

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

**Practicum Skills Seminar: Developing Engagement and Assessment Skills
19:910:553 OL**

Instructor:
Email:
Office Hours:

I. CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce students to the interpersonal communication skills necessary to engage and assess clients and client systems as they enter practicum learning. Topics covered include understanding the importance of the professional use of self, developing an empathetic relationship, creating a therapeutic alliance, and applying counseling skills while considering the client's larger social environment. The course will also introduce students to expectations associated with a generalist practicum. This course will use the classroom as an experiential learning lab environment that involves a significant use of classroom exercises, role-plays, written analysis and reflections about these, and client simulations to practice the concepts and skills learned.

II. COURSE OVERVIEW

This course focuses on the skills needed to engage and assess clients and client systems. Areas of focus include the importance of building a relationship and developing counseling skills, and learning approaches to working effectively with diverse clients and client systems. Experiential learning will include classroom exercises, role-plays, and client simulations.

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 first semester of practicum learning. It is a companion to Practicum I. The course meets five (5) times in the fall semester for 2.75 hours per class meeting.

IV. 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 2022 CSWE competencies within its curriculum. The competencies assessed in this course include:

1. Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant policies, laws, and regulations that may affect practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand that ethics are informed by principles of human rights and apply them toward realizing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice in their practice. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision making and apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize and manage personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. Social workers understand how their evolving worldview, personal experiences, and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally, understanding that self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Social workers use rights-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the profession's history, mission, roles, and responsibilities and recognize historical and current contexts of oppression in shaping institutions and social work. Social workers understand the role of other professionals when engaged in interprofessional practice. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure relevant and effective practice. Social workers understand digital technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

Social workers:

- a. make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context;
- b. demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- c. use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- d. use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

2. 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 individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, and privilege as well as their personal values and personal experiences may affect their ability to engage effectively with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers use the principles of interprofessional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate.

Social workers:

- a. apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- b. use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with clients and constituencies.

3. Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in culturally responsive assessment with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Assessment involves a collaborative process of defining presenting challenges and identifying strengths with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to develop a mutually agreed-upon plan. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and use interprofessional collaboration in this process. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, privilege, and their personal values and experiences may affect their assessment and decision making.

Social workers:

- a. apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies; and
- b. demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.

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

Assessment of Competencies/Program Level Learning Goals: Because this course focuses on providing you with the knowledge, skills, and values for you to demonstrate ethical and professional behavior and engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, it has been selected be to part of the School of Social Work overall assessment program of the social work competencies/program level learning goals. This means that the role-play assignment has been designed to assess your attainment of these competencies.

V. COURSE LEARNING GOALS

Course level learning goals 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) Identify and understand expectations associated with a generalist practicum
- 2) Explore the meaning of social work professionalism and practice associated professional behaviors
- 3) Increase and apply skills related to the professional use of self, including self-awareness, personal boundaries, and self-reflection
- 4) Gain and apply beginning engagement skills
- 5) Gain and apply beginning assessment skills

VI. COURSE READINGS AND TEXTS

All required & recommended readings will be available to students through the Rutgers library system or course data management system except for assigned readings from the required Bogo text.

Required Text

Bogo, M. (2018) *Social Work Practice: Integrating Concepts, Processes and Skills* 2nd ed, New York. Columbia University Press

Suggested text

American Psychological Association (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th Ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

VII. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to be active learners and collaborators. Students are expected to contribute knowledge and observations to discussions. When students participate in simulations and discussions, learning is enhanced. It is important that reading assignments be completed. Please take responsibility for seeking clarification of difficult material encountered in the text, readings, and lectures.

This course offers students an introduction to the engagement and assessment skills and competencies required for direct social work practice with diverse client systems.

The seminar is taken as a co requisite with the first semester practicum and focuses on providing students with practice competencies, which can be applied in the practicum. Emphasis is given to developing a positive learning environment based on mutual support and respect.

Upon completion of this course, students should have an understanding of the link between theory and social work process. Students will develop basic communication and interviewing skills needed for professional relationship building, and engagement and assessment with client systems.

Students will also develop the beginning competencies needed to practice as a professional and will be expected to demonstrate these through their interactions in the classroom. The focus will be on the following:

- Collaborating with colleagues
- Offering constructive feedback to colleagues and course instructor.
- Using feedback from colleagues and course/practicum instructor.
- Reflecting on and integrating professional, cultural and personal values.
- Critically analyzing one's own performance and interviewing competencies through interview analysis and reflection and in simulated role plays.
- Identifying personal strengths and well as identifying professional development/learning needs and ways to meet them.

VIII. COURSE ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICIES

Attendance

Please refer to the school-wide syllabus for the standard attendance policy for classes in on-the-ground (traditional) program, intensive weekend program (IWP), and asynchronous online program.

IX. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

All written assignments **must** follow APA format. The professor reserves the right to reduce the letter grade for any assignment that does not confirm to APA format.

Grades for the course will be weighted as follows:

- Simulations & Debrief Discussions: 40%
- Reflection Assignments: 30%
- Final Role Play Project & Discussion: 30%

Assignment Descriptions

Simulations & Debrief Discussions (40% of total grade)

Simulations are the social work virtual interviews conducted by the social worker or social work student with clients. Students encounter simulated clients, who present with a variety of concerns, dimensions of diversity, and problems, and they work to engage them and assess their needs. Debriefing provides an opportunity for the social worker to discuss their simulation performance.

Reflection Assignments: (30% of total grade)

These are brief papers that students will write reflecting on videos they will watch related to the module topic.

Final Role Play Project & Discussion: (30% of total grade)

This is the final simulation interview involving students, who are occupying social worker and client roles, and sharing their work. Students will work in teams to record and post a simulation of a case of their choice. Then, in the role of observer, students will watch the simulations of their classmates and provide detailed feedback in the form of replies on a discussion board.

Grading Standards

Practicum Seminar: Developing Engagement and Assessment Skills, 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 completed by the due date.

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

X. COURSE EVALUATION

Rutgers University issues an online survey that evaluates both the course and the instructor. This survey is completed by students toward the end of the semester, and all answers are confidential and anonymous. The university also will ask students to complete a mid-semester evaluation. Students are expected to thoughtfully participate in both surveys for the purpose of continuous quality course improvement.

Resources and Important Links:

- [National Alliance for the Mentally Ill \(NAMI\)](#)
- [National Institute of Mental Health](#)
- [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism](#)
- [National Institute on Drug Abuse \(NIDA\)](#)
- [National Mental Health Association](#)
- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#)

XI. COURSE OUTLINE

Module 1: Introduction to the Course (Weeks 1-3 | 1/21 – 2/10)

Readings

- Bogo, M. (2018) *Social Work Practice: Integrating Concepts, Processes and Skills* 2nd ed, New York. Columbia University Press, Chapters 1-3, pages 1-79; Chapter 5, pages 104-125; Chapter 13, pages 312-368.
- Harriman, K., (2016) [Clinical Is as Clinical Does: Thinking Differently about Social Work Internships](#), *The Field Educator*, Volume 6.2 Fall 2016 fieldeducator.simmons.edu
- [NASW Code of Ethics, 2017](#)

Class Activities & Assignments Due

- Classmate Introductions Discussion: Week 1, Day 5
- Lectures: Simulation in Assessment and Bogo Chapter 13, Communication
- Module 1 Simulation & Debrief Discussion: Week 2, Day 5

- Reflection Assignment #1 - Observed, Structured, Clinical Evaluation (OSCE): Week 3, Day 7

Module 2: Creating Working Relationships with Clients and Colleagues (Weeks 4-6 | 2/11 – 3/3)

Readings

- Bogo, M. (2018) *Social Work Practice: Integrating Concepts, Processes and Skills* 2nd ed, New York. Columbia University Press, chapter 4, 80-103, chapters 6, 7, 126-188; chapter 13, 312-368
- Cameron, M., (2014), [This is Common Factors](#). *Journal of Clinical Social Work*, 42:151-160 DOI 10.1007/s10615-013-0467-9

Class Activities & Assignments Due

- Lecture: Bogo Chapter 7, Contemporary Practice Issues
- Module 2 Simulation & Debrief Discussion: Week 5, Day 5
- Reflection Assignment #2 – Becoming a Therapist: Week 6, Day 7

Module 3: Reflective Practice (Weeks 7 – 9 | 3/4 - 3/31)

Readings

- Bogo, M. (2018) *Social Work Practice: Integrating Concepts, Processes and Skills* 2nd edn, New York. Columbia University Press, Chapters 8- 9, pages 191- 240; Chapter 13, pages 312-368.
- Urdang, E., (2010) [Awareness of Self - A Critical Tool](#), *Social Work Education*, Vol. 29, No. 5, 523-538.

Class Activities & Assignments Due

- Lecture: Bogo, Chapter 5, Engage Diversity and Difference
- Module 3 Simulation & Debrief Discussion: Week 8, Day 5
- Reflection Assignment #3 - Overcoming Personal Biases in Social Work: Week 9, Day 7

Module 4: Gaining and Applying Beginning Assessment Skills (Weeks 10 – 12 | 4/1 – 4/21)

Readings

- Bogo, M. (2018) Social Work Practice: Integrating Concepts, Processes and Skills 2nd edn, New York. Columbia University Press, Chapters 10-11, pages 241-294; Chapter 13, pages 312-368.
- Hardina, D, (2012). [Interpersonal social work skills for community practice](#). New York, NY. Springer Publishing. Chapter 2, Entering the Community and Using Interviewing Skills to Find Out About People, pages 39-46 (available online through the Rutgers library)

Class Activities & Assignments Due

- Lecture: Alliances, Ruptures, Impasses
- Module 4 Simulation & Debrief Discussion: Week 11, Day 5
- Reflection Assignment #4 – Working for Social Justice: Week 12, Day 7

Module 5: Evaluation of Our Practice and of Ourselves (Weeks 13 – 15 | 4/22 – 5/9)

Readings

- Bogo, M. (2018) Social Work Practice: Integrating Concepts, Processes and Skills 2nd edn, New York. Columbia University Press, Chapter 12, pages 295-308; Chapter 13, pages 312-368.

Class Activities & Assignments Due

- Lecture: Bogo, Chapter 12, Endings
- Module 5 Final Role Play Project & Debrief Discussion: Week 14, Day 5 with responses due Week 15, Day 3