Course Title and Number:  SW 780: Concentration Practicum I

Instructors/Classroom:

Contact Information:

Office Hours:

Credits:  4

Pre-Requisites:  Completion of all required Foundation Year courses or acceptance into the Advanced Standing Program.

Co-Requisites:  SW 720, SW 724

Course Description:

Integration of professional content through a weekly one hour seminar and development of advanced generalist practice skills through supervised placement in community agencies.

This course is the first in the sequence of two, four-credit courses constituting the social work field education program required of all Concentration year students. It consists of a practicum within a field setting that provides advanced generalist practice opportunities for students to demonstrate their Concentration year competencies. In the advanced generalist practicum, the student is expected to build upon the practice behaviors from their Foundation year and demonstrate all of the practice behaviors identified for the Concentration year. Additionally, the student begins to assume greater autonomy, learns to apply the knowledge and skills of practice to more complex situations, and begins to demonstrate leadership as they develop into a professional social worker.

To earn their degree, MSW students must complete a total of 900 hours of field education. The School of Social Work breaks this down into two blocks of 450 hours each. Each block is associated with the Foundation and MSW Concentration curriculum. At the Concentration level students must complete 225 hours by the end of Fall semester (SW 780) and 225 hours by the end of Spring semester (SW 781). To meet this requirement, students must complete 15 hours of field education for 15 weeks each semester. Additionally, students participate in a weekly 50-minute seminar that structures learning activities that will help students integrate theory and practice skills gained from academic course work with authentic field experiences.

Linkages with Other Courses:

As the “signature pedagogy,” the field practicum is the cornerstone of social work education. Knowledge, skills, and values acquired through other social work courses are integrated and demonstrated as competencies within the field practicum. Given this function, the SW 780 practicum must be taken concurrently with the social work methods courses, SW 720: Interventions with Individuals and SW 724: Interventions with Families. This sequencing ensures that students are able to integrate the knowledge, values, and skills they acquire in their concentration courses into their work with clients.

Relevant Competencies and Associated Practice Behaviors:
Given the culminating and integrative nature of the advanced generalist field practicum, students are expected to build upon the practice behaviors associated with their Foundation year while demonstrating concentration level practice behaviors of all 10 competencies.

2.1.1 Identify as a social worker and conduct oneself accordingly
Advanced generalist practitioners identify with the human rights values of the social work profession, the centrality of relationships, and the interconnections between client issues and larger social problems. Advanced practitioners in general practice take leadership in ethically and competently working to improve the wellbeing of clients, families, and communities.

- C1 Initiate and facilitate socially responsive & just practices across systems.
- C2 Provide social work leadership within practice contexts and as a member of the profession.
- C3 Cultivate and apply leadership qualities of self-awareness and other-awareness.

2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice
Advanced generalist practitioners readily recognize the range of complex, multi-dimensional ethical dilemmas that often characterize practice settings. They are adept at utilizing the advanced conceptual frameworks required to explore, navigate and resolve these complex circumstances.

- C4 Is able to critique ethical issues within complex environments to formulate innovative responses and approaches.
- C5 Employ strategies of ethical reasoning in practice settings where policies or values conflict with the delivery of social work services, personal values, or professional ethics.

2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.
Advanced generalist practitioners synthesize multiple sources of information as they seek to understand “what is” and clarify “what’s possible” in addressing issues that arise across system levels. In turn, they effectively communicate this information to diverse client, multidisciplinary team, and stakeholder groups.

- C6 Question, evaluate, synthesize and apply information from multiple sources in framing ill-defined, ever changing, multifaceted practice issues.
- C7 Question, evaluate, select and implement appropriate assessment, intervention, and evaluation strategies in complex, fluid, multidimensional practice situations.
- C8 Produce practice-ready presentations and documents (i.e., case presentations, intervention demonstrations, journal articles, grant applications, legislative briefs).

2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice
Advanced generalist practitioners recognize that human diversity includes and goes beyond conventional categories of ethnicity or culture and recognizes the intersectionality of human differences. Cultural humility characterizes their professional interactions across system levels.

- C9 Demonstrate leadership in collaboratively examining underlying assumptions and developing interculturally effective policies, programs, & interventions.
- C10 Effectively navigate conflicts between diverse identities within and among individuals, families, groups and organizations.

2.1.5 Advance human rights & social and economic justice
Advanced generalist practitioners identify, analyze, and address mechanisms of oppression and injustice embedded within social institutions, theoretical assumptions, research endeavors, intervention practices and policies. In doing so, they are able to analyze complex political, economic, and social forces that influence the distribution of power and resources.

- C11 Approach practice with an understanding of the complex and interrelated factors impacting power and oppression (i.e., interconnected—local, regional, national & global—factors, both historic and contemporary).
- C12 Identify, develop, implement and evaluate strategies to address policies, practices, and language that are discriminatory and oppressive.

2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research
Advanced generalist practitioners critically appraise and integrate data from multiple sources to inform practice decisions. Advanced generalist practitioners also collect, analyze, interpret, and communicate data for program development, evaluation and ongoing improvement of services.

- **C13** Question and critically evaluate the strength and application of the evidence in regard to assumptions, context, and culture.
- **C14** Employ evaluation frameworks in assessing the impact of interventions, programs, and policies.
- **C15** Collaborate with the research enterprise in identifying and addressing questions emanating from the practice arena.

### 2.1.7 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment

Advanced generalist practitioners integrate multiple theories about human behavior and the social environment to complete comprehensive assessments and develop and implement intervention plans across system levels. Advanced generalists give equal importance to understanding individual uniqueness and the broader social issues that support or deter well-being.

- **C16** Integrate understandings from a variety of theoretical perspectives in formulating comprehensive, multidimensional assessments and interventions.
- **C17** Identify and question underlying theoretical and ontological assumptions about human behavior guiding agency practices, programs and policies.

### 2.1.8 Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.

Advanced generalist practitioners utilize a range of analytical frameworks to assess the efficacy, costs and consequences of policy choices. In turn, advanced generalists use these data to develop and advocate for socially and economically just policies that promote the human rights and dignity of all.

- **C18** Apply analytical frameworks to critically assess the intended & unintended outcomes of existing and proposed policies, especially with respect to vulnerable populations.
- **C19** Formulate and advocate for policies that promote socially and economically just practices and services at all system levels.

### 2.1.9 Respond to contexts that shape practice

Grounded in the profession’s person-in-environment perspective, advanced practitioners recognize and attend to the cultural, organizational, and social elements that continually influence and shape social work practice.

- **C20** Based on evidence, facilitate and formulate innovative responses within ambiguous and changing practice contexts.
- **C21** Critically analyze and apply relevant data and emerging interventions and technologies to evolving practice contexts.
- **C22** Analyze & effectively navigate contextual structures (e.g., power, resources) encountered in emerging practice contexts.

### 2.1.10 Engage, assess intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Advanced generalist practitioners are ethical, competent leaders who are able to practice reflectively and autonomously in complex environments across system levels with diverse groups. Advanced practitioners integrate the systems, person-in-environment, and strengths perspectives with an array of theoretical models and intervention approaches to collaboratively frame and address complex issues, questions and problems. Thus, advanced practice involves the continuous, dynamic interplay of engagement, multidimensional assessment, intervention and evaluation processes—across system levels.

#### 2.1.10a Engagement

- **C23** Attend to the interpersonal dynamics, cultural & contextual factors that support or threaten client-worker relationships.
- **C24** Establish a relationally based process that encourages clients to be equal participants in the establishment of intervention goals & expected outcomes.
2.1.10b Assessment
- C25 Adapt, modify & use multidimensional tools in conducting comprehensive, culturally effective, integrative case assessments.
- C26 Identify client system strengths and coping capacities.
- C27 Assess client system readiness for change.
- C28 Select and modify intervention strategies based on continuous evaluation & assessment.

2.1.10c Intervention
- C29 Critically evaluate, select and apply best practices and evidence-informed interventions.
- C30 Capable of autonomous practice, in competently applying appropriate intervention techniques for a range of presenting issues, problems, or questions.
- C31 Develop and implement collaborative multidisciplinary interventions.

2.1.10d Evaluation
- C32 Use process and outcome evaluation findings to inform and shape the ongoing development of social work interventions.
- C33 Work collaboratively with evaluators/researchers in identifying questions emanating from practice, as well as assessing intervention efficacy and effectiveness.

Course Objectives/Educational Outcomes:

During and upon completion of this two-course sequence, students are expected to:

780.1: Engage with peers from a variety of practicum settings to learn about the unique field settings, their strengths, their challenges, and from each other’s experiences (C1, C3-C6, C9-C12, C15-18, C21, C22).

780.2: Participate in learning activities that will help the student connect the knowledge, skills, and values learned in the classroom with field-based experiences. Such activities include, but are not limited to: discussions, student presentations, demonstrations, completion of Individual Practice Assessments, completion of Time Logs, completion of a Learning Agreement, Site Visit Form, and an Evaluation of Student Performance (C2-13, C15-18, C21, C22).

780.3: Participate in a forum of engaged and authentic dialogue with peers and Faculty Liaison and demonstrate leadership in processing complex field experiences while acknowledging the development of their professional identity (C1-C6, C9-C18, C21, C22).

780.4: Adhere to principles and policies set forth in the University of Nevada Reno Student Code of Conduct, the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, the International Federation of Social Workers, the Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act of 1996, Nevada Laws governing social workers (NRS 641B, NAC 641B), mandated reporting laws (i.e. NRS Chapter 432B), and other pertinent laws associated with the field setting in which student is placed (C1-C8).

780.5: Participate in a forum of engaged and authentic dialogue with peers and Faculty Liaison and demonstrate leadership while both autonomously and collaboratively examining complex social, cultural, and economic justice issues that arise in the field practicum (C1, C9-C18, C21, C22).

780.6: Participate in a forum of engaged and authentic dialogue with peers and Faculty Liaison in addition to other learning activities to connect the knowledge, skills, and values learned in the “practice” classes to field-based experiences aimed at assessing, intervening, and evaluating complex issues facing individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities encountered during the field practicum (C23-C33).
780.7: Complete all required reading, forms, materials, and 225 hours of field education by specified deadlines (C2, C3, C4, C5).

780.8: Demonstrate leadership, autonomy, and competence in advanced generalist practice by integrating the knowledge, values, and skills of the concentration year practice behaviors in all 10 competencies and applying these behaviors to complex social issues within their field practicum setting (C1-C33).

**Instructional Methods:**

The SW 780 seminar provides a forum for discussion, feedback, and problem solving in a collegial environment where peer and Faculty consultation is key. The role of the seminar leader is NOT to solve the students’ field-based problems for them, but to guide students as they work to apply the knowledge, values, and skills acquired throughout their program to advanced generalist practice opportunities in the field. Students will be responsible for providing content and process by bringing issues to class for discussion and by contributing feedback and consultation with each other. Group process will be a primary learning tool and students will be challenged to demonstrate skills in leadership, listening, problem solving, and integration of knowledge with practice experiences.

**Course Policies:**

Please refer to the [Field Practicum Manual](#) for specific course related policies, expectations, roles and responsibilities. Students will be held accountable to the information presented in this manual. Students must also refer to the “Field Calendar” located online for important dates relating to their field experience.

- **Disabilities:** Students who have documented disabilities that may affect their learning or performance in this class should contact the UNR Disability Services Office (Thompson Student Services Building, Suite 100; (775) 784-6000; mzabel@unr.edu). The instructor will make those accommodations that are requested in writing by the aforementioned office.

- **Academic Success Services:** Your student fees cover usage of the Math Center (784-4433) or [www.unr.edu/mathcenter](http://www.unr.edu/mathcenter/), Tutoring Center (784-6801 or [www.unr.edu/tutoring](http://www.unr.edu/tutoring/)), and University Writing Center (784-6030 or [www.unr.edu/writing_center](http://www.unr.edu/writing_center)). These centers support your classroom learning; it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.

- **Academic Dishonesty:** “Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses” constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and penalties can include canceling a student’s enrollment without a grade, giving an F for the course, or giving an F for the assignment. For more details, see the [UNR General Catalog](#).

- **Audio or Video Recordings:** Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents’ policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded. **NOTE: THIS POLICY ALSO APPLIES TO THE FIELD PRACTICUM SETTING. THERE IS TO BE NO COVERT VIDEO, AUDIO, OR PHOTOGRAPHING OF WORK WITH CLIENTS OR ANY OTHER ACTIVITY ASSOCIATED WITH THE FIELD SETTING.**
• **Attendance:** Active engagement and contribution to each weekly seminar is critical to the attainment of the objectives listed above. Therefore, students are expected to attend each class. Students who miss more than 2 classes are at risk of failing the course. Absences due to field-related activities are not considered “excused.”

**Grading:**

Students will be assessed on progress toward and achievement of integration of classroom content with the demonstrated practice behaviors described above and professional expectations outlined in the field manual and the required readings. The Faculty Liaison, in consultation with the Field Instructor, is responsible for assigning the final grade for the four-credit field practicum course. Grade options are:

- **Satisfactory (S).** Student has met the performance requirements of the course at an acceptable level.
- **Unsatisfactory (U).** Student has not met the performance requirements of the course at acceptable levels.

The following materials and observations will be utilized in assigning the final grade in this course:

1. Field performance assessment (completed by student’s field instructor)
2. Seminar attendance
3. Seminar participation (i.e. engagement and contribution)
4. Timely submission of forms and other required materials
5. Adherence to all policies and codes referenced in the syllabus and as mandated by the field setting in which the student is placed
6. Student’s general readiness to advance (as measured by the level of integration of knowledge, values, and skills to demonstrate the requisite practice behaviors)

**Required Reading:**

- School of Social Work Field Education Manual (located online at http://www.unr.edu/social-work/field.html, click on “Current MSW Concentration Year Field Students.”)
- University of Nevada Reno, Student Code of Conduct: http://www.unr.edu/student-conduct/policies/student-code-of-conduct
- Field Setting/Agency Policies and Procedures
- Other reading assigned by field setting and/or Faculty Liaison

**Recommended Reading:**
Assignments:

Please note that all required forms are located online (as referenced above). Due dates are subject to change according to unique field-related circumstances. Students not able to meet deadlines, must consult with the Faculty Liaison and obtain permission for extended due dates.

1. Pre-field assignment: Due first day of field class, or as agreed upon with Faculty Liaison.

2. Required readings: Prior to the start of their field practicum, students must complete all readings listed above. Readings must be continually referenced throughout the practicum as evidenced by student’s demonstrated behaviors in field and seminar contributions.

3. Acknowledgement form: Due first day of field class, or as agreed upon with Faculty Liaison.

4. Learning Agreement: See the proposed schedule of classes for due dates.

5. Site Visit Form: Must be submitted prior to scheduled agency visit, per Liaison instructions.

6. Field Performance Assessment: See the proposed schedule of classes for due dates.

7. Time Log: Utilize template provided and submit to Liaison weekly.

8. Individual Practice Assessment: Students are required to complete a bi-weekly log aimed at assessing their own field performance and how they would modify/enhance their practice based on “lessons learned.” Students must respond to a minimum of two questions from the list below (one question from Group A and one question from Group B):

**Group A – Select one question:**

a. Provide an example of how you have demonstrated leadership during the past two weeks?

b. Provide an example of how you utilized supervision during the past two weeks? How was that successful or unsuccessful?

c. Describe opportunities you had to practice autonomously? Reflect on this experience.

d. Describe a situation that was particularly challenging for you. What were the complex dimensions involved in that situation? How did you or will you respond to that complexity? How did you utilize ethical principles to guide your decision-making?

e. Describe a situation in which you had to modify your course of action in order to respond to the culture and diversity of the people/organizations involved in the situation.

f. Describe a situation in which the power/oppression dynamic was evidenced. Reflect on this experience.

**Group B – Select one question:**
a. What skills/traits would you like to develop or improve?

b. What is the most important thing that you learned during the past two weeks about yourself and the work that you are doing?

c. How do you know that you have done your work effectively? What evidence would you draw upon to determine effectiveness?

d. What event or events had the biggest impact on you this week?

e. During the past two weeks, do you feel that you had clear direction regarding expectations of your performance?

f. Frame a research question based on your experiences over the past two weeks. What practice observations are you basing this question on?

g. Identify a theoretical perspective(s) that is used in your setting. To what extent does it help explain a situation, an intervention, or the context that a client might find themselves in?

h. Identify policies that impact a situation that you have encountered in the past two weeks. Assess the intended and unintended outcomes of those policies.
### Sample Proposed Schedule of Classes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week #</th>
<th>Date of Class</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
<th>Hour Tracker</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>August 29</td>
<td>Time Log</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Pre-field Assignment</td>
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<td>Acknowledgement Form</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>September 5</td>
<td>Time Log</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>Individual Practice Assessment</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>September 12</td>
<td>Time Log</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>September 19</td>
<td>Time Log</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Individual Practice Assessment</td>
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<td>Learning Agreement</td>
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<td>September 26</td>
<td>Time Log</td>
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<td>October 3</td>
<td>Time Log</td>
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<td>Individual Practice Assessment</td>
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<td>October 10</td>
<td>Time Log</td>
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<td>Site Visit Form</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>October 17</td>
<td>Time Log</td>
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<td>Individual Practice Assessment</td>
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<td>Time Log</td>
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<td>November 7</td>
<td>Time Log</td>
<td>165</td>
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<td>November 14</td>
<td>Time Log</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>November 21</td>
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<td>November 28</td>
<td>Time Log</td>
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<td>Individual Practice Assessment</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>December 5</td>
<td>Final Time Log</td>
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<td>Field hours must be complete</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Final Exam - TBA</td>
<td>Evaluation of Field Performance Due</td>
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