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

SWSS390A/390B/290C  
Fall 2022/Spring 2023  
Specialized Practice Year Field Practicum

Semester: Fall 2022/Spring 2023  
Instructors: Charlotte McCorkel, Ann Pugh, Greeta Soderholm (Faculty Field Liaisons) and Jean Sienkewicz (Field Education Coordinator)  
Credits: 3 credits each semester  
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Phone: 802-656-8800  
Office hours: By appointment  
Preferred mode of communication: Email  
Usual email pattern: M-F, 9am-5pm

Co-requisites:  
Fall: SWSS 314 Transformative Social Work I  
Spring: SWSS 315 Transformative Social Work I

Pre-requisites:  
Fall: All Foundation Year MSW courses or admission to the MSW Program with Advanced Standing Status  
Spring: SWSS 314 Transformative Social Work I & first semester of SWSS 390

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. Specialized Practice MSW (SPMSW) students have one placement throughout the academic year and need to complete a total of 900 hours over their two years in field, or 450/year. SPMSW Advanced Standing (SPMSW AS) students have one placement throughout the academic year and complete a minimum of 600 hours for AS students (see NOTES below).

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.)

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, 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, and
3. A generative practice that encourages the integration of policy, research, and practice so that change is long lasting and iterative.

The Specialized Practice Year Practicum provides all second year MSW students with opportunities to expand upon Foundation/Undergraduate social work course and fieldwork. 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 Master’s level employment where they can continue their learning outside of the formal classroom environment.

COURSE OBJECTIVES & SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES

After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the particular skills, knowledges, and sensitivities needed to work with clients in Transformative Social Work Practice.
2. Apply multiple theoretical perspectives and multi-level interventions in meeting individual client and collective needs.
3. Work autonomously within the limits of the profession and multi-agency and organizational settings.

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

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1 Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) 2015 Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS).
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](#) as well as the Guide to Writing the Learning Agreement (to be provided by Faculty Field Liaison). Students are also required to utilize the course Blackboard as stipulated by your 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 SPMSW/300 SPMSW AS)</td>
<td>Dec 9</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation in Monthly Field Seminars with Faculty Field Liaisons</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>TOTAL</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 SPMSW/600 SPMSW AS)</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 3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Oppressive Practice Assignment</td>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Record #3 with Field Instructor Feedback</td>
<td>March 24</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Record #4 with Field Instructor Feedback</td>
<td>April 14</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><strong>100</strong></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+ 74-76</td>
<td>F 73-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 94-96</td>
<td>B 84-86</td>
<td>C 74-76</td>
<td>D 70-73</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- 70-73</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

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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/)
Purpose and Brief Description: Purpose and Brief Description: Students are expected to complete a minimum of 450 hours (SPMSW) or 600 hours (Advanced Standing SPMSW) 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.

Evaluation Criteria: Students will negotiate a weekly field schedule with their Field Instructor so as to complete their required minimum hours before the last day of classes (for AY 2022-2023, this is May 5). Students will read and adhere to the Student Hours 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 virtual seminars are purposefully constructed for a small number of students to consult with one another about their field practicum experiences and their emerging professional 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 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.)

Evaluation Criteria: 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 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/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 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**

- AS Field Orientation (required)  
  Weds, August 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 7  
  *Day/time/location TBD via liaison communication*
- Process Record 1 due  
  Oct 21
- Process Record 2 due  
  Nov 11
- Progress towards Completion of Hours (250/300)  
  Fri, Dec 9
- December Evaluation due  
  Fri, Dec 9

**Spring Semester 2023**

- Faculty Field Liaison Seminar #4  
  Week of Jan 23  
  *Day/time/location TBD via liaison communication*
- Learning Agreement Addendum due  
  Fri, Feb 3
- Faculty Field Liaison Seminar #5  
  Week of Feb 20  
  *Day/time/location TBD via liaison communication*
- Anti-Oppressive Practice Assignment due  
  Fri, Mar 3
- Process Record 3 due  
  Fri, Mar 24
Faculty Field Liaison Seminar #6: Week of Apr 3
Day/time/location TBD via liaison communication
Process Record 4 due: Fri, April 14
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*, the core philosophy of the UVM Department of Social Work, and the United Nations’ *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, specifically Article 9.

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7 [https://www.uvm.edu/cess/socialwork/about_us](https://www.uvm.edu/cess/socialwork/about_us)