

# THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

## STEVE HICKS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

**Course number:** SW 387C  
**Unique number:** 61550  
**Semester:** Fall 2022  
**Meeting place/time:** SSW 2.140  
Wednesdays 9:00 - 10:00 am

**Instructor's name:** Sarah Swords, LCSW-S  
**Office number:** SSW 2.244  
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**Office hours:** Wednesday, 10:00 - 11:00 am  
(Or by appointment)

### 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 in the internship portion of this course will be individualized to each agency setting. In the seminar portion of the course, a variety of learning methods will be applied to achieve the course objectives and to be inclusive of various learning styles. Discussions, case presentations,

in-class group activities, self-reflection, and readings may be used. In-class discussion will encourage students to engage in new ways of thinking from the diverse perspectives of the professor and classmates and to integrate a deep focus on social, racial, economic, and environmental justice issues in ongoing practice.

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

There is no assigned reading for this course. Individualized readings may be assigned by agency-based instructor, focused on specific issues and populations served in field immersion setting. Additional readings representing the perspectives of diverse scholars will be recommended by the instructor as relevant and appropriate.

#### **V. Course Requirements**

**HOURS.** Students must complete a minimum of 125 hours in the field immersion placement *in addition* to the 1-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.

**LEARNING CONTRACT.** A written learning contract is to be developed by the student, approved by the field instructor, and uploaded to the class Canvas site by the specified due date. This contract should incorporate field experiences, 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 class instructor.

**JOURNAL.** The weekly field journal should be uploaded to the class Canvas site prior to midnight of the day before each seminar class. The journal should be approximately 3 double-spaced pages and should capture significant experiences, interactions, and learning moments from the field immersion experience. The instructor may periodically request that students journal on a relevant topic. Students should strive to integrate theoretical concepts learned in concurrent concentration courses. In general, the journal should demonstrate growth and progress as a practitioner, according to the course objectives. Care should be taken to be explicit in making observations relevant to client identities and intersectionality.

**AGENCY RECORDING.** The field instructor(s) may assign additional agency recordings. This is to be available to the seminar instructor at the time of any scheduled site visits. If the agency has minimal recording requirements, the class 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 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 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 Office of Field Education makes information available for students to purchase this policy prior to entering field.

## **VI. Class Policies**

Students are responsible for awareness of and adherence to the content in the *MSSW Graduate Guide to Field* (<https://socialwork.utexas.edu/dl/files/academic-programs/field/mssw-guide-to-field.pdf>) concerning field policies.

**INDIVIDUAL SUPERVISION WITH FIELD INSTRUCTOR.** Performance as a self-directed adult 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 the weekly integrative seminar are required. Since the overall goal of this seminar is to apply knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes to advanced practice, the success of the seminar depends on students' engagement and 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 inclusion and 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.

## **VII. University Policies**

**COVID-19 RELATED INFORMATION.** The University's policies and practices related to the pandemic may be accessed at: <https://protect.utexas.edu/>

**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.

**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). A student should present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed and followed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>.

**PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND CIVILITY IN THE CLASSROOM.** The professor expects students to act as 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. A course brings together a group of diverse individuals with various backgrounds. Students are influenced and shaped by such factors as race, ethnicity, gender, sex, physical abilities, religious and political beliefs, national origins, and sexual orientations, among others. We expect to learn from each other in an atmosphere of positive engagement and mutual respect. This atmosphere includes working intentionally to recognize and dismantle racism, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism in the classroom. Social Work also deals with complex and controversial issues. These issues may be challenging and uncomfortable, and it would be impossible to offer a substantive classroom experience that did not include potentially difficult conversations relating to challenging issues. In this environment, we will be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometimes we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. Nevertheless, the professor requires that students engage one another with civility, respect, and professionalism.

**UNANTICIPATED DISTRESS.** Students may experience unexpected and/or distressing reactions to course readings, videos, conversations, and assignments. If so, students are encouraged to inform the professor. The professor can be responsive and supportive regarding students' participation in course assignments and activities, but students are responsible for communicating clearly what kind of support is desired. If counseling is needed, students may contact a service provider of their choosing, including the UT Counseling Center at 512-471-3515 or online at <https://cmhc.utexas.edu/>.

**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 (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and other forms of electronic communication (e.g. blogs) 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 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY.** Students who violate University rules on academic 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 academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct>.

**USE OF COURSE MATERIALS.** The materials used in this course, including, but not limited to exams, quizzes, and homework assignments, are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized duplication of the course materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary action being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of course materials without the specific, express approval of the professor may be a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty, which could result in further disciplinary action. This sharing includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of distributing those materials to other current or future students.

**CLASSROOM CONFIDENTIALITY.** Information shared in class about agencies, clients, and personal matters is considered confidential per the NASW Code of Ethics on educational supervision and is protected by regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as well. As such, sharing this information with individuals outside of the educational context is not permitted. Violations of confidentiality could result in actions taken according to the policies and procedure for review of academic performance located in sections 3.0, 3.1, and 3.2 of the Standards for Social Work Education.

**UNIVERSITY ELECTRONIC MAIL STUDENT NOTIFICATION.** Electronic mail (email), like postal mail, is a mechanism for official University communication to students. The University will exercise the right to send email communications to all students, and the University will expect that email communications will be received and read in a timely manner. Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <https://it.utexas.edu/policies/university-electronic-mail-student-notification-policy>.

**RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS.** A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable period after the absence. A reasonable accommodation does not include substantial modification to academic standards, or adjustments of requirements essential to any program of instruction. Students and instructors who have questions or concerns about academic accommodations for religious observance or religious beliefs may contact the [Office for Inclusion and Equity](#). The University does not maintain a list of religious holy days.

**TITLE IX REPORTING.** In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the University of Texas at Austin is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from discriminatory conduct on the basis of sex <https://titleix.utexas.edu/>. Faculty, field instructors, staff, and/or teaching assistants in their supervisory roles are mandated reporters of incidents of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, stalking, dating violence, or any other forms of sexual misconduct. Students who report such incidents will be informed of University resources. Incidents will be reported to the University's Title IX Coordinator. Further information, including student resources related to Title IX, may also be found at <https://titleix.utexas.edu/>.

**CAMPUS CARRY POLICY.** The University's policy on campus carry may be found here: <https://campuscarry.utexas.edu>.

**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 and COVID-19 ADVICE LINE (BCCAL).** If students have concerns about their behavioral health, or if they are concerned about the behavioral health of someone else, students may use the Behavior Concerns and COVID-19 Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns. This service is provided through a partnership between 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 <https://safety.utexas.edu/behavior-concerns-advice-line>. The Behavior Concerns and COVID-19 Advice Line has been expanded to support The University of Texas at Austin community during the COVID-19 pandemic. By calling 512-232-5050 - Option 2 for COVID-19, students, faculty and staff can be assisted in English and Spanish with COVID-19 support.

**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 in the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering 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.

### **GRADING SCALE**

This course is offered on a credit-no credit basis; therefore, no grading scale is shown here.

### **VIII. Course Schedule**

The seminar will meet each Wednesday from 9:00 am to 10:00 am (unless otherwise noted).

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.

### **IX. Course Assignments**

1. 125 hours of field immersion in the assigned agency to be completed by the last class day of the semester, **November 30, 2022 (Field visits will be completed prior to grades being due)**.
2. Weekly seminar attendance. There will be no class on November 24, 2022.
3. Weekly journals are due on Canvas by 11:59 pm the Tuesday before each seminar, unless the student makes prior arrangements with the instructor. The final journal entry should include an analysis of progress on your learning contract, a summary of your learning and growth, and thoughts regarding learning in your final placement.
4. The learning contract should be uploaded to Canvas by **September 14, 2022**. The contract should be reviewed with and signed by your field instructor before submission.
5. Case Presentation and Peer Feedback on either **November 9, November 16, or November 30, 2022 or as decided in class**. Students will choose the date of their presentation; multiple students will present during each of these class sessions.

## **Case Presentation Assignment Guidelines**

The case presentation is designed to synthesize what you are learning in your coursework with what you are experiencing in your field immersion. Each student will have approximately ten minutes to present a case and ten minutes to receive feedback from peers and the instructor.

Please include the following in your presentation:

Choose a client or group interaction for analysis.

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

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 the ethical, cultural, and/or values issues that arose. Summarize supervisory feedback and discussion.

Conclude with any questions you have for the class regarding next steps with this client or group.

### **X. Bibliography**

*MSSW Graduate Guide to Field:* <https://socialwork.utexas.edu/dl/files/academic-programs/field/mssw-guide-to-field.pdf>

Individualized by agency field instructor and/or seminar instructor.