



## **SW 651 - Field Education Seminar I**

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

**Co-requisites:** SW 650

**Credits:** 1

**Professor:**

**SSW Office:** 616-331-6550

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**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 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 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 levels.

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 SW650, Field Education I.

## **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**

Focus on the integration of knowledge, skills, and values with Advanced Generalist practice for students in field education placements. Illustrations from students' work in agency setting included.

## **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**

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 MSW 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 conclusions of field education as evidenced through the evaluation of the learning contract by the field instructor and self-evaluation by the student.

## **EXPLANATION OF THE COURSE**

This course assists students in understanding and achieving competence in the social work skills taught and practiced in their Field Education 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.

### **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*. (4<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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](mailto:garrett@gvsu.edu)). Additional resources include the National Suicide Prevention 24/7 Crisis Line, which can be reached by calling or texting 988.

### **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 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	20%
Reflective Journal	20%
Learning Contract (Common Assignment)	40%
Attendance and Participation	20%

### **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. Your Field Education agency presentation should address each of the areas listed below. As you present the information link your responses to the core competencies, to show how the agency does/does not advance them. At the end of your presentation, you should have linked your responses to the 9 competencies in order to receive credit for this assignment. (20 points)

1. What is the name of the agency?
2. What is the agency's address and contact information?
3. Is the agency's location accessible to clients? Please explain.
4. What is the agency's history; when was it founded, why and by whom?
5. What is the agency's organization structure? If available, use the agency's organizational chart to demonstrate this.
6. What is the agency's mission, vision, goals? If you are working within a specific program at the agency, what are the program's objectives? What are the human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice issues that are being addressed by the agency? How?
7. Where does the agency receive its funding from? What (if any) are the socio-political implications of receiving this funding?
8. What accrediting bodies monitor the operation of the agency? Is there a benefit to this oversight or lack of it?
9. What are the professional backgrounds of the staff working at the agency? Do the different professions work together harmoniously to meet the agency's goals? What are the strengths and/or limitations of the multi-professional representation at the agency?
10. Describe the demographics of the personnel who work at the agency.
11. What services are provided by the agency to clients? Have you observed any strengths and limitations related to service delivery?
12. Describe the demographics of the clients that receive services at the agency.
13. What are the presenting problems and/or needs of the clients who seek services at the agency?
14. Are the agency's services accessible to clients with special needs i.e. language, disability, etc.
15. Have you observed or identified any ethical conflicts or dilemmas at the agency?
16. How does research inform service delivery and/or practice at the agency? What theories are utilized by the organization/program to address client/constituent needs?
17. What excites you about completing your Field Education placement at this agency? What skills do you think you will learn through the Field Education placement?

18. What do you think will be your greatest challenge during Field Education? What is your plan for overcoming that challenge?

### AGENCY PRESENTATION GRADING RUBRIC

<b>COMPETENCY</b>		<b>TOTAL GRADE POSSIBLE</b>
Competency 1	Presenter demonstrates a professional demeanor; oral communication is clear and concise; good organization of content that addresses all data points; and written/electronic handouts/visual aids are of a high quality with relevant information.	4
Competency 2	Presenter discusses the diversity present in the organization in relation to clients, the organization and its staff, and the community it serves. Presenter describes how the agency approaches its mission to address marginalized client populations/client systems. Presenter describes their observation of the agency's efforts to be inclusive, strengths based, and culturally responsive.	4
Competency 3	Presenter discusses the human rights/social justice issues the agency addresses. Presenter discusses how the organization, through its mission and services, advances human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice; as well as the accessibility of services to the community/population served.	4
Competency 4	Presenter identifies the models of service delivery utilized within the agency/program and the research/theories that support these practices.	4
Competency 5	Presenter demonstrates an awareness and analysis of how agency funding, contractual standards, accreditation, and policy shapes services and to whom and how services are delivered.	4
Total Score		20

### REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

The purpose of journals is multidimensional. They are intended to assist in self-reflection, critical thinking, and integration of theory and practice. Journals also provide valuable information to Faculty Field Liaisons regarding your experiences with field education and supervision. Please follow the format below in documenting your journal:



1. Describe an experience/event that occurred over the last two weeks.
2. What feelings or values did this elicit?
3. What professional skill, model, or theory did you apply in this situation?
4. How did you evaluate the effectiveness of your handling of the situation?
5. What knowledge did you gain from this experience?
6. How does this situation apply to gaining the core nine social work competencies?
7. Is there anything else your Faculty Field Liaison should know?
8. What did you discuss in supervision?

On each of the due dates determined by the Faculty Field Liaison, submit reflective journals documenting your learning during Field Education. Reflective Journals must be submitted in by 11:59 p.m. on the date they are due. Late submissions will be penalized one half a point for each day beyond the due date.

### REFLECTIVE JOURNAL GRADING RUBRIC

	Points	Definition
Satisfactory Content	2	Responses to all questions present; 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

### LEARNING CONTRACT/EVALUATION GRADING

A learning contract will be completed as part of your Field Education. The learning contract is due within the first four weeks of the semester. Late submissions will be penalized with a reduction in points. 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 complete. (40 points)

### 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	<b>Unacceptable Competence:</b> 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	<b>Minimal Competence:</b> 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	<b>Emerging Competence:</b> Student meets baseline expectations and is progressing. The student has demonstrated an adequate level of understanding and proficiency.
4	<b>Competence:</b> Student demonstrates consistent growth and development, increased levels of understanding and proficiency. Able to function with independence.
5	<b>Advanced Competence:</b> Student demonstrates a high degree of competence, understanding, and proficiency. Able to initiate and add significant value.
D	<b>Deferred:</b> Student has little or no opportunity to engage in activities that would develop this behavior. More than 2 scores of “D” in an assessment results in a Performance Improvement Plan. No “deferred” allowed in the final semester of field education.

#### 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.

Learning Contract	40
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## ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION GRADING RUBRIC

Field Education Seminar is mandatory. Students are not expected to miss seminar, missing more than one Field Education Seminar is 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. **Participation in field education is also predicated upon meeting and maintaining health compliance requirements for the duration of field education. Failure to meet health compliance requirements may impact a student’s ability to enter and remain in field education and to be awarded credit.**

Class Participation	20
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