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

SWSS290A/290B
Fall 2022/Spring 2023
Foundation Year Field Practicum

Semester: Fall 2022/Spring 2023
Instructors: Jean Sienkewicz (Field Education Coordinator), Alice Scannell (Faculty Field Liaison)
Credits: 3 credits each semester
Office e-mails: jsienkew@uvm.edu, alice.scannell@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 900 hours over their two years in field, or 450/year.

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.

(Note: Due to ongoing COVID-19 precautions, “hands-on” can and should take the possibility of remotely-completed projects into account. For AY 2022-2023, projects completed remotely can and should count towards a student’s total placement hours.)

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 COMPETENCIES¹

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 and sign the Microsoft Forms document 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 assigned Faculty Field Liaison.

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 (250)</td>
<td>Dec 9</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>Sept 30</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Record #1 with Field Instructor feedback</td>
<td>Oct 21</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Record #2 with Field Instructor feedback</td>
<td>Nov 11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December Evaluation signed by all parties</td>
<td>Dec 9</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 (450 minimum)</td>
<td>May 5</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 17</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Record #3 with Field Instructor Feedback</td>
<td>Feb 17</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Oppressive Practice Assignment</td>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Record #4 with Field Instructor Feedback</td>
<td>March 31</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ending Evaluation</td>
<td>May 5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></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:2</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 courses\(^3\) 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.

I. **Field Hours**

**Purpose and Brief Description:** Students are expected to complete a minimum of 450 hours in their approved and confirmed field placement for the Academic Year 2022-2023. 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 450 hours before the last day of classes (for AY 2022-2023, this is May 5). 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.

II. **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 (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 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

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2 Graduate Students do not receive a grade of D.
3 [http://catalogue.uvm.edu/graduate/academicenrollment/gradingpolicies/](http://catalogue.uvm.edu/graduate/academicenrollment/gradingpolicies/)
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 Field Liaison to make up seminar 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 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 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.

Detailed 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 2022-2023, this is December 9). 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

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 2022-2023, this is May 5). 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 2022-2023, this is May 5). 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 2022

- FMSW Field Orientation (required)  
  Weds, Aug 24, 1-4pm
- Faculty Field Liaison Seminar #1  
  Week of Sept 12
  Day/time/location TBD via liaison communication
- Learning Agreements due  
  Fri, Sept. 30
- Faculty Field Liaison Seminar #2  
  Week of Oct 10
  Day/time/location TBD via liaison communication
- Faculty Field Liaison Seminar #3  
  Week of Nov 14
  Day/time/location TBD via liaison communication
- Process Record 1 due  
  Fri, Oct 21
- Process Record 2 due  
  Fri, Nov 11
- Process Record 3 due  
  Fri, Feb 17
- Process Record 4 due  
  Fri, March 31
- Field Hours complete (minimum 250)  
  Fri, Dec 9
- December Evaluation due  
  Fri, Dec 9

Spring Semester 2023

- Faculty Field Liaison Seminar #4  
  Week of Feb 6
  Day/time/location TBD via liaison communication
- Learning Agreement Addendum due  
  Fri, Feb 17
- Process Record 3 due  
  Fri, Feb 17
- Anti-Oppressive Practice Assignment due  
  Fri, Mar 3
- Faculty Field Liaison Seminar #5  
  Week of Mar 6
  Day/time/location TBD via liaison communication
- Faculty Field Liaison Seminar #6  
  Week of Apr 3
  Day/time/location TBD via liaison communication
- Process Record 4 due  
  Fri, March 31
- Field Hours complete (minimum 450)  
  Fri, May 5
- Ending Evaluation due  
  Fri, May 5

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 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), the university’s Our Common Ground,6 the core philosophy of the UVM Department of Social Work7 and the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, specifically Article 9.8

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