GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

SW 492: Social Work Field Seminar I

Professor:
Email:
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Credits: 1
Co-requisites: SW 490

MISSION AND GOALS

BSW Program Mission

As an established School of Social Work in the region, the mission of the GVSU BSW program is to develop well-rounded generalist social workers who recognize and understand the worth of all people, and are prepared to address the unique needs of vulnerable individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in West Michigan, the State, the Nation, and globally. We value diversity, serving our community, scientific inquiry, relationships, and ethical practice and are united by a commitment to our students, the profession, and the University. Graduates will be lifelong learners, prepared for advanced studies and a values-driven, service-oriented professional life. Through our ecologically-minded, research-informed, rights-based, anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and social justice approach to education, graduates will be skilled and knowledgeable in ethical practice, comprehensive justice, cultural competence, and inclusion. Graduates will be prepared to apply their knowledge to serve their communities, enhancing human rights and relationships and fighting poverty. Our high-impact generalist curriculum, including field education, will produce skilled social workers with a well-rounded liberal arts foundation who are committed to enhancing the well-being and equity of all people and reflecting the values of the profession. (Adopted 12.2.2024)

BSW Program Goals

The BSW program's goals are derived directly from its mission statement and are designed to meet the social service needs of its Program location and beyond. They are:

1. To provide a generalist BSW curriculum in a high-quality learning environment that prepares students for entry-level social work practice and graduate education.
2. To prepare graduates for bachelor's level practice that promotes social, economic, racial, and environmental justice and endeavors to address poverty and other social problems within individual, family, group, organizational, and community contexts in local, regional, statewide, national, and international settings focused on improving the quality of life for all persons.
3. To award the undergraduate degree to individuals who are competent generalist practitioners, adhere to the *NASW Code of Ethics,* promote human rights, incorporate anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion into their practice, and advance the profession's reputation and knowledge base locally, nationally, and globally.
4. To instill the value of lifelong development of professional social work knowledge and practice through supervision, scholarly inquiry, research, and ethical use of emerging technology. (Adopted 3.18.25)

FIELD EDUCATION: THE SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY

Field Education is the signature pedagogy of social work education and offers students opportunities to fully integrate and practice the skills necessary to demonstrate achievement with the School of Social Work's core competencies and practice behaviors. Field Education provides practical application of values, skills, and knowledge introduced to students in foundation and advanced coursework. Using carefully selected community partnerships and at the direction of qualified field instructors, students become participating members of the social work community while learning to apply the ethics and values needed for effective service delivery with populations at risk. Participation in the guided seminar class assists the student in assimilating course content with community-based learning.

FIELD EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

In keeping with the most recent practice standards outlined by the Council on Social Work Education, the Grand Valley State University School of Social Work recognizes the centrality of field education curriculum in addressing competencies at the MSW and BSW levels. Field Education curriculum provides students with an experiential and imitative learning opportunity to explore and use Social Work ideas, concepts, and behaviors first encountered in the classroom. These learning opportunities are designed to further develop professional social work identity, self-reflection and self-awareness, and practice competence in each student. In each semester of field placement, students develop concrete and measurable activities that address the competencies using the learning contract and evaluation. The development and monitoring of these activities requires the collaboration of the student, the agency-based field supervisor, and the university-based faculty liaison. This model of collaborative competency-based Field Education is implemented at both the BSW and MSW levels.

Additional emphasis on the integration of coursework into Field Education is provided by the guided Field Education Seminar coursework, which provides students with the opportunity to actively reflect on the connection between classroom theory and agency application. Furthering the centrality and integrative nature of the field experience is the use of tenure and tenure-track faculty actively engaged in teaching. This faculty further ensures the reciprocal nature of field practice in courses and the field experience.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Competency 1:
Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Competency 2:
Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Competency 3:
Engage in Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

Competency 4:
Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Competency 5:
Engage in Policy 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

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This Field Education course requires concurrent attendance with SW 490, Field Education I. This course assists students in understanding and achieving competence in the social work skills taught and practiced in their field practicum setting. The course requires students to report and analyze field activities with faculty and peers, including the assessment and evaluation of client populations as well as issues related to agency functioning.

Field Education Seminar is designed to be a directed peer learning course where students take significant responsibility for their own and their peer's professional growth and development. This type of course requires students to be active participants in their own learning and to share their excitement, fears, success and frustrations with classmates. As such, the Field Education Seminar reflects an active learning environment that mirrors the type of trust, support, openness, feedback and safety essential to productive supervision. Emphasis is on the development of competencies and observable behaviors encountered in professional practice. Field Education Seminar focuses on the integration of the knowledge, values and skills of all curricular content in practice and are integrated in the Field Education Seminar through discussions, activities and assignments. The Faculty Liaison is responsible for directing and reflecting upon class discussions to highlight connections among competencies, practice behaviors and identified benchmarks.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of the course the students will be able to:

1. Application/Apply:
Apply values, skills, and knowledge introduced to students in foundation and advanced coursework.

2. Adaptation/Develop:
Develop professional social work identity, self-reflection and self-awareness, and practice competence in each student.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Social Work Field Seminar I integrates theoretical and conceptual contributions from classroom learning with practical experiences accumulated during three semesters of a practicum. This experience within a practice setting is intended to prepare BSW students for professional practice as generalist social workers and to further socialize them in social work values, ethics, and orientation towards social justice. Within the seminar and field education itself, students are expected to address all nine core competencies. The dimensions of the competencies include the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes, as well as expected behaviors to demonstrate competence. Students will demonstrate an adequate level of proficiency in each of the nine competencies by the conclusion of field education, as evidenced through the evaluation of the learning contract by the field supervisor and self-evaluation by the student.

Recommended text(s)

Grand Valley State University [GVSU], School of Social Work. (2025). *Bachelor of social work field education manual: Policies and procedures*. Grand Rapids, MI: GVSU.

National Association of Social Workers. (2021). *Code of ethics of the National Association of Social Workers*. https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English

Poulin, J., Matis, S., & Witt, H. (2023). *The social work field placement: A competency-based approach* (2nd ed.). Springer Publishing Company. https://doi.org/10.1891/9780826137531

Switzer, H.F. & King, M.A. (2014). 4th edition. *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional, and Civic Development in Experiential Learning*. Belmont CA: Brooks/Cole.

Attendance and Class Participation

Field Education Seminar is mandatory. Students are expected to be on time for Field Education Seminar meetings and to remain for the entire duration of the Seminar. Students are not expected to miss Field Education Seminar. Faculty Field Liaisons may develop make-up assignments for any missed seminar. However, missing more than one Field Education Seminar may be grounds for receiving a "no credit" grade in Field Education. Field Education and Field Education Seminar are inextricably related; failure to receive a "credit" grade in Field Education Seminar will result in a "no credit" grade in both Field Education I and Field Education Seminar I. If you have an unexpected emergency that prevents you from attending seminar, it is your responsibility to contact your Faculty Liaison immediately.

Grades

This is a credit/no credit course. Grades are based upon factors that include, but are not limited to completion of 15 hours of Field Education Seminar attendance, class participation, Field Education Supervisor and Faculty Field Liaison evaluation of performance in Field Education,

and satisfactory performance in both Field Education and Field Education Seminar.

ASSIGNMENTS

AGENCY PRESENTATION

The purpose of this assignment is to develop your understanding of the Field Education agency and to share that understanding with other students. Students are required to interview their colleagues at the field placement site to gain the information. Do not simply rely on the agency's website for information. Please address each area listed below. Be creative! The presentation should last no more than 10 minutes. Please submit a copy of the agency presentation to your instructor via email by the date you are presenting.

1. Name/location/phone number/website of the agency (2 points)
2. Identify the services/programs the agency provides. If applicable, identify what program are you assigned. (2 points)
3. What is the presenting problem and/or needs of the clients who seek services at the agency? (2 points)
4. What, if any, is the eligibility requirement(s) for services? (2 points)
5. How does the agency/program receive its referrals? (2 points)
6. As future social workers, name one thing you want your peers to remember about the agency. (2 points)
7. What is your role at the agency and what are your primary responsibilities? (2 points)
8. Share one of your learning experiences at the agency thus far. (2 points)
9. What excites you about completing your Field Education placement at this agency? What skills do you anticipate learning and practicing at your Field Education placement? (2 points)
10. What do you think will be your greatest challenge during Field Education? What is your plan for overcoming that challenge? (2 points)

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT

A total of seven journals will be due throughout the semester. Journal entries are to be submitted via email or Blackboard to your instructor. They are due by noon on the day your seminar meets. Also, you are required to relate each of your journal entries to one or more of the nine competencies. Please make sure I know which competency you have chosen. When writing the journal, students are to choose one sentence stem (from below) and provide a thorough answer.

- One highlight of my week was… and one downside of my week was…
- My biggest concern right now…
- This week in supervision…
- My biases were apparent when…
- I was surprised…
- One thing I am learning about myself is…
- Consider and discuss what your thoughts were about_____ prior to your internship. How have your thoughts changed over time? What influenced the change?
- Discuss a time you had to make a decision at your internship about_____ How did you make your decision? What factors did you consider? What was the outcome of your decision?
- I am feeling uneasy about_____ because_____ What steps could you take to ease this concern?
- Discuss interesting/difficult/stressful/rewarding experiences at your internship with an individual, group, family, organization or community
- Discuss any work affecting you personally – countertransference, 'pushing buttons' etc.
- Discuss the skills you are developing/utilizing. How do you know you are building these skills?
- Discuss the areas in which you need to develop more skills. How do you plan to further develop the skills?
- Discuss a challenge you experienced at your internship and how you worked through it
- Discuss a value that you encountered in practice and how that value influenced your work
- Discuss an "ah ha" moment when you were able to see something you learned in a class, play out at your internship
- Discuss an interaction you had with a client, colleague, or supervisor and what you learned from this interaction
- Share a success you had this week. What made it a success?
- Discuss the results of an interaction with a person who is in some way culturally different from you. Share any thoughts or feelings you had during the interaction.
- Share an instance where you felt confident in your role. Describe the situation/encounter from beforehand, during, and afterwards.
- Share what you learned about a policy that impacts social work practice
- I advocated by……
- I researched_____ and the used the research by……
- I responded to feedback by…

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL GRADING RUBRIC

Questions	Points	Definition
Satisfactory Content	2	Rich in content; insightful analysis; strong in critical thinking and self- reflection; ideas and observations are well structured, accurate use of vocabulary and grammar, few errors.
Partially Satisfactory	1	Partial responses or some questions unanswered, some insight and analysis but not as in depth; ideas and observations are more loosely associated, some writing and grammatical errors.
Inadequate Content	0	Questions unanswered or superficial; little analysis or self-reflection, obvious writing and grammatical errors
Competency	**Points**	**Adequacy**
Satisfactory	1	Competency identified; thorough explanation why/how the competency relates to the journal topic
Unsatisfactory	0	Competency not identified; poor explanation why/how the competency relates to the journal topic

LEARNING CONTRACT/EVALUATION

A learning contract must be completed as part of your Field Education. The learning contract is due within the first four weeks of the semester. At the end of the semester, the learning contract will be used as an evaluation of your progress in Field Education. A grade of "credit" for field education and seminar cannot be awarded until the evaluated learning contract is completed.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING LEARNING CONTRACT AND EVALUATION

A new Learning Contract is required for each semester of Field Education. The student (under the guidance of the Field Education Supervisor) is responsible for generating the tasks/activities that the student will complete over the course of the semester. Tasks and activities will assist the student in developing the observable behaviors and the development of the competency as a whole. At the end of the semester, the Learning Contract becomes the basis for evaluating student progress during Field Education. The assessment requires input from both the Field Education Supervisor and student. The rating scale provided below should be used by the Field Education Supervisor and student in assigning numeric scores to progress for each behavior and assessment of the overall competency. The Field Education Supervisor rates student progress in the column titled "Field Education Supervisor Rating" and the student self-assesses their progress in the column titled "Student Rating." The Field Education Supervisor rating is the basis for recommending a grade to the Faculty Field Liaison, benchmarks, and program assessment. Student rating is used for self-awareness and professional growth.

END OF SEMESTER EVALUATION SCALE

SCORE	DEFINITION
1	**Unacceptable Competence**: Student has not developed in relation to this behavior/ competency. The student was unable to demonstrate a basic level of understanding and proficiency. Performance Improvement Plan required in collaboration with student's Faculty Field Liaison.
2	**Minimal Competence**: Student is aware of and demonstrates minimal evidence of competence, growth, and change; unable to demonstrate an adequate level of understanding and proficiency. Performance Improvement Plan required in collaboration with student's Faculty Field Liaison.
3	**Emerging Competence**: Student meets baseline expectations and is progressing. The student has demonstrated an adequate level of understanding and proficiency.
4	**Competence**: Student demonstrates consistent growth and development, increased levels of understanding and proficiency. Able to function with independence.
5	**Advanced Competence**: Student demonstrates a high degree of competence, understanding, and proficiency. Able to initiate and add significant value.

Performance Improvement Plan

If a score of 1 "unacceptable competence" or 2" minimal competence" is given for a behavior, a performance improvement plan is required. Please develop and attach a performance improvement plan for each behavior/competency where a score of 1 or 2 was given.

Practicum Review Committee Meeting

If 9 or more scores on the Field Education Supervisor Assessment are at a 2 or lower, the student will be referred for a Practicum Review Committee Meeting with the Field Education office.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND WELL-BEING

Non-Discrimination and Diversity

Every aspect of University life should be free from discrimination because of age, color, disability, familial status, height, marital status, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sex/gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, veteran status, or weight. Student housing, organizations, athletics, classes and University community facilities should be open to all who desire to participate. - Student Code Section 100.01

The School of Social Work at Grand Valley State University is committed to anti-racism, diversity, inclusion, and equity. Faculty work collectively and continuously to define these terms as they relate to social work education. You can find these working definitions here: ADEI Definitions. We infuse our commitment into explicit and implicit in classroom and field

education. It is expected that students demonstrate respect for diversity, consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics, in their academic and professional performance.

SSW Handbook and GVSU Student Code

The School of Social Work Handbook and GVSU Student Code include all policies, practices, and procedures. These policies include your rights and options as a student, as well as student responsibilities. All the policies outlined in these sources apply to courses and participation in the BSW and MSW Programs. Faculty in the School of Social Work will follow the Academic Misconduct Procedures (STU 6.1) related to cheating, collusion, dual submission, falsification and fabrication, and plagiarism. The use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) such as ChatGPT, GPT, DALL-E, GitHub, and Copilot without the instructor's explicit permission falls under plagiarism. (SSW Adopted 12/10/24)

Student Accessibility Statement

Grand Valley State University strives to provide an inclusive environment across campus that is accessible to all individuals with a diverse range of abilities. As your instructor, it is my objective to facilitate opportunities within all class activities and programs because your success is important to me. If you are encountering difficulties that are interrupting your learning experience, please feel free to make those known to me as soon as possible, as early planning is essential. If you feel that you need accommodations in this course, you must present a memo to me from Student Accessibility Resources, indicating the existence of a disability and the approved accommodations. If the class meets in person, you should schedule a meeting with me during office hours to discuss your accommodations. If your class is online or hybrid, please forward your memo to me in an email and schedule a virtual or phone appointment with me to discuss your accommodations. Accommodations are not retroactive. If you have not already done so, please contact the Student Accessibility Resources office (215 CON) by calling (616) 331-2490 or by email access@gvsu.edu. Please note that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received a copy of the Accessibility Resources issued memo. Furthermore, if you have a disability and think you will need assistance evacuating this classroom and/or building in an emergency, please make me aware so that the university and I can develop a plan to assist you. All discussions will remain confidential. (GVSU Revised 8/26/24)

Student Well-Being

You may experience a range of issues that can negatively impact your learning, such as anxiety, depression, interpersonal or sexual violence, difficulty eating or sleeping, loss/grief, and/or alcohol/drug problems. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and affect your ability to participate in day-to-day activities. In order to support you during such challenging times, GVSU provides a number of confidential resources to all enrolled students, including the University Counseling Center (https://www.gvsu.edu/counsel/ or (616) 331-3266) and the Student Ombuds, Takeelia Garrett (garrettt@gvsu.edu). Additional resources include the National Suicide Prevention 24/7 Crisis Line, which can be reached by calling or texting 988.

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