

University of Vermont
College of Education and Social Services
Department of Social Work

SWSS 390: CONCENTRATION YEAR FIELD PRACTICUM II
Fall 2016 and Spring 2017

Regular Track: 3 credits per semester for a total of 6 credits over two semesters
Advanced Standing: 4 credits per semester for a total of 8 credits over two semesters

Prerequisites: Accepted Concentration Year Field Application
Co-requisites: SWSS 314: Transformative Social Work I (Fall) & SWSS 315: Transformative Social Work II (Spring)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This two-semester course takes place outside of the traditional classroom environment and inside of local community human/social service agencies. Students are placed in approved social work field sites with professional trained social work supervisors. They have one placement throughout the academic year and complete a minimum of 450 hours for Regular Track students and a minimum of 600 hours for Advanced Standing students.

This social work field experience will provide students with an educationally based hands-on experience grounded in our program's philosophy highlighting our commitment to human rights, social, economic, and environmental justice, and critical social construction. Students will integrate more specifically 1) the development of an ongoing and deeply self-reflective professional approach to the work, 2) learned (and still-learning) social work knowledges, skills, and values typically associated with our unique profession, and 3) an unrelenting focus on relational and authentic connections with clients, colleagues, the community, and the world.

Students will also contextualize their practice within our program's advanced curricular concentration of transformative social work and their self-identified individual threads of inquiry (focus). Students will deepen their transformative social work practices by exploring *change* on all levels. They will do this by focusing on:

1. A relational practice that looks at the authentic and curious nature of how they are in relationship to those they are working with (clients, patients, service-users, members, etc.), to themselves, to their colleagues, and to the work, itself,

2. A profound practice that focuses on the creative process of complicating our “understanding of everyday problems” through questioning what has been taken for granted about truth, best practices, expert stances, and even what is said about what kind of change is possible,

3. And a generative practice that encourages the integration of policy, research, and practice so that change is long lasting [and iterative](#).

The Concentration Year Practicum provides all concentration year students with opportunities to expand upon foundation/undergraduate social work course and fieldwork. All students have met the generalist competencies and practice behaviors for foundation and undergraduate students by the time they enter into this year’s field experience. Students are expected to move toward advanced and autonomous social work practice by the end of the first semester – for example, they are carrying their own assignments (with clients or on projects) autonomously, they are taking the initiative in their supervisory sessions to integrate their practice with classroom learning regarding transformative social work ideas, theories, knowledges, and approaches, and they are communicating professionally with colleagues both within and outside of the organization.

In the second semester, students are expected to continue deepening their transformative practice skills, their confidence in their work, their effective use of supervision and collegial consultation, and their articulation of what they have learned, what they know, how that can help others/situations. In other words, students are expected to be prepared for masters level employment where they can continue their learning outside of the formal classroom environment.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the Concentration Year Practicum, students are expected to be skilled in performing complex professional social worker roles. The goal is for students to become competent practitioners who 1) have the particular skills, knowledges, and sensitivities needed to work with clients in Transformative Social Work Practice; 2) are able to apply multiple theoretical perspectives and multilevel interventions in meeting individual client and collective needs; and 3) are able to work autonomously within the limits of the profession and multi - agency and organizational settings.

The objectives are as follows:

Objective #1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior	
1a.	Identifies social work opportunities for promoting transformative change
1b.	Applies ethical decision-making skills in transformative social work practice situations.

Objective #2: Engages Diversity and Difference in Practice	
2a.	Reflects on his/her own identity and background as these affect practice
2b.	Assesses how social difference operates in various transformative social work practice contexts
2c.	Employs complex understandings of diversity and difference to engage effectively in transformative relationships at all levels of practice

Objective #3: Advances Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice	
3a.	Identifies and critically analyzes everyday practices that create and perpetuate privilege and oppression in society and in our environment
3b.	Uses transformative approaches to advocate at multiple levels for just practices (social, economic, and environmental) and extending human rights
3c.	Advocates for and facilitates collaborations and alliances in the service of transformative change

Objective #4: Engages in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice	
4a.	Works collaboratively with evaluators/researchers and service users to gather evidence and critically assess the merits of different practice strategies
4b.	Utilizes practice experience to assess and refine research-based practices
4c.	Critically assesses assessment and measurement tools and proposes their appropriate uses for transformative social work with various groups, situations, and practice goals
4d.	Implements research-informed transformative practices across diverse groups and situations

Objective #5: Engages in Policy Practice	
5a.	Uses legislative advocacy, social action, and institutional reform to promote transformative change
5b.	Applies policy analysis and practice skills to advance transformative change linked to social and economic justice and human rights

Objective #6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	
6a.	Listens openly to and collaboratively engages the concerns, knowledge, and skills of diverse groups as they elaborate their own priorities for transformation
6b.	Uses a complex combination of skills that include collaboration, transparency and authenticity to form partnerships that empower clients and underserved communities at all levels of intervention
6c.	Assesses the relationship between power and the knowledge used to make sense of clients' lives in various social work contexts and advocates for reforms that enable transformative change

Objective #7: Assess individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	
7a.	Adapts and uses collaborative assessment approaches
7b.	Evaluates, selects, and applies assessment strategies according to their relevance to individual and shared meanings and priorities in diverse communities
7c.	Analyzes and applies assessment strategies from a social constructionist perspective and in relation to their congruence with transformative social work

Objective #8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	
8a.	Applies social work strategies informed by critical social constructionist ideas at all levels
8b.	Develops and implements collaborative multidisciplinary strategies for building and sustaining the capacity of organizations, policy makers, and practitioners to support and facilitate transformative change
8c.	Identifies, evaluates, and selects transformative social work approaches that expand people's capabilities, resources, and choices
8d.	Advocates at multiple levels to promote an understanding of people's lives that prioritizes their narrative and reduces the authority of subjugating and pathologizing discourses

Objective #9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	
9a.	Applies research skills that are congruent with the values underlying transformative social work
9b.	Identifies and uses evaluation approaches that are consistent with transformative social work
9c.	Interprets and communicates the evaluation of programs and policies, integrating awareness of social construction of difference and knowledge of social privilege
9d.	Routinely solicits and weighs evaluative feedback from clients, supervisors, and other colleagues, in analyzing one's own and others' practices in complex situations

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to access the Field Education link from the Department of Social Works' Webpage. They are responsible for knowing the contents on this page. The link is below:

<http://www.uvm.edu/~socwork/?Page=field/default.html>

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

Field Hours: Field is a year-long-course and therefore the student "time in the course" typically looks and feels differently than a traditionally structured course taken in a classroom. When students start in the fall they remain in the same placement until the end of the spring semester. This means that there is no "course ending" in December or "course beginning" in January.

To manage the required hours and course length, students and field instructors are expected to work together to set both a weekly (micro) schedule and a broader full academic year schedule. The weekly schedule reflects which days of the week and what hours the student is expected to be in the placement, the day and time of supervisory meetings, and the days and times of any regularly scheduled agency meetings students are expected to attend (i.e. staff meetings or treatment team meetings). The full academic year schedule reflects which weeks the student

will begin, end, and have time away from the work. Because each agency has unique needs, provides unique services, and has unique hours of service delivery, these scheduling agreements will differ from student to student. Above all, the most important scheduling decisions consider the professional manner in which students begin, take time away from, and put closure to their field experiences. In other words, the relationship and services to 'clients' must always be a priority. **So, practically speaking, what this means is that a student should not assume that they have no field responsibilities during school breaks (especially the longer winter break) unless this agreement has been explicitly made during the scheduling process.**

More specific guidance:

1. Concentration year MSW students complete a minimum of 450 hours in the field between September and May. **If they are an advanced standing student**, they complete an additional 150 hours for a total of 600 hours. Approximately half of these hours are completed by mid-December.
2. Some field sites may require more hours than the field program's minimum. In these cases, students must [have been made](#) aware of this prior to accepting the placement.
3. Students schedule consistent blocks of time in their agency each week so as to complete their hours within 2-3 days.
4. Student hours reflect the "normal business hours" of the agency. Evening and weekend hours must be approved by both the faculty liaison and field education coordinator. The rationale for this expectation is that the student's experience as "member of the agency community" is significant to social work practice skill development. And therefore, it follows that if the student is not consistently interacting with other agency personnel within the agency culture, integral learning opportunities are missed.
5. Students either develop their own way to document their hours on a weekly basis or use an agency process to do so.
6. There is no built in allowance for sick time or vacation time. Students make up any regularly scheduled time that they miss. In other words—students must complete the required hours regardless of the reason for missing. In case of illness or unavoidable absence, the student informs the agency as soon as possible. The student and field instructor immediately notify their faculty field liaison of absences of more than three consecutive 'field days.' Students make up time they have missed within the semester, unless otherwise approved by the Field Education Coordinator. If considerable lengths of time are missed, arrangements can be made to make up time before the beginning of the next semester, but only as a result of a meeting that leads to a written plan and approval of the faculty field liaison, field instructor, and student.
7. There may be occasions when students may be asked to work additional hours in a particular week. An example of this request could be due to a conference or special event that the student has been helping to organize. Students are not required to work outside of their set schedule but if they choose to, student should plan to take compensatory time off in a balanced and professional manner.
8. No student is to be scheduled for "on call" work during class time. Any on-call or crisis duty must be pre-approved by the faculty field liaison and the field education coordinator.
9. While occasionally there will be important field opportunities scheduled during a student's regularly scheduled class, students cannot be required (by their field instructor/agency) to miss class in order to attend a field meeting or event.
10. Students complete their hours no later than the Friday after the last day of classes in May. At the same time, students are expected to be working in the agency at least until

the Friday after the last day of classes (also in May). If a student finds that they “have enough hours” and would like to end early, a formal request must be made and approved by the faculty field liaison and the field instructor. In other words, students may not “work ahead” of their approved schedule just so they can finish the field course weeks ahead of time. Having said this, students should not be discouraged from working additional hours for the purposes of planning for unexpected absences; students should only be aware that they may not need to use these hours for successful completion of field. For example, some students choose to carry a balance of 15 - 20 hours with them throughout the year as a back-up. They do this knowing (and accepting) the fact that they may not ever need to use these hours.

Written Learning Agreement: The learning agreement is a formal document collaboratively developed by the student and field instructor. It is reviewed and approved by the Faculty Field Liaison. It is intended to ground the student in their work and provide a plan for completing assignments. Please see the specific guidelines in the *Guide to Writing the Concentration Year LA* posted on Blackboard.

Process Records: Students are required to produce four (4) written process records for by the end of the academic year – two (2) each semester. Please see specific guidelines posted on Blackboard.

Research and Policy Notes: No matter what type of practice students are engaged in, they are expected to have an understanding of the impact of specific policy and research on the work of their agency and the clients they serve. Students are required to complete 2 two-page notes addressing these two points: 1. Description of at least one way in which a specific policy at the agency, state or federal level advances human rights in their agency. And how it impacts access to services for those who are marginalized? 2. An example of your practice (micro, mezzo or macro) that has been informed by research or the identification of a piece of research you will pursue next semester as a result of your practice.

Field Portfolio: [This includes all of the assignments for the field as well as examples of your practice this year. As relevant it would include such things as a \(redacted\) copy of an assessment or treatment notes, planning documents, white papers, etc](#)

Evaluations: It is important to contextualize this evaluative process as a practice within professional social work, as a whole. So, while the specific course requirement of “evaluation” exists for a student “grade” in a “course”, it is potentially more significant to notice that feedback from the Field Instructor to the student and from the student to the Field Instructor is part of a dynamic and relational social work practice in all of our communities. Twice a year the student and Field Instructor (and potentially the Faculty Field Liaison) sit together and formally review the student’s learning progress. These meetings contribute to the student grade each semester. Guidance for these meetings and copies of the forms used are posted on Blackboard. Therefore, Field Instructors have an authentic and practical opportunity to teach/model the skills related to giving and receiving feedback, requesting specific feedback from colleagues, and processing feedback in ways that generate a deepening of skills and relationships.

Confidentiality of the latter two written forms is honored; however, the year would be incomplete if students and Field Instructor did not also participate in a verbal evaluation of their overall field experience with one another. Therefore, students will be expected to initiate the need for this discussion as they end their time with their Field Instructor.

Clearly, the content and outcome of these student evaluations is integral to the student's final grade, however, we must hold the process of participating in and completing them as equally important.

Field Seminars: The Concentration Year Field Seminar offers group discussion and peer consultation designed to help students perform effectively as beginning social work practitioners in a field agency. Three group meetings are held during each semester and are devoted to discussion of practice issues and common and divergent practice themes across field settings. The main objective of the seminar is to help students integrate the knowledge, skills, and values gained in social work courses with their actual social work practice experience.

In addition, the seminar is designed to offer students the opportunity to experience support, feedback, recognition of strengths and a constructive critical analysis of their professional behaviors. Students are encouraged to reflect on their own practice and increase their capacity for self-reflection and problem-solving. Attendance and participation are required and viewed as an integral component of the "Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory" recommendation. It is the student's responsibility to inform the faculty field liaison directly of the reasons for any absence prior to the absence so that a plan for making up the seminar will be developed.

GRADING

The concentration year Field Practicum (SWSS 390) utilizes a "Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory" evaluation system. A student's grade is assigned by the Field Education Coordinator with consultation and recommendation from both the field liaison and the field instructor(s). A "satisfactory" grade would be earned if a student has a combined score of 80% in the following areas:

ASSIGNMENT:	PERCENTAGE OF GRADE
Completed field hours	20%
Attendance and participation in field seminars with Faculty Field Liaisons	Up to 20%
Completed an approved/signed learning agreement and it's update	Up to 10%
Completed two process records per semester	Up to 10%
Content of the formal December and Ending written evaluations	Up to 30%
Research and Policy Notes	Up to 5%
Completed Portfolio of Field	Up to 5%

COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

Field Practicums Begin	August 28 th Students will have already determined the day and time that they will begin in their organization. They are expected to follow through on any needed communication with their Field Instructor to confirm this.
Field Seminar #1	SWSS 390A September 7 th 7:30pm - 9:00pm SWSS 390B September 8 th 7:30pm - 9:00pm
Learning Agreements Due	September 30 th
Field Seminar #2	SWSS 390A October 12 th 7:30pm - 9:00pm SWSS 390B October 13 th 7:30pm - 9:00pm
Process Records #1	Due to Field Instructor on October 20 th Due to Faculty Field Liaison (with Field Instructor's comments) on October 28 th
Field Seminar #3	SWSS 390A November 9 th 7:30pm - 9:00pm SWSS 390B November 10 th 7:30pm - 9:00pm
Process Record #2	Due to Field Instructor on November 18 th Due to Faculty Field Liaison (with Field Instructor's comments) on December 2 nd
Research and Policy Notes	December 9th
December Evaluation of Students	Due to Field Liaison by December 9 th Student and Field Instructor turn in the written and signed copy of this evaluation to their Faculty Field Liaison.
Field Seminar #4	January/February Date is TBD (check the SOC when registering)
Learning Agreement Update	February 3 rd Students must review and write an update to their Learning Agreements reflecting changes made to the learning plan. This addendum should be agreed to and signed by the student, field instructor, and liaison before being turned in to the field education coordinator.
Field Seminar #5	March is TBD (check the SOC when registering)
Process Records #3 and #4	Date TBD. Faculty Field Liaison will inform students of these dates by posting them on Blackboard at the start of the second semester.

Field Seminar #6

April date is TBD (check the SOC when registering)

Student Field Portfolio April 28th

Student Ending Evaluation

May 5th

Student and Field Instructor turn in the written and signed copy of this evaluation to their Faculty Field Liaison.

RELATIONSHIP OF THIS COURSE TO THE REST OF THE CURRICULUM

The field practicum is one of five core content areas of the social work curriculum. Field practicum learning objectives are consistent with those of the program and are derived from the program philosophy and mission statement.

In the concentration year, the field practicum engages students in supervised social work practice in diverse settings and provides opportunities to apply concurrent classroom practice orientations (social justice, strengths, family centered and human rights) to practice with individuals, groups, families, organizations and communities.

The Field Education Coordinator and the faculty work directly with field instructors to inform them about the concentration year curriculum. Field instructors attend the field orientation, field seminars and other related events during the academic year and meet regularly with faculty field liaisons. During the field orientation phase at the beginning of the fall semester, field instructors and faculty collaboratively review and discuss the syllabi for practice, social policy, research and human behavior and the social environment courses and begin the learning agreement development process. The learning agreement for the field is directly related to the syllabi of these courses. There is a high degree of interrelationship between classroom knowledge, values and skills objectives and assignments and tasks associated with concurrent field experiences. Classroom faculty also participate in field instructor seminars during the academic year on topics related to curriculum and professional issues. They meet with and discuss policy and practice issues with field instructors, thus receiving feedback from the field on application of theory and classroom instruction to direct practice work in the field.

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Honesty and Professionalism

All students are required to be familiar with and adhere to the "Academic Honesty Policy Procedures" delineated in the most recent edition of "The Cat's Tale."
(<http://www.uvm.edu/~umvppg/ppg/student/acadintegrity.pdf>).

Accommodations

Accommodations will be provided to eligible students with disabilities. Please obtain an accommodation letter from the ACCESS office and see the instructor early in the course to discuss what accommodations will be necessary. If you are unfamiliar with ACCESS, visit their website at <http://www.uvm.edu/access> to learn more about the services they provide.

Religious Observance

The official policy for excused absences for religious holidays: Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. Each semester students should submit in writing to their instructors by the end of the second full week of classes their documented religious holiday schedule for the semester. Faculty must permit students who miss work for the purpose of religious observance to make up this work.