University of Kansas  
School of Social Welfare  
SW 801  
MSW Clinical Concentration Practicum  
Master Syllabus

Prerequisites: Taken concurrently with SW 810 and 811 or following completion of these courses.*
Credit Hours: 14

I. COURSE RATIONALE
The mission of the School of Social Welfare is to educate students whose skills, compassion and commitment enhance individual and community well being. This mission is accomplished through providing students with the knowledge necessary to practice effectively and ethically with the full range of social systems, emphasizing social justice, a strengths approach, diversity, and a critical perspective. The School is committed to preparing graduates who are effective and culturally competent practitioners with individuals, groups, families, organizations and communities, and who accept responsibility to continue their professional education.

The Practicum is an integral component of the curriculum in social work education. During the Advanced level year of the M.S.W. program the curriculum in the Clinical Concentration focuses on helping the student develop the knowledge and skills to apply social work theory and methods to the treatment and prevention of psychosocial problems, disability, or impairment, including emotional and mental disorders. Clinical practice includes the application of assessment and diagnostic strategies, the formation of a treatment plan that may include psychotherapy, counseling, client advocacy, systemic and organizational interventions, consultation and evaluation, and other clinically appropriate interventions with individuals, families, couples, groups and social systems. The Practicum engages the student in supervised social work practice to develop these skills and provides students with opportunities to apply classroom learning in the field setting. This includes classes in Clinical Social Work Practice, clinical practice strategies with diverse populations, specialized knowledge in a field of practice (health/mental health, children & families, aging, schools), and macro level interventions used by clinical social work practitioners. Students are expected to complete a minimum of 720 hours in the assigned Practicum setting, averaging 24 hours each week for 30 weeks (or two consecutive semesters).*

A minimum of 50% of practicum hours must be spent in direct client practice.

The Clinical Concentration Practicum is closely related to all of the courses in the advanced level curriculum. The interaction between the acquisition of knowledge about clinical social work practice, policy, research, and best practices and the opportunity to translate this knowledge into action in the Practicum is at the crux of the development of a Clinical Social Worker. This

* If Field Education is not taken concurrently with these courses, then a concurrent practicum exception form must be submitted to, and approved by the Associate Dean of Academic Programs prior to enrolling in these courses.
interaction promotes the student's ability to develop a critical perspective on all aspects of their learning.

II. EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

Students are expected to develop an individual learning contract, in conjunction with their field instructor and field liaison, that will specify the activities they will be involved in to accomplish the following learning objectives and how the attainment of the objectives will be measured. By the end of the two-semester Clinical Concentration practicum students will be able to:

1. Formulate comprehensive bio-psycho-social assessments that demonstrate culturally competent practice and consider client strengths, with a wide range of clients systems and problems. (Reflects Clinical Concentration Objective 1).

2. Formulate DSM-IV (TR) diagnoses that take into consideration age, race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, culture and other distinguishing characteristics (Reflects Clinical Concentration Objectives 1 and 5).

3. Demonstrate the ability to challenge dominant clinical practice models that marginalize and oppress clients based on age, race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, culture and other distinguishing characteristics (Reflects Clinical Concentration Objective 5).

4. Apply appropriate intervention plans based on their assessment and diagnoses that utilize empirically supported clinical practice theories and practice models. (Reflects Clinical Concentration Objective 2).

5. Demonstrate the ability to engage in indirect practice activities that enhance service delivery and client well-being with special consideration of populations at risk and issues of social and economic justice. (Reflects Clinical Concentration Objective 3).

6. Demonstrate the integration of policy, research and practice with clients served by the agency. (Reflects Clinical Concentration Objective 4).

7. Apply the NASW Code of Ethics to clinical social work practice activities, taking into consideration client strengths, diversity, social and economic justice and applying a critical perspective to their work. (Reflects Clinical Concentration Objective 6).

8. Demonstrate the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of their clinical practice interventions, and to use this evaluation to modify their case plans on an ongoing basis. (Reflects Clinical Concentration Objective 7).

9. Demonstrate the ability to use supervision and consultation.

III. CURRICULUM THEMES

Relying on the social work frame of reference and consistent with the mission and themes of the School of Social Welfare, the clinical concentration builds on the foundation curricula to provide a practice-centered curriculum that integrates the importance of recognizing clients’ strengths, the value of understanding, acknowledging, and engaging with the client around the diversity of cultural, racial, ethnic, and experiential differences and similarities, a commitment to social and economic justice, and a critical perspective in one’s examination of the individual worker’s and system’s underlying assumptions about human needs and potentials.
• **Strengths Perspective**: Students are expected to demonstrate their ability to complete comprehensive biopsychosocial assessments and develop intervention plans with client systems of varying sizes utilizing the strengths perspective;

• **Diversity**: Students are expected to demonstrate their understanding of how race, ethnicity, class, economic status, age, gender, sexual orientation and other characteristics affect the experience of clients, and to show respect, sensitivity and appreciation for these experiences;

• **Social and Economic Justice**: Students are expected to demonstrate their ability to analyze the impact of economic, societal and institutional oppression on individuals and how this oppression is perpetuated through agency and social policies;

• **Critical Perspective**: Students are expected to demonstrate their ability to critically reflect on their own practice, understand the similarities and differences between various helping professions, and to understand clients systems of various sizes using different theoretical perspectives.

IV. THE LIBERAL ARTS PERSPECTIVE
The Clinical Concentration Practicum draws on relevant knowledge and skills that may enhance the ability of students to achieve the stated educational outcomes. Students are encouraged to use their knowledge from courses on history, literature, social sciences and fine arts along with the knowledge and skills gained from life experiences, their previous and concurrent social work courses to support their learning.

V. PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES AND VALUES
Students will be expected to demonstrate an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the NASW Code of Ethics and to analyze their work with individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations through this value system.

VI. PREPARATION FOR PRACTICE WITH DIVERSE POPULATIONS
All students will be expected to work with vulnerable populations within the limits imposed by the field practicum agency, and demonstrate the ability to be culturally competent in the clinical social work practice.

VII. TOPICS
The Required Topics of the Clinical Concentration field practicum are grouped into three broad areas:

A. **Professional Development** includes the continued development of professional identity, an increasingly complex understanding of how the NASW Code of Ethics affects clinical social work practice, the ability to reflect on and critically analyze one's own practice, taking active responsibility for one's own learning and performing in a professional manner.

   1. Verbal and written communication skills
   2. Reflective practice skills and the use of this reflection to modify practice
   3. NASW Code of Ethics
4. Strengths, diversity, critical perspective, and social and economic justice
5. Constructive supervision as demonstrated by open and professional communication
6. Inter and intra-disciplinary collaboration on behalf of clients.

B. Direct Clinical Social Work Practice includes the ability to complete comprehensive biopsychosocial assessments and develop and implement appropriate intervention plans with a range of client systems and problems, demonstrating they have taken into consideration client strengths and diversity.

1. Bio-psycho-social assessments using a person-environment perspective.
2. Agency and other evaluation tools used in assessment.
4. Clinical intervention models/theories/and approaches used in the agency.
5. Evaluation of practice interventions and outcomes and the use of these evaluations to modify practice.
6. Cultural competence, with an emphasis on clients who are from marginalized groups.
7. Inter and intra-professional power dynamics that effect client outcomes.

C. Indirect Practice includes the development of knowledge and skills needed to enhance service delivery and client well being, including the ability to evaluate and develop policy within a particular field of practice.

1. Intra and inter-agency activities that focus on service delivery and client well-being.
2. Policy and legislative issues that impact service delivery and client well-being within the agency.
3. Best practices within the agency setting based on empirical research and social work values and ethics.

VIII. RECOMMENDED READINGS

Required:
All students are expected to read the Field Education Handbook.

Recommended:
Readings may be assigned on an individual basis by the field instructor or the field liaison according to the needs of the student and the mission of the agency.

IX. RECOMMENDED ASSIGNMENTS

Specific learning assignments for each student that operationalize the learning objectives for the Clinical Concentration Practicum will be developed within the Field Education setting through mutual agreement of the student, field instructor and field liaison. This agreement will be documented in the Field Learning Contract. The guidelines for developing the learning contract are detailed in the Field Education Handbook. The field instructor and liaison will evaluate students
on their overall performance on the learning objectives for Clinical Concentration Advanced Practicum at the end of the 720 hours, utilizing the evaluation instrument in the Field Education Handbook. Intermittent evaluations will also take place throughout the course of the field Practicum to evaluate student progress in meeting the learning objectives, as specified by the Field Education Office.

X. GRADING
The vast majority of students will receive a P grade first semester and an S grade second semester. Students receive credit for the Field Education only after they have completed the total number of clock hours in SW 801. Grades are recommended by the field instructor and assigned by the field liaison. Grading is on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) basis at the end of the field practicum, with grading at the end of the first semester being Pass (P) or Unsatisfactory (U). An Incomplete (I) may be given when a student has made satisfactory progress, but has insufficient clock hours for completion of the Field Education due to illness or other factors beyond the student’s control for which an exception has been granted by both the field instructor and liaison.

The vast majority of students will receive a P grade first semester and an S grade second semester. However, if a student:

- Receives an Unsatisfactory grade at the end of first semester the MSW Program Director and the Director of Field Education will meet with the student to discuss the student’s future in the program.
- Receives a P grade at the end of first semester and an Unsatisfactory grade at the end of second semester, the student will not receive any credit for the Field Practicum in which she/he has been enrolled. If a student receives an unsatisfactory grade then the Director of Field Education, the MSW Program Director, the student and other appropriate individuals will discuss the student’s future in the program.
- Receives an Incomplete (I), a written plan for completion of the practicum must be developed by the student in conjunction with the field instructor and approved by the field instructor and field liaison.

An Unsatisfactory grade in Practicum may be assigned if a student engages in behavior described under “Grounds for Dismissal” in the Field Education Handbook. In these instances dismissal will be immediate. However, if the student’s behavior does not meet the criteria for immediate dismissal, the following procedures must occur before an Unsatisfactory grade will be assigned in Practicum:

1. The field instructor must inform the student of the specific aspects of his/her performance which are not meeting the expectations of satisfactory performance and immediately notify the field liaison of her/his concerns;

2. The student, field instructor and field liaison must meet to develop a behaviorally specific, time-limited contract to help the student meet expectations in the areas of concern (complete Practicum Concern Form). This contract must be behaviorally specific so that the student, field instructor and liaison can all measure if the student has met the expectations to receive a passing grade. The contract must specify the performance areas that are needing improvement; the functional responsibilities of the student for demonstrating progress; the
functional responsibilities of the field instructor of supporting the student; the specific means by which progress will be evaluated; the dates where progress will be evaluated and the determination of the final grade. **The field liaison** will inform the Director of Field Education if a student is in danger of receiving an unsatisfactory evaluation.

3. **The field liaison** is expected to be actively involved in any situation where the student is in danger of receiving an unsatisfactory grade and will offer consultation during this period to the student and the field instructor. The field liaison may require specific documentation from the student and/or the field instructor. The field liaison is responsible for assigning the final grade.

**Attendance Policy:**
The MSW Clinical Concentration practicum requires that students complete 720 hours over the course of two-semesters.

1. **Sick/Family Leave:** Students in the Clinical Concentration Practicum are allowed 24 hours of sick/family leave each semester. Students must make up time for absences when it exceeds the allowable number of hours. It is expected that students will behave in a professionally responsible manner, will provide advance notice of an anticipated absence, and make appropriate arrangements for their absence. If the practicum is completed as a block, the student is allowed a total of 48 hours of sick/family leave.

2. **University Holidays:** If a student is scheduled to be in Practicum on a day that the University has cancelled classes students are not required to attend practicum, and these hours count towards the student's total clock hours. However, as with sick/family leave, it is expected that students will behave in a professionally responsible manner and make appropriate arrangements for their absence.

**XI. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Students are asked on the practicum planning materials to specify if they have any special learning needs that need accommodation. The Field Education Office works closely with the student and the Services for Students with Disabilities Office to provide reasonable accommodation so the student will have a fair opportunity to perform in practicum.

**XII. RECORDING AND SHARING RECORDINGS OF LECTURES**

Course materials prepared by the instructor are the property of the instructor. Video and audio recording of any type without the consent of the instructor is prohibited. On request, the instructor will usually grant permission for students to audio tape information, on the condition that these audio tapes are only used by the individual making the recording. Unless explicit permission is obtained from the instructor, recordings may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in practicum.

**XIII. HIPAA REGULATIONS**
The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requires that any personal information that may identify a person must be removed to protect confidentiality. Confidentiality applies to both classroom discussions and to written work. Please follow these simple, yet essential guidelines:
• Always disguise the name and other personal identifying information when you speak and write about a person, following the guidelines established by HIPAA.
• If writing in great detail about a client, ask permission from the client.
• Share nothing about specific clients, agencies or other students outside of the classroom.

Any information shared with the class/instructor will be confidential, within the limits defined by the Code of Ethics and state guidelines. All written materials submitted to the field liaison must follow HIPAA Regulations.

XIV. INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY
Field Instructors have agreed to provide a minimum of 1 hour of supervision each week. The exact timing of this meeting and general availability of the field instructor are determined on an individual basis.

XV. INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY
Students are expected to attend practicum during inclement weather if the agency is open. If the student is unable to attend then the student is expected to behave in a professionally responsible manner and make appropriate arrangements with their field instructor. These hours will NOT count towards the student’s total clock hours.

If the agency closes due to inclement weather when a student is scheduled to be in attendance, students are not required to attend practicum, and these hours count towards the student’s total clock hours.