

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

SWSS 290A/290B
Fall 2019 & Spring 2020
Foundation Year Field Practicum

Semester: Fall 2018 & Spring 2019
Instructors: JB Barna, Alice Scannell and Robin Pesci
Credits: 3 credits each semester
Office: e-mails: jbarna@uvm.edu, alice.scannell@uvm.edu, robin.pesci@uvm.edu
Phone: 802-656-8800
Office hours: By appointment
Preferred mode of communication: email
Usual email pattern: M-F, 9 a.m. & 5 p.m.

Co-requisite: Fall: SWSS 212
Spring: SWSS 213
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 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 first year of the field education curriculum in an accredited masters 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 skills to increasingly complex skills. The successful completion of this course indicates a student's ability to move into the more advanced and autonomous concentration 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 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 competencies that CSWE requires you to master by the time you graduate from the social work 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 document that says they are aware of the contents and policies within.

LEARNING 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.

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

LEARNING ASSESSMENT ASSIGNMENTS

Table 1. Assignments, Deadlines & Grading

Fall Learning Assessment Assignments	Dates Due	Points
<i>Progress toward Completion of Field Hours (~185)</i>	Dec 6	20
<i>Attendance and Participation in Field Seminars with Faculty Field Liaisons</i>	Monthly See course outline for dates	Up to 20
<i>Learning Agreement</i>	Oct 7	Up to 10
<i>Process Record #1</i>	Oct 28	Up to 10
<i>Process Record #2</i>	Nov 11	Up to 10
<i>December Evaluation</i>	Dec 6	Up to 30
TOTAL		100

Spring Learning Assessment Assignments	Dates Due	Points
<i>Completion of Field Hours</i>	May 1	20
<i>Attendance and Participation in Field Seminars with Faculty Field Liaisons</i>	Monthly See course outline for dates	Up to 20
<i>Review and Completion of any Updates and Revisions to Learning Agreement</i>	Feb 10	Up to 10
<i>Process Record #3</i>	March 2	Up to 10
<i>Process Record #4</i>	April 13	Up to 10
<i>Ending Evaluation</i>	May 8	Up to 30
TOTAL		100

UVM Grading System: 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 courses² incompletes require the approval of the Graduate College dean.

² <http://catalogue.uvm.edu/graduate/academicenrollment/gradingpolicies/>

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 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.

Evaluation Criteria: Students will negotiate a weekly field schedule with their field instructor so as to complete 450 hours before May 4th. Students will read and adhere to the field policy (see webpage) on hours in the field.

II. Attendance and Participation in 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 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.

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

III. Learning Agreement

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 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. Please go to the Field Education page of UVM’s Department of Social Work website for guidance on this assignment. <https://www.uvm.edu/cess/socialwork>

While the Learning Agreement is started in the fall semester, the beginning of the spring semester offers the opportunity for revisions and updates.

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 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 can be found on the Field Education page of the UVM Department of Social Work website. <https://www.uvm.edu/cess/socialwork>

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. The content and the timeliness of the evaluation will be considered in assigning the final grade. There is a form and discussion prompts available on the UVM Department of Social Work Field Education Webpage. <https://www.uvm.edu/cess/socialwork>

VI. **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. The content and the timeliness of the evaluation will be considered in assigning the final grade. There is a form and discussion prompts available on the UVM Department of Social Work Field Webpage. <https://www.uvm.edu/cess/socialwork>

COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

Field Orientation/Field/Seminar #1	Fri, Aug 23 (11:00 – 12:00)
Field Seminar #2	Mon, Oct 7 (10:15 -11:45)
Learning Agreements due	Mon, Oct 7
Field Seminar #3	Mon, Oct 28 (10:15 – 11:45)
Process Record #1 due	Mon, Oct 28
Field Seminar #4	Mon, Nov 11 (10:15 – 11:45)
Process Record # 2 due	Mon, Nov 11
Signed December Evaluation due	Fri, Dec 6
Field Seminar #5	Mon, Feb 10 (10:15 – 11:45)
Revisions to Learning Agreement due	Fri, Feb 10
Field Seminar #6	Mon, March 2 (10:15 – 11:45)
Process Record #3 due	Mon, March 2
Field Seminar #7	Mon, April 13 (10:15 – 11:45)
Process Record #4 due	Mon, April 13
Final Evaluation due	Fri, May 8

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:

<http://catalogue.uvm.edu/undergraduate/academicinfo/rightsandresponsibilities/>

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 rights³ 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),⁴ the university's *Our Common Ground*,⁵ the core philosophy of the Department of Social Work⁶ and the United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, specifically Article 9.⁷

3 <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/bill-of-rights-transcript#toc-amendment-i>
4 <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>
5 <http://www.uvm.edu/~presdent/?Page=miscellaneous/commonground.html>
6 https://www.uvm.edu/cess/socialwork/about_us
7 <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>