

Valdosta State University, Department of Social Work
SOWK 6600/6610 Fall 2013 (Credit Hours)
Practicum-Practicum Seminar

Instructor:	TBA
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Office Hours:	TBA
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Class:	Pine Hall Thursday 5-7 pm Web weekends Friday 5:15-9:15pm

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

SOWK 6600 — Practicum I

First semester of supervised practice for the integration of classroom learning in field settings.

SOWK 6610 — Practicum Seminar I

Seminar in which students discuss their practicum experiences with the goal of integrating social work theory and practice.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

SOWK 6600/6610 is the first foundation practicum sequence in which students are engaged in practicum in a human service agency and participate in a concurrent, seminar. Both segments of the first practicum experience are treated as a unit and are designed to support and augment one another. Practicum and Practicum Seminar begins during fall semester. Course content is designed to provide students with an orientation to the practicum agency and social work practice as well as the integration of classroom material and practicum experiences. Additionally, the practicum/seminar offers support to students as they transition into the practitioner role.

Using the ecological systems model, students are oriented to the principles of generalist social work practice within a specific agency context. They are exposed to and begin to implement the PIP process with client systems. Students are expected to begin to understand how social work values and ethics as reflected in the NASW Code of Ethics apply to social work practice situations. In addition, during the course students begin to engage in supervised practice at multiple levels including work with individual client systems, groups, agencies and communities. Populations served by agencies selected as practicum sites are among society's most vulnerable and include diverse groups and oppressed groups. Course materials and content of the practicum seminar are informed and influenced by a commitment to and promotion of human and cultural diversity, social justice, an understanding of oppression and socio-economic poverty. Students must use the ecological perspective to determine how field education and practice fit into the overall generalist curriculum. Course content also addresses expectations surrounding supervision and the field placement experience. Additionally, students are introduced to working closely with a group of peers as they participate in practicum seminar and engage in joint problem-solving activities with an instructor.

PREREQUISITE

Admission to the program.

RELATION TO OTHER COURSES

SOWK 6600/6610 is designed to introduce students to the field educational component of professional social work education. The practicum and practicum seminar provide educational support and instruction for students as they enter practicum. Content for SOWK 6600/6610 is linked horizontally with other foundation courses including SOWK 6201 (HBSE I), Generalist Practice I (SOWK 6301), and Research and Evaluation Methods in Social Work (SOWK 6500). The first practicum course/seminar is designed to prepare students for the subsequent practicum sequence, SOWK 6700/6710 that is taught the following semester. The overall objectives of the practicum/seminar are to introduce students to the field educational component of professional social work education and begin to cultivate the integration of classroom work with practicum experiences.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Curington, A. *Field Instruction Handbook*. Division of Social Work, Valdosta State University, Valdosta, GA.

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

Adobe Acrobat Reader and Writer will be used as a tool for course enhancement. Your field documents will require access to both Reader and Writer. Please make sure you secure access to this program

VSU BlazeView D2L Support

Valdosta State provides free technical support for students. If you need technical assistance with BlazeView D2L, call the Desire2Learn Help Center at 1-855-772-0423 or visit the [BlazeView D2L](#) University web site for Frequently Asked Questions and Self Help, or contact [BlazeView D2L Help](#). You may also contact your instructor for assistance.

COURSE OUTCOMES

EXPLANATION OF THE POCO MAP

As a part of our 2007-2008 MSW Curriculum Revision, you will begin to see the Program Objective Course Outcome Map or "PoCo Map" in each class syllabus. Your instructors will assist you in using the map while you are in the MSW Program. The "map" is simply a graphic representation of the MSW Curriculum which shows how all parts of the curriculum are interrelated. For 6600/6610 the POCO map is the Learning Plan. All program objectives and course outcomes connected to the program objectives are reflected on the learning plan. Course outcomes are derived from the foundation courses and curriculum.

The program objectives are derived from the goals of the MSW program. As we define it, program objectives are more specific than goals, and specify what we **intend or expect** students to accomplish by the end of the MSW Program. Think of them as targets to achieve. On the other hand, course outcomes

are much more specific, course-related components of each program objective. The specific Course Outcomes are what each of you should have achieved by the end of each course. Perhaps the analogy of a community may be helpful. The advanced generalist social work community at VSU is made up of program objectives which can be thought of as individual businesses, institutions, and houses in our community. Like any community, each program objective (e.g., house, business) can stand alone, but they need each other to thrive and become a functional community. Course outcomes then can be seen as the walls, floors, windows and doors that are combined to comprise each objective and, ultimately the Advanced Generalist community.

The faculty has selected 19 Program Objectives to form the basic structure of the MSW Curriculum: 14 are foundation objectives and five are concentration objectives. The PoCo Map (Learning Plan) shows that these 19 Program Objectives are met in different courses across the two-year curriculum. Further, each of the 19 Program Objectives is linked with specific Course Outcomes. In examining the range of courses that comprise the overall curriculum, we can begin to identify specific elements of knowledge, values, and skills that we expect students to achieve during the MSW Program. We have called these elements *Course Outcomes*. Outcomes combine specific chunks of knowledge and skills with a demonstration of their achievement, through application! Just as a window might be a combination of a specific size of glass, with a type of wood and metal. Its achievement is the building of a window; the window is an achieved product although its ultimate application is its 'fit' with the specific house. By examining the outcomes that students are expected to master per course, students can determine the actual content that will be learned.

The POCO Map ensures that all courses and the overall curriculum meet our own curriculum standards as well as national standards of social work education as set forth by the Council on Social Work Education. (*July 24, 2008*)

This course is organized by outcomes that will provide focus, consistency, and clear evaluation criteria. Skills and knowledge that support achievement of the course outcomes will receive the majority of class time. These course outcomes are derived from the MSW program objectives, and will help you build toward achievement of those objectives. Lessons, materials, methods and assignments are organized toward your achievement of the objectives and toward what you as a student will be able to do differently, as a direct result of participating in the course:

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to: (See Attached 6600/6610 Learning Plan for a thorough list of course outcomes)

Program Objectives

1. **Conduct multi-level generalist practice based on the planned intervention process**
2. **Demonstrate the ability to apply critical thinking within the context of professional social work practice**
3. **Analyze and apply the values and ethics of the social work profession**
4. **Using the strengths perspective, practice without discrimination and with respect, knowledge, and skills that are appropriate for the range of human differences**
5. **Understand and challenge mechanisms of oppression and discrimination**
6. **Apply strategies of advocacy and social change to advance justice**
7. **Understand and interpret the history, development, and current trends of the profession**

8. **Select and apply human behavior theory and evidence to inform practice using the ecosystems perspective as an organizing framework**
9. **Demonstrate the ability to analyze, formulate, and influence social policies.**
10. **Evaluate and apply research findings to practice and evaluate individual practice interventions at multi levels appropriately**
11. **Demonstrate the ability to communicate across client populations, colleagues and communities, in both written and verbal form**
12. **Demonstrate the ability to appropriately use feedback, supervision and consultation in the service of professional conduct and growth**
13. **Demonstrate ability to function within the structure of organizations, delivery systems and community networks and seek organizational change**
14. **Identify with the social work profession and behave professionally**

COURSE POLICIES PARTICULARLY RELEVANT TO THIS COURSE (*Other, general policies are listed at the end of the syllabus in Grading Issues*)

Written Work & Submission of Assignments

- Your written work should show thoroughness, accuracy and professionalism. All work must be carefully proofread and corrected. Case Studies, Journals and Process Recordings should be free of errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation. If you do not proofread carefully, you run the risk of having your paper rejected for re-write, with penalty for lateness.
- Late papers will lose one full letter grade (10%) for every 24-hour period they are late (including weekends).
- **Any Word documents submitted electronically and uploaded to BlazeView D2L must have a .doc (Word 2003) file extension.**
- No revisions of assignments will be allowed without explicit permission—However, please feel free to meet with me (face-to-face, online, or by phone) to discuss your papers before the final due dates.
- Make-up exams, as a rule, will *not* be permitted. Only in extraordinary circumstances will such work be accepted.

ASSIGNMENTS

You will demonstrate your achievement of course objectives through your submitted projects, exams, and assignments:

1. Construct the 6600/6610 Learning Plan Worksheet

2. Triadic Process Recordings (Giddings & Vodde, 2001) will be assigned. In order to emphasize the team approach to field experiences, students are expected to complete process recordings on the assigned dates. The recordings are first turned in to practicum seminar instructors who provide written feedback to the student.

3. A Student Assessment will be assigned. The assessment will include a 2-3 page paper in which students must self-assess their skills in the following dimensions:

Interpersonal Communication Skills: Identify and critique your interpersonal skills with clients, colleagues and other professionals. Evaluate your beginning level of skills as you begin to engage in client contacts.

Foundation Content Knowledge: Describe your strengths and weaknesses as you reflect on the content that you learned during the fall semester. Consider all areas of the curriculum including human behavior, social policy, social work practice, and if possible, Research. Which areas are you most comfortable with? Identify areas in which you need more work.

Human Diversity: Consider your level of comfort in working with diverse populations and individuals with vastly different life experiences. Rate your own ability to respond to diverse groups, in particular, and in particular, African-American and Hispanic populations who comprise a significant percentage of the caseloads in area agencies. How comfortable are you in discussing issues of human difference in seminar and in Practice situations?

Self-Awareness: Why is awareness of self so important to social work practice? Identify areas of bias and vulnerability that may impact your ability to meet the needs of clients. Identify areas in which you hope to increase your skills of self-awareness.

4. Student presentation of practicum experiences. Students are responsible for identifying problems, areas of strength and areas of concern regarding their experiences in practicum, and presenting this material to the seminar. This content is used as a basis for practicum seminar discussion and for teaching students how to use the PIP model. **Students are evaluated on their attendance in practicum and their participation in group discussions.** The practicum seminar instructor also uses group discussions as a teaching tool for applying inductive and deductive teaching methods. A major theme that is used as a focus for group discussion includes teaching students to understand the concept to integration as well as teaching them how to integrate classroom content and practicum experiences. The role of the practicum seminar instructor is to identify, label and to help students first to make assisted theory-practice linkages and subsequently to make unassisted linkages. The format for student discussion is based on the Progressive Adaptation and Integration Model (PAI) that has been developed by Giddings & Vodde (2001). All course objectives are addressed in this assignment. All program objectives are addressed in this assignment.

ASSESSMENT and ASSESSMENT ISSUES

Students are expected to meet the fourteen program objectives that are applicable to all practicum sites as they begin practicum, supervision with their field instructor and practicum seminar. In grading the first practicum sequence, a Midterm Grade Form must be completed by the field instructor to provide feedback at the mid-point of the semester. At the end of the semester the Final Grade Form and the Semester Evaluation is used to evaluate student progress in meeting the learning objectives. Each objective has been broken down into specific course outcomes that students must demonstrate by the end of the 10 week sequence. Students are evaluated according to the 1-5 rating scale indicated on the Semester Evaluation which is located on the Learning Plan Worksheet. Using the rating scale on the form, the evaluation for SOWK 6600/6610 is completed by field instructor with input from the practicum seminar instructor and the student. Each program objective will be averaged which will determine the students letter grade for each objective. All Program Objectives will be averaged to determine the letter grade (A,B,C,D,F).

A student who receives a C or below on **any** of the following Program Objectives listed below automatically will receive a C or below in practicum, and a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) will be required:

Foundation Practicum 6600/6700

FPO 11 Communication

FPO 12 Supervision and Feedback

FPO 14 Professional Behavior

Concentration Practicum 7611/7612

FPO 11 Communication

FPO 14 Professional Behavior

CPO 15 Self Directed Practice

CPO 19 Specialized theories and Models

If a student receives a C on 4 out of the 14 Foundation Program Objectives for Foundation Practicum or 5 out of 15 Program Objectives for Concentration Practicum, the student will automatically receive a C for the course and a Corrective Action Plan will be required.

All program objectives will be graded based on the average of the course outcomes. A student will be assigned a letter grade of A,B,C,D or F depending on the average. If a student makes a D in practicum/seminar the student must repeat the course and a Corrective Action Plan will be activated. Students who receive a C, D, or F also receive deficiency points. Please see Student Handbook for explanation of deficiency points. Because of the emphasis on practicum performance in the social work program, a grade of "F" in practicum courses equals 4 deficiency points and will result in permanent dismissal from the program.

Practicum seminar instructors also are responsible for submitting the Semester Evaluation Section and the Final Grade Form to the Field Office. The Semester Evaluation Section is used to examine student strengths and areas in which further work is needed. Areas in which students need further work should be incorporated into the Learning Plan Worksheet for SOWK 6700/6710 as well as a correction action plan.

Students may demonstrate that they meet the objectives in a number of ways: student-initiated discussion of objectives during supervision, student logs, student journals, verbal content presented in supervision or practicum seminar, process recordings or other written or taped materials. Joint interviewing with field instructors or seminar instructors is also encouraged. All field instructors will be oriented to the development of realistic and utilitarian Learning Plans.

Whereas evaluation of student performance should be an ongoing process throughout the semester, students must be evaluated formally on at least two occasions during the Spring Semester:

1. **Midterm** — during the mid-semester evaluation, the field instructor and student should jointly evaluate the student's performance. If there are no problems that have been identified, the field instructor must complete the Midterm Evaluation Form. The student and field instructor must sign the

form and forward the form to the practicum seminar instructor for his/her signature. If there are problems or concerns that have emerged, the field instructor must notify the practicum seminar instructor and a meeting should be scheduled as well as a correction action plan completed (See Policy 6, Practicum Policies, Field Handbook).

2. End of the semester — at the end of the semester, the field instructor, practicum seminar instructor and the student should plan a joint meeting to formally evaluate student progress during the practicum. At this time the Semester Evaluation Section and the Final Grade Form should be completed. Field instructors will be asked to evaluate the course outcomes. The practicum seminar instructor will convert the evaluation into a letter grade as discussed above.

3. Students will also be evaluated on timeliness and quality of assignments. Points are designated for each assignment in practicum seminar. These points will determine the letter grade for practicum.

Use of the Learning Plan

As a part of the course content for SOWK 6610, students are taught about the integral role played by the Learning Plan in social work education. The Learning Plan is used each semester as a mechanism for individualizing program objectives, formulating specific agency assignments that match the program objectives and that link objectives and assignments to the student evaluation process. Both field instructors and practicum seminar instructors are involved in the development of this learning plan.

GRADING SCALE for Seminar

180-200 = A

160-179 = B

140-159 = C

120-149 = D

Below 120 = F

Because of the emphasis on practicum performance in the social work program, a grade of "F" in practicum courses equals 4 deficiency points and will result in permanent dismissal from the program.

I will need to inform your Advisor if your midterm grade is marginal and if you receive a C or below in practicum or practicum seminar

Please Note: Students should be aware of various issues that may adversely affect their grades and even their participation in the program. These regulations arise from legal codes, The Georgia Board of Regents, Valdosta State University, or the Valdosta State University Division of Social Work. All of them are listed in the Student Handbook at <http://www.valdosta.edu/sowk/documents/StudentHandbook09-10.pdf> IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO READ AND UNDERSTAND ALL OF THE STUDENT HANDBOOK.

Remember the "STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING" signed by all students (see page 87).

Please contact me with any special needs or developing problems. I will help you all if I can.

COURSE SCHEDULE FACE TO FACE

CLASS 1--Engagement in Practicum

August 15, 2013

- Engagement in Practicum Seminar, Supervision and the Agency Practicum Bingo: Game to elicit expectations of beginning practice and social work supervision
- Communication skills in practice: written and verbal skills
- A focus on diverse, at-risk client populations served by practicum agencies

10 points participation

CLASS 2 — Student Learning Style 1st week of practicum

September 12, 2013

- The Mind Design Exercise (Rabb, 1994)

10 points participation

CLASS 3 – Understanding the Student Learning Plan

September 26, 2013

- Exercise: Create a Learning Plan for SOWK 6600/6610
- Defining the concept of Theory-Practice Integration and the seminar instructor's role in fostering integration.

10 points participation

CLASS 4 – Integrating NASW Code of ethics to practicum/seminar

October 03, 2013

The NASW Code of Ethics: Applying values and ethics to generalist practice

10 points participation

Midterm Grade Form Due (pg. 191 of Field Handbook)

CLASS 5 – The Ecological Systems Approach to Field Education

October 10, 2013

- Application of the ecological systems perspective to practicum
- Case Study Discussion using the ecological perspective with use of eco-map and genogram
- Application of the ecological systems perspective to practicum
- The continuum of generalist practice: Applying generalist roles to the student practicum experience.

10 points participation

CLASS 6— Beginning Practice Skills

October 17, 2013

- Using the PIP in practice
- Discussion of student's assessment of performance of skills learned in SOWK 6301; role play of practice skills
- Engagement with clients: personal bias, problem-solving, use of self, and self-awareness with clients.

10 points participation

Completed Learning Plan Due 50 points (pgs. 74-91 of Field Handbook)

CLASS 7— Case Studies, Journals, and Process Recordings

October 24, 2013

Discussion of case studies, journals, and process recordings as tools for supervision and seminar.

Discussion of practicum cases

10 points participation

CLASS 8 --- Understanding the role of theory in practicum and seminar

October 31, 2013

Students Bring Cases for Discussion

The Field System Eco-Map Exercise, (Vodde & Giddings, 2000)

10 points participation

Assignment: Process Recording Due 20 points (pg. 188 of Field Handbook)

CLASS 9 ---Students Bring Cases for Discussion

November 07, 2013

10 points participation

Assignment: Self-Assessment Due 30 points (See Syllabus under *assignments section*)

CLASS 10---Wrapping up

November 14, 2013

10 points participation

COURSE SCHEDULE WEB

CLASS 1--Engagement in Practicum

August 16, 2013

- Engagement in Practicum Seminar, Supervision and the Agency Practicum Bingo: Game to elicit expectations of beginning practice and social work supervision
- Communication skills in practice: written and verbal skills
- A focus on diverse, at-risk client populations served by practicum agencies

Student Learning Style

- The Mind Design Exercise (Rabb, 1994)

20 points participation

CLASS 2 — Understanding the Student Learning Plan

September 06, 2013

- Exercise: Create a Learning Plan for SOWK 6600/6610
- Defining the concept of Theory-Practice Integration and the seminar instructor's role in fostering integration.

20 points participation

Integrating NASW Code of ethics to practicum/seminar

The NASW Code of Ethics: Applying values and ethics to generalist practice
Program Objectives

CLASS 3 – The Ecological Systems Approach to Field Education

September 27, 2013

- Application of the ecological systems perspective to practicum
- Case Study Discussion using the ecological perspective with use of eco-map and genogram
- Application of the ecological systems perspective to practicum
- The continuum of generalist practice: Applying generalist roles to the student practicum experience.

Beginning Practice Skills

- Using the PIP in practice
- Discussion of student's assessment of performance of skills learned in SOWK 6301; role play of practice skills
- Engagement with clients: personal bias, problem-solving, use of self, and self-awareness with clients.

20 points participation

Assignment: Process Recording Due 20 points (pg. 188 of Field Handbook)

CLASS 4 – Case Studies, Journals, and Process Recordings

October 18, 2013

Discussion of case studies, journals, and process recordings as tools for supervision and seminar.

Discussion of practicum cases

Understanding the role of theory in practicum and seminar

Students Bring Cases for Discussion

The Field System Eco-Map Exercise, (Vodde & Giddings, 2000)

20 points participation

Completed Learning Plan Due 50 points (pgs. 74-91 of Field Handbook)

CLASS 5 – Students Bring Cases for Discussion

November 15, 2013

Wrapping up

20 points participation

Assignment: Self-Assessment Due 30 points (See Syllabus under *assignments section*)

DIVISION OF SOCIAL WORK and UNIVERSITY POLICIES

The goal of the Division of Social Work is to prepare students for the professional practice of social work. The Division requires students to adhere to professional practices and standards in all classes and practicum. These practices and standards are outlined in the MSW Student Code of Conduct which can be found on pages 86-89 of the current *MSW Student Handbook*. The Code of Conduct must be signed by all students beginning MSW students.

The following standards are not negotiable: Students may depend on well-planned classes and knowledgeable instructors. Professors are committed to the facilitation of student success. Learning is a complex phenomenon for which BOTH instructors and students are responsible. Evaluation criteria are stated clearly in the syllabus. However, if students have questions about grading, it is the students' responsibility to discuss these matters with their instructors. The course syllabus represents a contract between students and the instructor. Professors reserve the right to modify syllabi, and students will be notified in writing when such changes are made. Likewise, students are responsible for reading and following instructions on the syllabi.

Class Attendance: Because the MSW Program is a professional program, class attendance is **MANDATORY**. The Attendance Policy is extremely important and can be found in the current *MSW Student Handbook* on page 82. Students are expected to be on time for class and to return from breaks in a timely manner. Likewise, students are expected to participate in class discussions and activities.

Submission of Assignments: All assignments must be submitted ON TIME and IN THE MANNER directed by the faculty (e.g., brought to class, sent to an assignment drop box, etc). Deadlines are extremely important for professional social workers. Additional information about assignment submission is found in the Attendance Policy.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are not acceptable in a professional social work program. Students who engage in this type behavior risk failure on specific assignments, in the course, and possible dismissal from the MSW Program. Academic dishonesty is prohibited by the university as well as the Division of Social Work. The following link outlines [VSU's Academic Honesty Policies](#). The Academic Dishonesty Policy for the Division of Social Work is found in the *MSW Student Handbook* found as a link off the [Division web site](#).

Incompletes: Incomplete grades are given only in cases of extreme emergency with proper documentation, and are granted only with the prior approval of the instructor. Policies governing Incompletes are found in the *MSW Student Handbook*.

Academic Performance: Students are expected to maintain a 3.00 grade point average in the MSW Program. A discussion of all academic expectations and grading can be found in the *MSW Student Handbook*, including the Division's policy of Academic Deficiency Points given for grades lower than C.

Cancellation of Classes: The University President may cancel classes under specific emergency conditions. The most frequent cause of cancellation is inclement weather. Please check the main page of the VSU web site if you have concerns about inclement weather or an emergency situation: <http://www.valdosta.edu>

ADDITIONAL STUDENT INFORMATION

Specific Learning Needs: Students requiring classroom accommodations or modifications because of a documented disability should discuss their needs with the professor at the beginning of the semester. Students who are not registered with the Access Office for Students with Disabilities should contact [VSU's Access Office](#) or call 229-245-2498 (229-219-1348 for TTY). The office is located in Room 1115 Nevins Hall.

Students Experiencing Academic Difficulties: Students with academic concerns are strongly encouraged to contact the staff of the [Student Success Center](#) or call them at 229-333-7570. The Student Success Center is located on first floor of Langdale Hall on the main VSU campus. Services provided by the Success Center include tutoring, writing assistance, and help with time management. Students are encouraged to make appointments with Center Staff through the web link or by telephone. The Center is available to all VSU students, and evening appointments are available.

Additional services: The [Counseling Center](#) (phone 229-333-5940; e-mail pjraynor@valdosta.edu). Services are free of charge to students with emotional/mental, social, substance abuse and other problems. The [Farber Health Services](#) provides physical health services (phone 229-333-5886).

Emergency Campus Policy: The Police Contact Number is **229-259-5555**. The Campus Police Division is located in Pine Hall. Officers will escort students on campus, and emergency phones are placed across campus. Students are **strongly encouraged to program the campus emergency number, 911** (for local police) **and *447** (GA State Highway Patrol) **into their cell phone.**