

**RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

**Course Outline
Reflective Practice Seminar
19:910:557**

Instructor:

Telephone

Email:

I. Catalog Course Description

The purpose of this seminar is to facilitate the integration of practicum experience with knowledge, values, and skills acquired in the classroom. With a focus on self-in-practice, the seminar will provide students with the opportunity to engage in discussion, reflection, and critical thinking about their evolving professional identity and key areas of social work practice. The seminar will explore a different aspect of social work each week; with the opportunity for students to explore how that aspect of the profession impacts them personally. This seminar will use the classroom as an experiential learning lab environment that involves a significant use of classroom discussion, exercises, role-plays, written analysis, and reflection.

II. Course Overview

This seminar is designed to offer a collaborative learning environment to explore the integration of knowledge acquired in the classroom with a student's practicum placement experience. The seminar's structure and assignments will encourage students to reflect on theories and concepts as they relate to their practice as well as their evolving professional identity. Experiential learning will include classroom exercises, role-plays, reflective discussion of students' experiences, and simulations. The areas explored include the student's evolving professional identity, awareness of their positionality in practice, exploring their practice in the micro-macro realm, and the use of supervision.

As students read through this syllabus, they should also remember to **closely review the School-Wide Syllabus** in Canvas or the Student Handbook to find information on the School of Social Work mission statement and learning goals, school-wide policies (including academic integrity policies and the standardized attendance policy), and student resources and supports.

III. Place of Course in Curriculum

This course is a required, one (1) credit course taken in the student's second semester of practicum education. It is a companion to Practicum Education Practicum II. (19:910:509.) The

course meets five (5) times in the spring semester for two hours and forty minutes per class meeting.

IV. Program Level Learning Goals and The Council of Social Work Education's Social Work Competencies

The MSW Program at Rutgers is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). CSWE's accreditation standards can be reviewed at www.cswe.org.

In keeping with CSWE standards, the Rutgers School of Social Work has integrated the CSWE competencies within its curriculum. These competencies serve as program level Learning Goals for the MSW Program and include the following. Upon completion of their MSW education students will be able to: demonstrate ethical and professional behavior; engage in diversity and difference in practice; advance human rights and social, economic and environmental justice; engage in practice informed research and research informed practice; engage with individuals, families, groups organizations and communities; intervene with individual, families, groups organizations and communities; and evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.

This course will assist students in developing the following CSWE competencies:

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession's history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers:

- make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
- use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and

- use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. Social workers:

- apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and
- engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate. Social workers:

- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

[Explore the entire set of 2022 CSWE competencies.](#)

V. Course Objectives

The course objectives primarily relate to the aforementioned competencies/program level learning goals as the course addresses ethical and professional behavior and engagement with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities through the experiential use of role-plays and additional course assignments.

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Effectively employ the use of reflexive thinking to examine their own practice and inform their work with individuals, groups, communities, and larger systems.
2. Demonstrate awareness of their positionality when they engage in social work practice – particularly when working with oppressed populations.
3. Demonstrate understanding of their social work role and responsibilities when working in interprofessional settings.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of elements of effective supervision.
5. Demonstrate increased awareness of the importance to reflexively engage in social work practice across the micro-macro continuum.

VI. Course Readings and Texts

All required & recommended readings will be available to students in the Reading List section of the course Canvas site.

VII. Course Requirements

Expectations

Students are expected to be active learners and collaborators in this course. Regular class attendance with active participation is expected. Students are expected to contribute knowledge and observations to discussions in each class session. When students participate actively in class discussions, learning is enhanced. It is important that readings and assignments be completed prior to each session. Please take responsibility for seeking clarification of difficult material encountered in the text, readings, and lectures. At the end of each class session, additional readings for the subsequent class may be assigned. Please become familiar with the attendance policy to ensure successful.

The seminar is taken as a co-requisite with the second semester practicum and focuses on providing students with competencies, which can be applied in the practicum. This course offers

students the opportunity to engage in reflection and discussion in several core areas of social work practice. Upon completion of this course, students will develop their use of reflection in professional practice and will better understand and explore their personal and professional relation to the course material. Emphasis is given to developing a positive learning environment based on mutual support and respect. The focus will be on the following:

- Using reflection and critical analysis of one's own reactions, ideas, and values to course discussions, readings, and exercises.
- Offering constructive feedback to peers and course instructor.
- Using feedback from peers and course/ instructor.
- Identifying personal strengths and well as identifying professional development/learning needs and ways to meet them.

VIII. Attendance & Grading

Grades for the course will be weighted as follows:

Attendance & Participation..... 50% total

Reflection Papers..... 50% total

Grading Standards

The Reflective Seminar is graded as a Pass or as a Fail.

Pass = Acceptable or outstanding work; student demonstrates good understanding of material, displays consistent effort to analyze and understand the counseling process; shows good organization and communicates professionally at all times, verbally and in writing. Work is turned in and completed by the due date.

Fail = Unacceptable work; student has not shown effort to apply the concepts and techniques to their own work, does not prepare for role plays, does not submit assigned papers; shows continuing problems in organizing and presenting written materials; is disruptive or disrespectful to classmates; misses more than one class.

Assignments:

A. Class Attendance and Participation (50% of total grade)

Attendance:

This class relies heavily on student interaction and consists of only five sessions, making attendance and participation essential. Please review the attendance policy in the syllabus to ensure you are fully prepared and successful in completing the course.

Class attendance is required. The seminar meets for five classes in the spring semester for two hours and forty minutes each class. **Students are expected to attend all five sessions and may fail the course if they miss a session or exhibit repeated lateness.** Every effort should be made to attend all five sessions - missing one session is 20% of the allotted class time. Students are expected to notify the instructor if they are unable to attend a session (see email and telephone numbers above). If a class is missed due to an excused absence, the instructor will assign a 3–5 page paper examining the topic that was missed (this is in addition to the three reflection papers).

While an additional paper is required if you miss a class, it does not erase the absence and should not be considered a substitute for attendance. **Missing more than one class will result in a failing grade.**

Students who leave during breaks will be marked as absent. Students will not be penalized for missing class for appropriate reasons (e.g., illness and religious observances).

Participation:

As an experiential learning based course, students are expected to work hard during class by thoughtfully contributing to class discussions, fully participating in role-play and group exercises, responding to the instructor's and classmates' questions, and asking questions in return of classmates and the instructor.

Students are expected to read the required readings prior to each class and show up prepared to discuss the material. Demonstrating lack of preparedness will result in a lower or failing grade.

Each student is expected to contribute verbally during every class - failure to do so will lower your grade. Students will fail the course if they do not regularly participate or fail to demonstrate they have read the readings.

Do not use Artificial Intelligence (AI) or other individuals to write any of the content of your work. Doing so will result in a zero for the assignment and likely failure of the course. Use of artificial intelligence such as ChatGPT should not be used to provide content for your assignments. This is an academic integrity violation. All material submitted in the course must be your own as per the Rutgers Academic Integrity policy.

B. Reflection Papers (50% of total grade)

Research shows that practitioners who take the time to reflect on their work, and their personal relation to it, are more intentional and effective. The goal of this assignment is to help each student personally engage with the material being covered through the process of reflecting on what they are learning and how it has meaning and utility to them. Before writing, spend some time thinking and reflecting on your personal reactions to the material. This assignment is not a report on the material, it is a description of *your* impressions and engagement with the material.

Requirements:

- You must submit a total of **three reflection papers** over the course of the semester. There are 5 class sessions in this course, you may choose which three class sessions you write about.
- Reflection papers are due **one week after** the conclusion of a class (you are submitting three reflection papers this semester – choosing three of the five weeks to write about).
- The reflection should be inspired by your class experience (e.g., lecture, discussions, exercises) and the assigned readings.
- Papers are graded pass/fail but may be returned to a student for revisions if sufficient depth is not achieved. Late papers will not receive credit.

Format:

- The reflection paper format is 2-3 pages, double spaced. Include your name, date, and a title for the paper. Write in the first person using well-written full paragraphs.
- Using the DEAL model of reflection (Describe/Examine/Articulate Learning), answer the following questions (label each of the three sections):
 - 1) **Describe** an aspect of this week's class session, an aspect of this week's topic, or an aspect of the readings that resonates with you. Be brief and concise.
 - 2) **Examine (reflect on)** how it impacts you:
 - a) **Personally:** Reflect on how the concepts from the reading and class interact with you *personally*. The interaction may include your values, beliefs, biases, assumptions, culture, wisdom, and/or past experiences (personal and/or professional).
 - b) **Professionally:** Why do you think this material matters?
 - 3) **Articulate Your Learning:** Describe one thing you learned from your reflection. For example:
 - a. Something that matters to you as a social worker.
 - b. Something you might use in current or future practice.
 - c. Something you learned about yourself.

IX. Cell phone Laptop Policy

Cell phones, laptops or other electronic devices are NOT to be used during class time unless you obtain approval from the instructor first. This course is meant to be a conversation. Electronic devices easily disrupt the learning process and the distracted attention they foster is disrespectful to your fellow students.

In general, no cell phones are allowed in open view during class. If one needs to monitor their cell phone in the case of an emergency, please discuss this with the instructor in advance of class. Otherwise, please turn all modes of ringers off, and put phones out of sight. Students can use phones during designated break periods outside of the classroom.

Use of cell phones or laptops are not permitted during class, unless they are required for your learning and approved for use by the instructor in advance. Using devices will result in the lowering of the class participation grade. Even if previously approved by the instructor, you can be dismissed from class and lose points if you use these devices for non-class related purposes such as surfing the internet or answering email. Students who use technology inappropriately during class will not receive full credit for class participation, regardless of the quantity and quality of their class contributions.

X. Zoom camera policy (for synchronous classes only)

In order to promote interactive learning, engagement, and community building, we expect students enrolled in synchronous remote classes (i.e., 'Zoom') courses to turn their cameras on for the duration of class. RU SSW also expects: 1) students should be in as private and distraction free environment as possible in order to support focused learning; and 2) students should not be engaged in other activities during class (driving, at work, etc.). If you are unable to turn your camera on for a particular week, please communicate and let me know before class.

XI. Class Topics, Readings, Activities, and Coursework

<u>Session #</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Required Readings</u>
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Session #1	Introduction to the course/Professional identity/Use-of-self/Imposter Syndrome	<p>Dewane, C. J. (2006). Use of self: A primer revisited. <i>Clinical Social Work Journal</i>, 34(4), 543-558. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10615-005-0021-5</p> <p>Ferguson, H. (2018). How social workers reflect in action and when and why they don't: The possibilities and limits to reflective practice in social work. <i>Social work education</i>, 37(4), 415-427. https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2017.1413083</p> <p>Knight, C. (2012). Therapeutic use of self: Theoretical and evidence- based considerations for clinical practice and supervision. <i>The Clinical Supervisor</i>, 31(1), 1-24. https://doi.org/10.1080/07325223.2012.676370</p> <p>Taiwo, A. (2022). Social workers' use of critical reflection. <i>Journal of Social Work</i>, 22(2), 384-401. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/14680173211010239</p>
Session #2	Awareness of Positionality in Practice	<p>Townson, L. & Pulla, V. R. (2020). Preparing social workers for empowerment: The place of positionality & its continual intricacies. In V. Pulla & B.B. Mamidi (Eds.). <i>Aspects of community empowerment & resilience</i> (pp. 31-48). Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd.</p> <p>WISE. (2021, June 4). The power of positionality in social justice efforts. Blog post updated on September 7, 2022. https://www.womenofwise.org/post/positionality-social-justice</p> <p>Recommended:</p> <p>Dentato, M. P. (2020). Queer communities (competency & positionality). <i>Encyclopedia of Social Work</i>. http://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199975839.013.881</p>
Session #3	Use of Supervision	<p>Hubbard, T. L. (2018). Having difficult but necessary conversations with your social work instructor. <i>The New Social Worker</i>. https://www.socialworker.com/feature-articles/-placement/having-difficult-but-necessary-conversations-with-your-social/</p>

		<p>Ketner, M. et al. (2017). The meaning & value of supervision in social work education. <i>Field Scholar</i>, 7(2), 1-18.</p> <p>Recommended:</p> <p>William, K. (2013). Field placement: What students need from their supervisors: A student's perspective. <i>The New Social Worker</i>. https://www.socialworker.com/feature-articles/-placement/Field Placement: What Students Need From Their Field Supervisors: A Student's Perspective/</p>
Session #4	Micro & Macro Social Work Practice	<p>Austin, M. J., Anthony, E. K., Knee, R. T., & Mathias, J. (2016). Revisiting the relationship between micro and macro social work practice. <i>Families in Society</i>, 97(4), 270-277. https://doi.org/10.1606/1044-3894.2016.97</p> <p>Reisch, M. (2016). Why macro practice matters. <i>Journal of Social Work Education</i>, 52(3), 258-268. https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2016.1174652</p>
Session #5	Course Review/Practice Using Reflection	<p>Dempsey, M., Halton, C., & Murphy, M. (2001). Reflective learning in social work education: Scaffolding the process. <i>Social work education</i>, 20(6), 631-641. https://doi.org/10.1080/02615470120089825</p> <p>Whitaker, L., & Reimer, E. (2017). Students' conceptualisations of critical reflection. <i>Social Work Education</i>, 36(8), 946-958. https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2017.1383377</p>