

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

**SWSS 173/174 - Sections A/B
Syllabus**

Semester: Fall 2017 Spring 2018

Credits: 3

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Office hours: By appointment

Usual email pattern: Responses within 72 hours

Pre/Co-requisite: Must be also registered for SWSS 212 (Fall) and SWSS 213 (Spring)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

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

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**.

The primary objective of the undergraduate senior year of the field education curriculum in an accredited bachelors program is to provide a foundation in generalist social work practice. Specific objectives include working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities from a person-in-situation perspective and developing broad service coordination skills. All students are expected to move along a continuum from beginning social work engagement practice to increasingly complex engagement practice.

Key Words: *inside local community human/social service agencies, educationally based hands-on experience, self-reflective professional approach, relational and authentic connections with clients, colleagues, the community, and the world.*

CSWE DESIGNATED SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES (2015 EPAS)¹

The following is a list of social work competencies that CSWE requires students to master by the time they finish the foundation year of the MSW program. Because this is a field education course, all of the competencies are relevant to this course. These will serve as the basis for both the learning agreement and the student evaluation process.

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- 1) **Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**
 - i) Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
 - ii) Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
 - iii) Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
 - iv) Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
 - v) Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

- 2) **Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice**
 - i) Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;

 - ii) Present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and

 - iii) Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

- 3) **Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice**
 - i) Apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and
 - ii) Engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

- 4) **Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice**
 - i) Use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;
 - ii) Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and
 - iii) Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

- 5) **Engage in Policy Practice**
 - i) Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service

¹ Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards

- delivery, and access to social services;
 - ii) Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;
 - iii) Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.
- 6) Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- i) Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and
 - ii) Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.
- 7) Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- i) Collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
 - ii) Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;
 - iii) Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and
 - iv) Select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.
- 8) Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- i) Critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;
 - ii) Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;
 - iii) Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;
 - iv) Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and
 - v) Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.
- 9) Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- i) Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;
 - ii) Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;
 - iii) Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and
 - iv) Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

COURSE FLOW, METHODS & RATIONALE

Students will be learning in a practicum environment, supported by faculty field liaisons and community social workers. They will complete several written assignments (below) and will be expected to demonstrate social work practice and receiving feedback on an ongoing basis.

COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

- Field Practicums Begin Second Week of Classes – September 5th
- Signed Learning Agreements Due Friday, October 13th in seminar class
- Process Record #1 Friday, October 22nd in seminar class
- Process Record #2 Friday, December 1st in seminar class
- Signed December Evaluation December 8th in seminar class
- Learning Agreement Update Due January 31, 2018

The Spring Field Seminar Dates, Process Record Due Dates and Evaluation Due Date will be added to this syllabus by January 16th.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS, DEADLINES & 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	Deadlines	Percentage of Grade
Completed field hours	May 4th	40%
Completed an approved/signed learning agreement and it's update	Sept 28 th Jan 31 st	Up to 10%
Completed two process records per semester	Ongoing	Up to 20%
Content of the formal December and Ending written evaluations	Dec 11 th May 13	Up to 40%

UVM Grading System

A+ 97-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79
A 94-96	B 84-86	C 74-76
A- 90-93	B- 80-83	C- 70-73

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Field Hours

Students are expected to complete 450 hours (in their approved and confirmed field placement. Policies that guide these hours can be found on the UVM Department of Social Work Website.

Learning Agreement

Almost immediately students and field instructors will begin talking about the work they will be doing together in the semesters ahead. It is, however, highly unlikely that this is the first time the conversation or the thinking about “student assignments” has happened. Field instructors would have discussed assignments possibilities in their annual application for site approval, students and field instructors would have talked about assignments during the interview, and field instructors probably would have already talked with agency/organization colleagues prior to the start of the school year. The learning agreement formalizes and expands on those discussions.

This is a student-assignment, however it requires significant input from the field instructor. In reality it is a deeply relational document. It is created at the very beginning of the student - field instructor relationship. It is a wonderful opportunity for collaboration, curiosity, discovery, exploration, visioning, agreement, and building some authentic connections. The student becomes the document writer and the field instructor is the consultant. Below is the format for the final written assignment.

Cover Page

The student should include the following on the first page. If there is additional information that seems relevant to the placement, students should be encouraged to include that, as well.

- Student name
- Faculty field liaison name
- Field instructor name
- Agency and program name
- Agency Address
- Contact information
- Student Schedule agreement (beginning and ending dates, day of the week and arrival and departure times)
- Anticipated dates student will be absent from field

Section One: Agency/Organization Description

- Describe how you learned what you know about your agency or organization so far. (website, conversations with professionals, word on the street, etc.)
- In your own words, write what it is that you do know about the place where you will be spending the year working and learning.
- This is also a good time to list any additional questions you have about the agency.

Section Two: Relationship to the Work

- Describe your particular relationship to the work of the agency/organization.
- This includes any personal anecdotes, educational background, or work background.
- It could also include a related long or short-term interest of yours that you know very little about or have very little experience with.

- Please take the time to think deeply so as not to miss any “overlapping stories” that just might reveal ‘some’ connection to some piece of where you have been placed.

Section Three

Because this document is due to your liaison within the first month of placement, there is a general acceptance that your work will be fluid and may perhaps change within the complexity of your organization’s context. In other words, it is quite likely that the ideas presented in this section could change over the lifecycle of your internship. Therefore, the work here should reflect a discussion that charts a “lightly held” path for your work with some vision for how it will evolve over the two semesters. Part of that vision should include ongoing review and revision of your assignments.

There are three parts to this section (an example of a possible format follows).

- 1) Describe your specific plans for engagement. This includes the actual work you will do with clients, patients, service-users, students, members, etc. It also includes collaborations you will be developing with colleagues and outside community members. Keep in mind that a well-rounded generalist social work learning experience includes work with individuals, families, and small groups. It also includes organizational practice and community work.
- 2) Look at your assignments in conjunction with the learning objectives in the field syllabi. Determine whether your assignments (above) will give you the opportunity to meet these learning objectives and then show the specifics of your determination next to each assignment. Please only list those objectives that seem “most” pertinent. This is very important as your ending evaluation will document your progress on the learning objectives – therefore, you really want to make sure you have assignments that will give you the opportunity to make progress and meet those objectives. These objectives have been approved as “outcome measures of student learning” by our national accrediting body (CSWE). Therefore a student’s identification of the relationship between field assignments and learning objectives indicates that the student’s work in the field is related to these overall academic program outcome measures.
- 3) Discuss your plan for how you and your field instructor will be able to determine your progress for each of your assignments. Write your evaluative and self -assessment plan for each assignment.

Section Four

Because your work with your supervisor(s) will be central to your learning, describe your plan for supervision and support. This can include agency practices, as well as the individual agreement you and your field instructor make. Please include formal and informal processes. It would also be interesting for you to think about and list any significant other ‘mentor’ or ‘consultant’ to your work.

Section Five

Below is a copy of the Student Safety Agreement Policy. Please review and discuss this with your field instructor then narrate (here in Section Five) your understanding of the relationship between “safety” and your work within the agency.

Student Safety Agreements

Field agencies and organizations are responsible for communicating a plan of safety for any and all students confirming a placement with them. Since most agencies and organizations have existing safety procedures, policies, or practices they should feel free to refer to that which already exists. However, it is important that field instructors and students discuss general plans for safety within the first two weeks of the field placement. Safety issues could include things like approaches to working with potentially violent or unpredictable client situations, making home visits to places where the

student may be unwelcome or there is doubt about the acceptance of the visit, working with clients who are incarcerated or on furlough for violent assaults, and responses to threatening statements, letters, phone calls, e-mails or other communications directed to the student or other agency personnel.

Section Five of the student's Learning Agreement will be the student's understanding (a description/summary of the discussion between student and field instructor) of the relationship between "safety" and their work within the agency.

If an incident occurs in which a student is personally threatened or hurt, or if the student is involved in an accident of any kind, the student will immediately inform the field instructor, faculty field liaison. The faculty field liaison will inform the field education coordinator. An incident report will be completed by the field education coordinator and placed in the student's file. The field education coordinator will review the situation with the student, faculty field liaison, and field instructor, and together they will determine the student's readiness to return to the field.

Section Six

If applicable, please list any agreements between student and field agency in which the student will receive monetary compensation.

Section Seven

This is your signature page. Please make sure that at the end of this document there is a space that you, your field instructor(s), your faculty field liaison, and I can sign, indicating agreement with the content. Type our names under the signature lines and add a date notation.

Appendix: Section Three Example

Engagement Assignment #1: JB will visit two families in their homes and communities on a weekly basis with the goal of helping to facilitate a less physically violent home environment. She will attend meetings with the families, and other providers, participate in written work, and participate in all levels of the planning process.

Related Learning Objectives/CSWE Standards:

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Competency 9: Evaluate practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Process for Determining Student Progress/Evaluative Plan:

JB will request feedback from her supervisor and from her clients and colleagues regarding her direct practice work, her communication skills, and her professional approach to the work. JB will work with families to identify the safety risks at the beginning of their work together and at several points throughout to see if safety is increasing in their home environments.

NOTE: Please make sure you follow the same format for each of your assignments. Some may be more complicated than others and that's fine. Some may have many related learning objectives and some may have just one. The important thing is to get the beginning map of your work in the field on paper. You will revisit this document several times throughout the year, revising your assignments as you go along.

Process Records

Process record assignments are an invitation for students to engage in a time-honored tradition in social work education. For years and years, social work field instructors have been assigning process records and students have responded by engaging in this dynamic thinking, writing, and feedback process. In our programs, students complete this assignment four (4) times over the course of the academic year.

These assignments are explicit in their focus on helping students develop a solid self-reflective practice. They enable students to look deeply and specifically at a single practice interaction by writing a verbatim recording of what was said and observational recording that coincides with that. Students provide their own comments about their work using the structured outline below.

Equally as important to the student writing is the field instructor and faculty field liaison feedback. Therefore, this assignment is clearly a process that values the generative and collaborative thinking that often (if not always) results in an increase in the quality of student work.

Please keep in mind that process records are not intended to become a part of a client's record but rather part of the education record of the student. Because of this, preserving the confidentiality of the client(s) and other professionals involved in the recorded interaction is extremely important. Actual names or other identifying information must either be omitted or disguised.

Guidance for How to Complete the Assignment

1. Field instructors and students think together in their supervision meetings about the specific interaction to be recorded and why. Because we believe that all student interactions have "significance" to the student's development, many kinds of recordings are possible - a client meeting that lasts a full hour, a 20-minute phone conversation, a complex family meeting, a community treatment team meeting, or even a supervisory session with a field instructor. The important thing to remember is that each interaction is chosen **AHEAD OF TIME** because of its anticipated significance to the learning of the particular student completing the assignment.
2. The student engages in the interaction agreed upon.
3. The student completes the verbatim recollection. Perhaps the single most important aspect of doing a process record is the immediacy with which the student actually records the interaction. It is for this reason that field instructors and students make a plan for private space and enough time immediately following the session so that the student may complete a thorough and "fresh" record. Without this preparation ahead of time, it is quite possible that the richness of the experience will be compromised.
4. The student goes back to the verbatim recollection and complete the more detailed process record, following the outline below.
5. The student gives the assignment to the field instructor and receives the written feedback within a week. The timing of this is very important and ideally is completed before the next scheduled supervisory meeting.
6. The student gives a copy of the process record **WITH** field instructor comments to the faculty field liaison so that the faculty field liaison may provide additional feedback.

Process Record Outline

1. Contextual Information – Describe the setting and purpose of the interaction and your thoughts and feelings prior to it.
2. Verbatim Recollection – Describe all verbal and non-verbal interactions between you and the other person(s). This includes everything that was said (word for word) and visual observations of both your and the other person’s physical state and behaviors. Divide the paper into two columns and put the verbal recollections in the left column, and simultaneously write your non-verbal observations and thoughts in the right column. Please note that there is an accepted realization that students will not remember everything perfectly. Remembering everything is not necessarily the goal. We do not want students to be paralyzed by trying to remember every single detail. In fact, the things you do remember are just as interesting and what you don’t remember can be an important part of the conversation, as well.
3. Reflection – This is the “heart” of the process record. Give your account of “what was happening,” as well as your examination of your own biases, ethical issues, and practice skills used.
4. Next Steps – Describe the possible goals and methods for future work. Connect this with your reflections above.

December Evaluation

Students and Field Instructors are expected to participate in a formal evaluation at the end of November or Beginning of December. There is a form and discussion prompts available on the UVM Department of Social Work Field Webpage

Ending Evaluation

Students and Field Instructors are expected to participate in a formal evaluation at the end of April or the beginning of May. There is a form and discussion prompts available on the UVM Department of Social Work Field Webpage

COURSE POLICIES

Religious Observances

As a UVM student you have the right to practice the religion of their choice. If you need to miss class to observe a religious holiday, please submit the Date(s) of your absence to me in writing by the end of the second full week of classes. You will be permitted to make up work within a mutually agreed-upon time.

Accommodations

In keeping with University policy, any student with a documented disability interested in utilizing accommodations should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS). SAS works with students and faculty to create reasonable and appropriate accommodations via an accommodation letter to professors with suggested accommodations as early as possible each semester. https://www.uvm.edu/academicsuccess/student_accessibility_services

A170 Living/Learning Center; University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont 05405, PH: 802-656-7753, FAX: 802-656-0739.

Difference and Diversity

In keeping with the program's commitment to promote diversity, human rights, social and economic justice and clients' strengths in its conceptualization and implementation, this course will affirm and respect difference with explicit attention to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, class, age, and disability. This affirmation will be apparent in the construction of the course objectives, the selection of course materials, and the instructor's ongoing attention to a respectful learning environment for all persons. (In compliance with the Council on Social Work Education Core Competency, #2.1.4 Diversity and Difference.) See also, Our Common Ground <http://www.uvm.edu/~president/?Page=miscellaneous/commonground.html>

Freedom of Expression & Speech in the Classroom, Field Practicum and the Department

As employees of a public institution, the UVM faculty and staff are obligated to follow an absolute interpretation of freedom of speech as set forth in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. We will uphold this freedom with the following exceptions: if that speech constitutes defamation, obscenity, criminal conduct or creates a clear and present danger to others or oneself. If the speech act incites violence, or threat of violence it is not protected. In fact, under that circumstance it is the U.V.M. faculty's responsibility to protect people from harm. As social workers, informed by clinical and empirical evidence, we know that neuroscience has established significant evidence of the severe harm of some emotional distress and that best practice is to attempt to prevent, minimize and rectify the harm without doing further damage to anyone involved. At the same time, the faculty member has a legal obligation to alleviate any disruption or interference with a speakers' constitutional right to speak.

However, the faculty also has the responsibility to remain in charge of classroom processes. In the classroom, the faculty has the right and responsibility to exercise discretionary judgment regarding freedom of speech even when that speech or related texts are offensive to some. They also are responsible to facilitate scholarly, academic discourse and debate about social issues and social work practice situations related to the course objectives and content. Social work faculty will deal with respect toward all members of the class, whether or not they agree with all positions taken on an issue. This does not mean that they cannot take a different position from some members of the class, assign reading on difficult, unpleasant issues, or lead class discussions on these issues. This is the nature of social work education- how to work with people who are experiencing deep suffering in their lives, their relationships and societal circumstances often due to historic bias and discrimination. The difficult topics and discussions must be directly relevant to the subject and objectives of the course, the accredited curriculum, and are within the faculty member's area of expertise.

Social work faculty members will employ their social work ethics. When a member of the class appears to be interfering with the learning environment, the faculty member will refrain from calling them out in front of the class. This is especially important when other students

in the class claim interference. Rather, they will ask to meet privately and will speak diplomatically with any student(s) whose speech or other actions interfere with the general learning environment. All attempt will be made to assist the student in their learning and their development of required social work competencies as designated in the syllabus. Simultaneously, the faculty member will work with the entire class when the situation represents a teachable moment in terms of the social work competencies and professional ethics and mandates set forth in the syllabus. Similarly, if some members of a class find a guest speaker's history or comments offensive they may not disrupt the presentation. If they do, the university's policy of applying a continuum of response from least to most restrictive to stop the disruption will go into effect.

Personal Safety and Security Policy

Threats or acts of violence involving both persons and personal or University property are therefore prohibited and constitute cause for removal from campus, discipline through appropriate channels, and/or civil or criminal prosecution. No student or instructor may threaten harm to another. In a possible or actual emergency situation, administrators, faculty, and staff ("employees") must report threats or acts of violence immediately to UVM Police Services. Students are also strongly encouraged to make such reports. Any form of retaliation against a person for making a good faith report is prohibited and may itself provide a basis for disciplinary action.

http://www.uvm.edu/policies/general_html/personalsafety.pdf

University Policies Specific to Students

The university has many policies that pertain primarily to students' rights and responsibilities and obligations as members of the UVM community, including the Code of Academic Integrity(<http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/acadintegrity.pdf>) and policies on grade appeals (<http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/gradeappeals.pdf>)

For a more complete list go to

http://www.uvm.edu/policies/?Page=cats.php&cat=St&SM=cat_menu.php

NASW Code of Ethics is to be followed in all Department of Social Work classes:

<https://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>