



SW650 - Field Education I

Prerequisites: SW 600, SW 601, SW 603
and SW 620

Co-requisites: SW 651

Credits: 3

Professor:

SSW Office: 616-331-6550

Email:

Office hours:

MISSION AND GOALS

As an established School of Social Work in the region, the mission of the GVSU MSW program is to prepare excellent advanced generalist social workers who are committed to the advancement of human rights, equity, and well-being among the individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities of 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. We are guided by research and ecological, rights-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches to teaching and practice. The program is committed to maintaining academically rigorous courses and dynamic field education experiences that prepare graduates to adopt a service-oriented approach to the complex social, behavioral, and systemic challenges they will encounter. Graduates will possess the professions' knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes necessary to ethically adapt and advocate for the comprehensive justice of all people. We strive to develop lifelong learners who are committed to justice, human relationships, cultural competence, humility, and serving the most vulnerable populations. (Adopted 12.2.2024)

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

1. To provide a foundational MSW curriculum and an advanced generalist social work curriculum that prepares graduates for autonomous social work practice and instills a commitment to professional development.
2. To prepare graduates for master's level social work 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 graduate degree to individuals who are skilled practitioners, adhere to the *NASW Code of Ethics*, promote human rights, incorporate anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion into their practice, and are capable of assuming leadership and professional roles locally, nationally, and globally.

4. To instill the value of lifelong development and responsibility to contribute to the professional social work knowledge base and practice through leadership, supervision, scholarly inquiry, research, and ethical use of emerging technology.

THE ADVANCED GENERALIST MODEL

The Advanced Generalist Model is built on a liberal arts education that promotes the use of critical thinking skills and conscientious application of advanced practice social work knowledge, skills, values, ethics, and cognitive and affective processes. The advanced generalist serves a dual purpose. First the model integrates the advanced practice skills concentration curriculum to equip graduates to meet the diverse demands presented by unique social service delivery system and second it provides the context for students in which the program achieves its goals.

Features of the Advanced Generalist Model are designed to:

- Enhance the depth and breadth of practice in a multi-method, multi-level, and theoretically grounded perspective
- Refine and shape advanced practitioners through acquisition of professional competencies to assess, intervene, and evaluate within all systems and within all practice environments
- Affirm that human problems derive from a complex interplay of psychological, social, cultural, economic, political, biological and physical forces
- Prepare students to effectively intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities
- Expand and enhance the foundation of generalist social work core competencies with advanced knowledge and practice behaviors
- Acquire advanced skills in leadership, collaboration, administration, advocacy, assessment, problem solving, intervention, cultural competency, communication, collaboration, community building, program evaluation, organizational management, policy analysis, and scientific inquiry

The integration of professional practice skills within the Advanced Generalist curriculum model results in mastery of social work's core competencies and advanced generalist practitioners are proficient in a wide range of interventions, skills, roles, theories, systems and settings (Jones & Pierce, 2006).

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 to assimilate 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 level. 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 require the collaboration of the student, the agency-based field instructor and the university-based faculty liaison. This model of collaborative competency-based Field Education is implemented at both the BSW and MSW level.

Additional emphasis on the integration of coursework into Field Education is provided by the guided Field Education Seminar coursework, providing 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 insures the reciprocal nature of field practice in courses and the field experience.

This Field Education course requires concurrent attendance with SW 651, a Field Education Seminar designed to integrate classroom teaching, supervision and evaluation with the student's placement in a social agency.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Competency 1:

Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Competency 2:

Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Competency 3:

Engage 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

The first in a series of applied Field Education courses involving 300 clock hours. Emphasis is on the advanced application of assessment, interaction, and evaluation skills within a generalist framework.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- 1) Model values, skills and knowledge introduced to students in foundation and advanced coursework.
- 2) Develop professional social work identity, self-reflection and self-awareness, and practice competence in each student.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Field Education I requires 315 clock hours in a Field Education setting approved by the School of Social Work. Fifteen of the 315 hours are earned in Field Education Seminar (SW 651). Field Education and Field Education Seminar are inextricably related and must be completed simultaneously in order to receive credit for Field Education.

- a. Students will complete a Learning Contract based on the CSWE competencies and behaviors that demonstrate achievement of the prescribed benchmark for each.
- b. Students will maintain a log, journal, process recording audio/video taping, etc. as arranged and/or required by the Field Supervisor and/or Faculty Liaison.
- c. Students will meet all University and Placement Site Health Compliance Requirements.

- d. Students will participate in an end of semester performance evaluation meeting with her/his Field Supervisor and Faculty Liaison each semester.
- e. Students will complete a Field Education Evaluation each semester.
- f. Students will complete a Field Education Exit Survey at the completion of Field Education III.

Recommended text(s)

Grand Valley State University [GVSU], School of Social Work. (2025). *Master 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>

Switzer, H.F. & King, M.A. (2014). *The successful Internship: personal, professional, and civic development in experiential learning*. (4th ed.). Belmont CA: Brooks/Cole.

Ward, K., Mama, R. S., & Moore-Bembry, N. (2025). *Breaking out of the box: Adventure-based field instruction* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.

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 (garrett@gvsu.edu). Additional resources include the National Suicide Prevention 24/7 Crisis Line, which can be reached by calling or texting 988.