

Valdosta State University, Department of Social Work
SOWK 7611/7612(four each)
Practicum

Instructor:
Office: Pine Hall
Office Hours: TBA
Phone: 229-249-4864 (Dept. office)
E-Mail: mswfield@valdosta.edu
Class:

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

SOWK 7611 — The first of two concentration practica designed to prepare students for advanced generalist social work practice.

SOWK 7612 — The second of two concentration practica designed to prepare students for advanced generalist social work practice.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The MSW concentration practica, SOWK 7611 and SOWK 7612 are built on the competencies gained in the generalist experience of the foundation practicum. The central purpose of the second practica is to prepare students for advanced generalist social work practice.

Based on the ecological perspective, the concentration practica emphasize multi system assessments and multi model interventions. Structured learning opportunities allow students to integrate advanced knowledge acquired in the classroom with practice experiences. Opportunities are provided for students to explore reflectively the interrelationships between human behavior, social policy, research, and practice content at an advanced level. In each case, students identify ways in which their social work practice can be evaluated for its effectiveness, its congruence with the ethical context of the profession, and competence in serving diverse client groups.

The goal of the concentration practicum is to promote further awareness of self as a developing professional and to gain further mastery in assessment and intervention that are prescribed in various models of practice. Students are expected to become proficient in social work intervention(s) appropriate to Advanced Generalist Practice.

PREREQUISITE

SOWK 6700/6710

REQUIRED TEXTS

Curington, A. *Field Instruction Handbook*. Department 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.

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 7611/7612 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 Learning Plan for 7611/7612 for a thorough list of course objectives)

Program Objectives

1. **Demonstrate the ability to apply critical thinking within the context of professional social work practice**
2. **Analyze and apply the values and ethics of the social work profession**
3. **Using the strengths perspective, practice without discrimination and with respect, knowledge, and skills that are appropriate for the range of human differences**
4. **Understand and challenge mechanisms of oppression and discrimination**
5. **Apply strategies of advocacy and social change to advance justice**
6. **Understand and interpret the history, development, and current trends of the profession**
7. **Demonstrate the ability to analyze, formulate, and influence social policies.**
8. **Evaluate and apply research findings to practice and evaluate individual practice interventions at multi levels appropriately**
9. **Demonstrate the ability to communicate across client populations, colleagues and communities, in both written and verbal form**
10. **Identify with the social work profession and behave professionally**
11. **Demonstrate an increasing ability to engage in informed and systematic Self-Directed Practice.**
12. **Demonstrate elements of leadership and the ability to shape the professional environment.**
13. **Demonstrate an ability to analyze and critically evaluate the contextual elements to inform social work practice.**
14. **Apply balanced attention to multi-level practice**
15. **Demonstrate the ability to practice at increasing levels of complexity using specialized theories and practice methods.**

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 and assignments:

Students will be asked to compile the following assignments in electronic form and to keep both an electronic and hard copy during the semester. Field instructors are aware of these assignments and can assist students in their completion. Students are asked to share their field and seminar work with field instructors, and in the case of process recordings, must do so. The practicum seminar instructor, field instructor and student will work together as a practicum team to construct and implement the SOWK 6700/6710 Learning Plan and to evaluate student performance of competencies specified on the plan.

Practicum Seminar Instructor's will develop a schedule for the following assignments:

1. **Triadic Process Recordings** (Giddings & Vodde, 2000) 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. (The template for the Triadic Process Recording can be found in the Field Handbook)

Subsequently, the recording is given to the assigned field instructor so that the supervisor's feedback can also be incorporated into the process recording. This triadic approach is helpful to the seminar instructor and the supervisor in underscoring areas of strength and weakness in student performance.

2. **Student Journals** will be assigned (the template for the Student Journal can be found in the Field Handbook).

3. **Case Studies** will be assigned (instructor will go over format in seminar).

ASSESSMENT and ASSESSMENT ISSUES

Students are expected to meet the fifteen program objectives that are applicable to all practicum sites as they begin practicum, supervision with their field instructor and meetings with their liaison. In grading practicum, a Midterm Grade Form must be completed by the field instructor to provide feedback at the mid-point of each semester. At the end of each semester the Final Grade Form and the Semester Evaluation is used to evaluate student progress in meeting the Program objectives. Each program objective has been broken down into specific course outcomes that students must demonstrate by the end of the 15 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.

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:

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. 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. Please see Student Handbook for explanation of deficiency points.

Students may demonstrate that they meet the outcomes in a number of ways: student-initiated discussion of objectives during supervision, student logs, student journals, case studies, 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 Fall and 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 faculty liaison for his/her signature. If there are problems or concerns that have emerged, the field instructor must notify the faculty liaison and a meeting should be scheduled and a Correction Plan should be completed(See Policy 6, Practicum Policies, Field Handbook).

2. **End of the semester** — at the end of the semester, the field instructor, faculty liaison 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 rate the course outcomes. The faculty liaison will then convert the ratings into a letter grade (A,B,C,D, or F).

3. **Students will also be evaluated on timeliness and quality of assignments.**

At the end of the Concentration Practicum Sequence, students are asked to complete a series of evaluation forms that relate to various dimensions of the overall practicum experience including an evaluation of the practicum agency, field instructor, and faculty liaison. Faculty liaisons also are asked to provide ongoing verbal feedback to the Office of Field Instruction regarding the quality of the practicum assignment. Field evaluation forms are found in the Evaluation Section of the Field Handbook.

I will need to inform your Advisor if your midterm grad is marginal and if you receive a C or below at any point during the academic year.

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 Department 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 I can.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Students are assigned to a specific practicum agency for two consecutive semesters. Students begin the Concentration practicum the first week of classes during fall semester. The Learning plan will be due the fifth week of practicum fall semester and will be turned in to the faculty liaison. In addition, four Triadic Process Recordings will be due throughout the academic year. The due dates will be at Midterm and Finals for each semester. The decision to require additional Triadic Process Recordings is left to the discretion of the field instructor and/or faculty liaison. The Process Recordings will be a part of the evaluation process and must be turned in to the faculty liaison and field instructor. The decision to require additional Triadic Process Recordings is left to the discretion of the field instructor and/or faculty liaison. The students concerns and questions surrounding practicum should be addressed in supervision and faculty liaison visits.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK and UNIVERSITY POLICIES

The goal of the Department of Social Work is to prepare students for the professional practice of social work. The Department 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 84-87 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 Department of Social Work. The following link outlines [VSU's Academic Honesty Policies](#). The Academic Dishonesty Policy for the Department of Social Work is found in the *MSW Student Handbook* found as a link off the [Department 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 Department'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>

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 pjaynor@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.**