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

**SWSS290A/290B/290C**  
**Fall 2021/Spring 2022**  
**Foundation Year Field Practicum**

**Semester:** Fall 2021/Spring 2022  
**Instructors:** Jean Sienkewicz (Field Education Coordinator), Alice Scannell and Danielle Jatlow (Faculty Field Liaisons)  
**Credits:** 3 credits each semester  
**Office e-mails:** jsienkew@uvm.edu, alice.scannell@uvm.edu, danielle.jatlow@uvm.edu  
**Phone:** 802-656-8800  
**Office hours:** By appointment  
**Preferred mode of communication:** Email  
**Usual email pattern:** M-F, 9am-5pm

**Co-requisite:**  
Fall: SWSS 212 Social Work Practice I  
Spring: SWSS 213 Social Work Practice II

**Pre-requisites:**  
Fall: Must be a matriculated MSW student  
Spring: SWSS 212 & first semester of SWSS 290

**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 professional trained social work supervisors. They have one placement throughout the academic year and are required to complete a total of 765 hours over their two years in field, or 382.5/year.  

*(NOTE: In previous years, students have been required to complete 900 hours over two (2) years in an MSW program, or 450 hours/year. However, because of the ongoing impact of COVID-19, our accrediting body, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), has reduced the minimum required hours for AY 2021-2022 to 382.5. It is unclear whether, in AY 2022-2023, CSWE will return to their previously established benchmark of 900 hours over 2 years (or 450/year) for an MSW program. If so, this would leave students who completed their Foundation year Field in AY2021-2022 with a deficit of hours they would need to make up during their Specialized Practice, or second, year in field. Thus, it is recommended that students work towards completing as close to 450 hours for AY 2021-2022 as possible so as to preclude this scenario. It is likely that more specific guidance about this will be released by CSWE during the Spring 2022 semester.)*

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 and reflexive 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 first year of the field education curriculum in an accredited master’s 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 to increasingly complex social work practice skills. The successful completion of this course indicates a student’s ability to move into the more advanced and autonomous Specialized Practice year field experience (SWSS 390).

**COURSE OBJECTIVES & SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES**

After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Contextualize generalist social work practice within the particular field placement setting that they are learning in.
2. Engage field assignments from a self-reflective and reflexive professional practice stance.
3. Make connections between classroom and field experience learning from the philosophical frame of the program.
4. Engage in evaluation based on the nine social work generalist competencies described below.

These course objectives align with items in bold in the following list of nine social work education competencies that our accrediting body, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), requires students to master by the time they graduate from the MSW program:

1. **Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**
2. **Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice**
3. **Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice**
4. **Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice**
5. **Engage in Policy Practice**
6. **Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**
7. **Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**
8. **Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**
9. **Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

**REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS**

Students are required to read the [UVM Department of Social Work Field Education webpage](https://www.uvm.edu/socialwork/fieldeducation/) and sign the [Microsoft Forms document](https://forms.office.com) that says they are responsible for the contents and policies on this site. Students are also required to utilize the course Blackboard as stipulated by your Faculty Field Liaison.

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1 Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) 2015 Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS).
LEARNING METHODS & RATIONALE

Students will be learning in a practicum environment, supported by their Faculty Field Liaisons, community social workers (Field Instructors) and if applicable, other human services personnel (Supervisors). They will complete several written assignments (below) and will be expected to demonstrate social work practice skills and give/receive feedback on an ongoing basis.

LEARNING ASSESSMENT ASSIGNMENTS

Table 1. Fall Assignments, Deadlines & Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall Learning Assessment Assignments</th>
<th>Dates Due</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progress toward Completion of Field Hours (~191)</td>
<td>Dec 10</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation in Monthly Field Seminars with Faculty Field Liaison</td>
<td>Monthly (See course outline for dates)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Agreement (LA)</td>
<td>Oct 1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Record #1 of 3 with Field Instructor feedback</td>
<td>TBD by FI and student</td>
<td>5-10²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Record #2 of 3 (if completed Fall semester) with Field Instructor feedback</td>
<td>TBD by FI and student</td>
<td>5-10²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December Evaluation signed by all parties</td>
<td>Dec 10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Spring Assignments, Deadlines & Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spring Learning Assessment Assignments</th>
<th>Dates Due</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completion of Field Hours (382.5 minimum)</td>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation in Field Seminars with Faculty Field Liaison</td>
<td>Monthly (See course outline for dates)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Agreement Addendum (review and completion of any updates and revisions to LA)</td>
<td>Feb 18</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Oppressive Practice Assignment</td>
<td>March 4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Record #2 of 3 (if not completed Fall semester) with Field Instructor Feedback</td>
<td>TBD by FI and student</td>
<td>5-10³</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² 5 points each if two (2) Process Records completed during Fall semester/10 points if one (1) completed during Fall semester (with two (2) to be completed Spring semester)
³ 5 points each if two (2) Process Records completed during Spring semester/10 points if one (1) completed during Spring semester (assumes two (2) were completed Fall semester)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spring Learning Assessment Assignments</th>
<th>Dates Due</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process Record #3 of 3 with Field Instructor Feedback</td>
<td>TBD by FI and student</td>
<td>5-10³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ending Evaluation</td>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**UVM Grading System:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent:</th>
<th>Good:</th>
<th>Fair:</th>
<th>Poor:</th>
<th>Failure:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+ 97-100</td>
<td>B+ 87-89</td>
<td>C+ 77-79</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 94-96</td>
<td>B 84-86</td>
<td>C 74-76</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>AF Administrative Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A- 90-93</td>
<td>B- 80-83</td>
<td>C- 70-73</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>XF Academic Dishonesty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is a pass/fail course, so the following grades apply:

- S = C or better
- U = C- or below
- AF Administrative Failure
- XF Academic Dishonesty

**Incompletes:** A grade of incomplete (INC) may be assigned when course work is not completed for reasons beyond the student’s control. Incompletes may be approved for the following reasons: medical, personal tragedy or academic. In MSW courses⁵ incompletes require the approval of the Graduate College dean.

**ASSESSMENTS (GRADED WORK)**

In this course, students will earn grades of either an “S” Satisfactory or a “U” Unsatisfactory.

1. **Field Hours**

   **Purpose and Brief Description:** Students are expected to complete a minimum of 382.5 hours (see note above re: AY 2021-2022) in their approved and confirmed field placement. Policies that guide these hours can be found on the [UVM Department of Social Work Field Education Website](http://catalogue.uvm.edu/graduate/academicenrollment/gradingpolicies/).

   **Evaluation Criteria:** Students will negotiate a weekly field schedule with their Field Instructor so as to complete 382.5 hours before the last day of classes (for AY 2021-2022, this is May 6). Students will read and adhere to the [Student Hours](http://catalogue.uvm.edu/graduate/academicenrollment/gradingpolicies/) field policy on the Dept. of Social Work Field website re: hours in the field.

2. **Attendance and Participation in Monthly Field Seminars**

   **Purpose and Brief Description:** Six one-and-a-half hour seminars (three each semester) are scheduled on a monthly basis with your Faculty Field Liaison. These on-campus

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⁴ Graduate Students do not receive a grade of D.

⁵ [http://catalogue.uvm.edu/graduate/academicenrollment/gradingpolicies/](http://catalogue.uvm.edu/graduate/academicenrollment/gradingpolicies/)
(and/or possibly virtual) seminars are purposefully constructed for a small number of students to learn about required Field assignments as well as consult with one another about their practicum experiences and emerging social work identities. These seminars count towards a student’s field hours total for the year.

**NOTE re: Attendance and COVID-19 Protection:** UVM expects students, faculty, and staff to remain compliant with all COVID-19 recommendations and measures in place for UVM, the State of Vermont, and the City of Burlington. This includes following all rules regarding facial coverings when attending class and generally in indoor spaces. If you do not follow these guidelines, I will ask you to leave the class. If you forget your mask, you cannot enter the class and should go back and retrieve it. The Code of Student Conduct outlines policies related to violations of University policies that protect health and safety on campus.

**NOTE re: Attendance and Illness:** If a student will not be able to attend in-person classes for qualifying health reasons, Student Health Services (SHS) will send a notification to the appropriate Student Services office or designated staff member informing them of this, along with the dates the student is unable to attend. The SHS notification will specify whether the request for flexibility is only around in-person class attendance or includes additional flexibility for assignments and tests because the student is too ill to participate. Students are responsible for working with their faculty to make up class content and work they miss due to a documented illness.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled Field Seminars across the academic year.

### III. Learning Agreement (LA)

**Purpose and Description:** 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 application for field site approval; students and Field Instructors will have already 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, co-created document generated at the very beginning of the student/Field Instructor relationship. It is a wonderful opportunity for collaboration, curiosity, discovery, exploration, visioning, agreement, and building authentic connections. The student becomes the document writer and the Field Instructor is the consultant. Please see the Learning Agreement assignment on the Field Education page of UVM’s Department of Social Work website for specific guidance.

While the Learning Agreement is started in the Fall semester, the beginning of the Spring semester offers the opportunity for revisions and updates (Learning Agreement Addendum).

### IV. Process Record Assignments

**Purpose and Brief Description:** These 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 three (3) times over the course of the academic year.

(Note: In previous years, students have completed this assignment four (4) times over the course of the academic year, two (2) in the Fall semester and two (2) in the Spring. However, due to the ongoing impact of COVID, students will complete this assignment three (3) times during AY2021-2022. Students and Field Instructors will collaboratively decide whether students will complete one (1) Process Record during the Fall semester and two (2) during the Spring semester or vice versa; they will also mutually determine the due dates for students to complete these assignments and turn in to their Field Instructor for written comments prior to submitting the completed assignment (with Field Instructor feedback) to their Faculty Field Liaison.

These assignments are explicit in their focus on helping students develop a solid self-reflective and reflexive 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 a structured outline.

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/or 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 can be found on the Field Education page of the UVM Department of Social Work website.

V. December Evaluation

Purpose and Brief Description: Students and Field Instructors are expected to participate in a formal evaluation at the end of November or beginning of December, to be completed by the last day of Fall classes (For AY 2021-2022, this is December 10). The content and the timeliness of the evaluation will be considered in assigning the final grade. There is a form with discussion prompts available on the UVM Department of Social Work Field Education webpage.

VI. Anti-Oppressive Practice Assignment (Spring only)

Purpose and Brief Description: There are multiple places in any social work curriculum where students look specifically at practice skills and philosophical approaches to our work with people and systems through an anti-oppressive lens. In an attempt to help integrate Practice and Field along this framework, we are asking students to begin a conversation with their field instructors about the anti-oppressive practices in their agency.
Students will work with their field instructor(s) to help them identify anti-oppressive practices and perspectives utilized in their program and organization. Faculty field liaisons will offer several handouts to ground the discussion, which consists of working through the “Seven Principles of Oppressive Practices (adapted by C. Cuddy from Brisebois & Gonzales-Prendes work in 2014) and record/submit to your field liaison a summary of salient points from that discussion.

VII. Ending Evaluation

Purpose and Brief Description: Students and Field Instructors are expected to participate in a formal evaluation at the end of April or the beginning of May, to be completed by the last day of Spring classes (For AY 2021-2022, this is May 6). The content and the timeliness of the evaluation will be considered in assigning the final grade. The paper version of this form is available on the UVM Department of Social Work [Field Education webpage](#).

( NOTE: While the paper version of this form continues to be available on the Department of Social Work Field Education webpage, it should be noted that students and Field Instructors must enter this data into UVM’s College of Education and Social Services’ assessment system, TK-20 prior to the end of the semester (for AY 2021-2022, this is May 6). The TK-20 system will send system-generated emails to Field instructors and students during the Spring semester with instructions and log-in credentials. The log-in page for this system can be found [here](#).)

### COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

#### Fall Semester 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date/Time/Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FMSW Field Orientation (required)</td>
<td>Weds, Aug 25, 1-4pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Field Liaison Seminar #1</td>
<td>Week of Sept 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Agreements due</td>
<td>Fri, Oct 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Field Liaison Seminar #2</td>
<td>Week of Oct 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Field Liaison Seminar #3</td>
<td>Week of Nov 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Record 1 of 3 due</td>
<td>TBD by student and FI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Record 2 of 3 due (if 2 in Fall)</td>
<td>TBD by student and FI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress towards Completion of Hours (~191)</td>
<td>Fri, Dec 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December Evaluation due</td>
<td>Fri, Dec 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Spring Semester 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date/Time/Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Field Liaison Seminar #4</td>
<td>Week of Feb 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Agreement Addendum due</td>
<td>Fri, Feb 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Oppressive Practice Assignment due</td>
<td>Fri, Mar 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Field Liaison Seminar #5</td>
<td>Week of Mar 14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Day/time/location TBD via liaison communication
Faculty Field Liaison Seminar #6  Week of Apr 11
Day/time/location TBD via liaison communication
Process Record 2 of 3 (if not done Fall)  TBD by student and FI
Process Record 3 of 3 due  TBD by student and FI
Field Hours complete (minimum 382.5)  Fri, May 6
Ending Evaluation due  Fri, May 6

UNIVERSITY AND COURSE POLICIES

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Students are responsible for knowing and observing all UVM policies regarding student rights and responsibilities. These policies address the following: Academic Integrity, Class Attendance, Athletic-Academic Conflicts and Religious Holidays. Likewise, social work faculty and students are responsible for knowing and observing the Classroom Code of Conduct. This is the link to these policies on the UVM website.

Accommodations

In keeping with University policy, any student with a documented disability interested in utilizing accommodations should contact SAS, the office of Disability Services on campus. SAS works with students and faculty in an interactive process to explore reasonable and appropriate accommodations, which are communicated to faculty in an accommodation letter. All students are strongly encouraged to meet with their faculty to discuss the accommodations they plan to use in each course. A student's accommodation letter lists those accommodations that will not be implemented until the student meets with their faculty to create a plan. Contact SAS: A170 Living/Learning Center; 802-656-7753; access@uvm.edu; or www.uvm.edu/access.

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, the courses in the Department of Social Work will affirm and respect difference. Explicit attention will be given but not limited to the intersectionality of age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status (Competency 2., CSWE 2015 EPAS).

This affirmation will be apparent in the construction of the course objectives and course assignments, the selection of course materials and the instructor’s ongoing attention facilitating a respectful, engaged learning for all students. Of particular significance, students and faculty should "apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in the classroom and in communicating about and working with diverse clients and constituencies (Competency 2).

Freedom of Expression & Speech, and Respectful Dialogue

Due to the topics of this course, some readings and discussions may be emotionally challenging or evoke controversial ideas. Considering and engaging multiple, complex positions is a necessary dimension of the discursive processes and applied learning in
social work education. Moreover, as employees of a public university, UVM faculty must seek to protect everyone’s First Amendment rights\(^6\) and the free speech exceptions established by the Supreme Court.

Respect for difference and diversity is to be demonstrated toward all members of the class, whether or not agreement exists among the positions taken on an issue. This is an integral part of engaging difference and diversity in social work practice and of participating professionally in the collaborative learning processes of social work courses.

For further understanding of the ethical standards, values and norms informing these policies, see: the NASW Code of Ethics (2017),\(^7\) the university’s Our Common Ground,\(^8\) the core philosophy of the UVM Department of Social Work\(^9\) and the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, specifically Article 9.\(^{10}\)

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6 https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/bill-of-rights-transcript#toc-amendment-i
8 http://www.uvm.edu/~presdent/?Page=miscellaneous/commonground.html
9 https://www.uvm.edu/cess/socialwork/about_us