

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

Course number: SW 387C

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Semester: Fall 2011

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DIRECT PRACTICE FIELD IMMERSION ELECTIVE

I. Course Description

This concentration elective will allow students to further develop practice skills in preparation for final concentration field. Students will build on Foundation field experiences and begin to integrate concentration classroom learning. An emphasis will be placed on coordinated learning with concentration coursework. This course will draw from the specifics of the immersion experience for theory development related to practice and policy. Weekly experiential learning will occur in approved field settings and students will process their learning through journals and a weekly one-hour seminar. Malpractice insurance through the field office is required. This course is offered on a credit/no credit basis.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of MSSW Foundation Field and/or successful completion of a BSW level field placement from an accredited social work program.

II. Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, the student will:

1. Complete a minimum of 125 hours (approximately 10 hours per week) in an approved concentration field setting.
2. Examine personal values and ethical issues relating to the provision of services.
3. Examine various treatment theories and approaches utilized with agency clientele to develop a fuller understanding and application of existing theories or the use of experience to inform developing theoretical models.
4. Apply skills in assessment of social and economic justice issues regarding treatment approaches with populations-at-risk.
5. Utilize supervision and consultation to increase professional competence and prepare for final concentration field.

III. Teaching Methods

Methods will be individualized to each agency setting.

IV. Required and Recommended Texts and Materials

Individualized readings, as assigned by agency based instructor, focused on specific issues and populations served in field immersion setting.

V. Course Requirements

HOURS. Students must complete a minimum of 125 hours in the field immersion placement *in addition to* the one-hour weekly seminar.

ATTENDANCE. Attendance at seminar and field immersion must be punctual and regular. If, due to an emergency, a student is unable to report to field, the appropriate agency personnel must be informed as early as possible. Also, the field instructor should be given the reason for the absence and the arrangements that have been made to cover the student's responsibilities. Finally, the seminar instructor must be fully informed about any irregularity in attendance to field practice.

TIME SHEETS. Each student is responsible for keeping time sheets. The time sheets are checked periodically by the field instructor and seminar instructor.

EDUCATIONAL CONTRACT. A written educational contract is to be developed by the student, approved by the field instructor, and submitted to the seminar instructor by the end of the second week in placement. This contract should incorporate relevant readings and other activities that address the student's personal learning goals. In general, this document should serve as a guide for development of field assignments and evaluation of a student's performance in field. The contract should encompass educational, professional, and personal growth goals. Periodic review and modification(s) of the contract is recommended. Copies of modified contracts are to be shared as quickly as possible with the seminar instructor.

JOURNAL. The weekly field journal should be kept in a softbound, loose-leaf notebook or folder with brads and is due at the beginning of each seminar class. This will facilitate submission on a timely basis, while keeping all reviewed journals in one location. Daily entries should be made and should delineate the activities for that day and the student's analysis of those that were most significant. Students should integrate theoretical concepts learned in concurrent concentration courses. In general, the journal should demonstrate growth and progress as a practitioner, according to semester objectives. Care should be taken to be explicit in making observations relevant to gender, economic, ethnic, and lifestyle differences.

AGENCY RECORDING. The field instructor(s) may assign additional agency recording. If the agency has minimal recording requirements, the seminar instructor and/or the field instructor may require additional written assignments which can address professional accountability requirements as well as educational needs.

EVALUATION. Ongoing feedback will be given in student journals, on written assignments and during any field immersion visits.

GRADING. The grades of credit, no credit, or incomplete will be assigned by the seminar instructor. Credit reflects satisfactory and consistent performance in written assignments, seminar participation and the field immersion experience.

MALPRACTICE INSURANCE. Students must be covered by an adequate malpractice insurance policy before beginning field immersion. The School of Social Work, through the Field Office, makes information available for students to purchase this policy prior to entering field.

VI. Class Policies

Students are responsible for the content in the *Student Guide to Graduate Field* concerning field policies. These policies can be found in Sections II and III of the *Guide*.

INDIVIDUAL SUPERVISION WITH FIELD INSTRUCTOR. Performance as an adult, self-directed learner is the work pattern demanded in graduate field instruction. Therefore, individual supervision is provided on a weekly basis to facilitate practice and the attainment of the field objectives. It is the student's responsibility to be a punctual, assertive, well-prepared and accountable participant.

INTEGRATIVE SEMINAR. Attendance and participation in a weekly integrative seminar is required. Since the overall goal of this seminar is to apply knowledge, values and skills to advanced practice, the success of the seminar depends on students' participation in class discussion. This includes listening to the opinions and concerns of others with openness, offering suggestions and ideas in a positive and respectful manner, and being willing to promote group cohesiveness in the learning environment. Information shared in class about agencies and clients is covered by the NASW Code of Ethics. Agencies are aware that information is shared in class for this purpose, however, discussions outside of class, with individuals outside of the seminar context is considered a breach of confidentiality. This is grounds for removal from field immersion.

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.

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.

POLICY ON 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.

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://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/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). 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/>.

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.

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>.

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.

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>.

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 are given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

VII. Course Schedule

The seminar will meet each Wednesday from 11:00 am to noon.

Students will schedule their immersion hours with the field instructor to meet the needs of the agency and to fulfill the students' requirement of working 125 hours (approximately 10 hours per week) in field immersion.

VIII. Course Assignments

1. 125 hours of field immersion in the assigned agency to be completed by the last class day of the semester, **December 2, 2011**.
2. Weekly seminar attendance. There will be no class on November 23.
3. Weekly journals due at the beginning of each seminar. The final journal entry should include an analysis of progress on your educational contract, a summary of your learning and growth, and thoughts regarding learning in your final placement.
4. Educational Contract due at the beginning of class on **September 14, 2011**. The contract should be reviewed with and signed by your supervisor before submission.
5. Integration Paper due at the beginning of class on **November 16, 2011**.

The written assignment in this course is designed to synthesize what you are learning in your advanced coursework with what you are experiencing in your field immersion. Recognizing that your experiences are varied dependent upon your placement, the following is a suggested guideline for your paper. If you do not think that the work you are doing in your immersion lends itself to this assignment, please arrange a time to meet with me to refine the assignment.

The paper should be no more than eight (8) pages in length and should include citations and a bibliography following APA style.

Choose a client or group interaction for analysis.

Develop a summary assessment of the client/group including identifying information; diversity; pertinent social history; presenting problems and goals for change; systems of support/conflict; risk assessment; and strengths, resiliency, and resources.

Apply a theoretical concept from one of your concentration courses to the chosen interaction including research regarding effectiveness of the model.

Identify social work skills and knowledge utilized and how they did or did not contribute to best practices in this interaction.

Assess the effectiveness of the interaction including an analysis of your strengths and areas for growth. Address any ethical or values issues that arose. Summarize supervisory feedback and discussion.

Conclude with next steps with this client or group.

IX. Bibliography

Student Guide to Graduate Field.

Individualized by agency field instructor and/or seminar instructor.