be a punctual, assertive, well-prepared and accountable participant in the field experience.

**FACULTY LIAISON VISITS.** The Faculty Liaison will visit the agency three times a semester to confer with the student and 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. Additional visits will be scheduled as needed.

**GRADING.** The grade for this course will be assigned by the Faculty Liaison, and will be a Credit/No Credit grade. In determining the final grade, the Faculty Liaison will take the following into account: evaluations and observations of performance in the field (including those of the Field Instructor); attainment of educational contract objectives; the quality of

participation in the field seminar; attainment of the course learning objectives; and the student self-narrative. Extended absences from field may result in 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, unless other arrangements have been agreed upon by the Field Instructor and the Faculty Liaison. **Students must adhere to all field policies and are responsible for the content in the *Student Guide to Undergraduate Field*. The guide can be found at <http://www.utexas.edu/ssw/field/forms/>**

**USE OF BLACKBOARD IN CLASS.** In this class the professor uses Blackboard, a web-based course management system with password-protected access at <https://courses.utexas.edu/>. Use may include the following: 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.

**MALPRACTICE INSURANCE.** Students must be covered by an adequate malpractice insurance policy before beginning field. The School of Social Work, through the Office of Field Education, makes information available for students to purchase this policy prior to entering field. Malpractice insurance does not cover transportation of clients. Students are never allowed to transport clients.

**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 instructors regarding any safety concerns as soon as they arise.

**USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION.** Public social networks are not private. Even when open only to approved or invited members, users cannot be certain that privacy will exist among the general membership of sites. If social work students choose to participate in such forums, please assume that anything posted can be seen, read, and critiqued. What is said, posted, linked to, commented on, uploaded, subscribed to, etc., can be accessed and archived, posing potential harm to professional reputations and prospective careers. Social work students who use social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and other forms of electronic communication (i.e. blogs, etc.) must be mindful of how their communication may be perceived by clients, colleagues, faculty, and others. Social work students are expected to make every effort to minimize material which could be considered inappropriate for a professional social worker in training. Because of this, social work students are advised to manage security settings at their most private levels and avoid posting information/photos or using any language that could jeopardize their professional image. Students are asked to consider the amount of personal information posted on these sites and are obliged to block any client access to involvement in the students' social networks. Client material should not be referred to in *any* form of electronic media, including *any* information that might lead to the

identification of a client or compromise client confidentiality in any way. Additionally, students must critically evaluate any material that is posted regarding community agencies and professional relationships, as certain material could violate the standards set by the School of Social Work, the Texas Code of Conduct for Social Workers, and/or the NASW Code of Ethics. Social work students should consider that they will be representing professional social work practice as well as the University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work program while in the classroom, the university community, and the broader area communities.

**Cell phone use in the field placement has ethical, legal, and liability implications. It also has implications regarding professional boundaries and self-care. Use of a personal cell phone for client communication is strongly discouraged, but if necessary, should be planned well and in advance with your Field Instructor.**

#### **VI. University Policies**

**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.

**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.** 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). Students are responsible for presenting the letter to their Faculty Liaison and Field Instructor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

**RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS.** By UT Austin policy, students must notify their instructor of a pending absence at least 14 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 instructor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

**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>.

**BEHAVIOR CONCERNS ADVICE LINE (BCAL)** If students are worried about a UT employee or student who is acting differently in a way that raises safety concerns, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about that 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>.

## **VII. Course Schedule**

Students will schedule hours with the Field Instructor to meet the needs of the agency and to fulfill each student’s requirement of working 32-35 hours per week.

## **VIII. Required and Recommended Texts and Resources**

- ***Student Guide to Undergraduate Field*** available at <http://www.utexas.edu/ssw/field/forms/>
- ***BSW Handbook for Social Work Pre-Majors and Majors*** available at <http://www.utexas.edu/ssw/current/forms/>
- **NASW Code of Ethics** available at <http://www.utexas.edu/ssw/current/forms/>
- **Texas Social Worker Code of Conduct** available at <http://www.utexas.edu/ssw/current/forms/>
- **NASW Standards for Social Work Education** available at <http://www.utexas.edu/ssw/current/forms/>
- Other readings and resources as assigned by agency Field Instructor and/or Faculty Liaison