

**WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY**  
**Graduate Social Work Department**  
**MSW Program**  
**Syllabus**

**Fall**

- I. Course Number**            SWG 598
- II. Course Title**            Field Practicum III (First Semester, Concentration Year)
- III. Course Instructor**      Faculty Field Liaison
- IV. Credit Hours**            3 Graduate Credit Hours
- V. Program Mission Statement**

The Graduate Social Work Department provides a quality, affordable and accessible Master of Social Work Degree in preparation for a career in an evolving, complex, technological, and global society. It prepares graduates who can think critically, communicate effectively, embrace diversity, practice ethically, respond to the needs of vulnerable and oppressed populations, are committed to social justice, and are competent to practice with individuals, families, and communities.

**VI. Program Goals**

The goals of the West Chester University Graduate Social Work Department are to:

1. Provide a quality Master of Social Work Program in accord with the standards of the Council on Social Work Education and the PA State System of Higher Education.
2. Prepare graduates to practice competently and ethically with individuals, families, and communities.
3. Prepare graduates to think critically, communicate effectively, and engage research in the practice of social work.
4. Prepare graduates to practice social work with a commitment to social justice.

**VII. Course Description**

SWG 598 is the first of two required Concentration-Year field practicum courses, each consisting of a structured field experience at an assigned practicum site for 20 hours per week during the academic semester. Included in the 20 hours is a mandatory 60-minute individual supervisory session with an approved Field Instructor, as well as at least 30 minutes of additional supervisory time in group or other settings. SWG 598 is taken concurrently with Advanced Practice with Individuals and Advanced Practice with Families. It is designed to support student achievement of competency in *Direct Practice with Individuals and Families*.

## VIII. Theoretical Framework

The West Chester University, MSW Program, strives to be on the cutting edge of theory-driven and research-informed practice. To this end, the program takes an integrative approach to social work practice with individuals, families and communities. This approach incorporates a number of theories, perspectives and models for practice with the various levels of social systems, depending on mutually identified strengths, needs, and goals. What is central to this approach is the importance of a collaborative relationship between the social worker and those served, building on strengths and working together to affect meaningful and socially just change. The theories and models incorporated include, but are not limited to: attachment theory, a developmental perspective, the ecological perspective, conflict theory, the empowerment perspective, feminist theory, crisis theory, the risk/resiliency model, the social justice perspective, the social action model, social constructivist theory, social exchange theory, social learning theory, social systems theory, theories of social change and the strengths perspective.

## IX. Course Outcomes

The WCU, Graduate Social Work Department has adopted a competency-based, outcome performance approach to its curriculum consistent with the Educational and Policy Accreditation Standards (EPAS) of the Council on Social Work Education (2008). Competencies are measurable practice behaviors that are comprised of knowledge, values, and skills. This course is designed to provide students the opportunity to develop and demonstrate Advanced Practice Competencies in *Direct Practice with Individuals and Families* through measurable practice behaviors.

*Direct Practice with Individuals and Families* is an approach to social work grounded in human rights and social justice. Graduates of the West Chester University MSW program are trained to work with individuals and families using strengths-based, research-informed assessment, and community-oriented intervention and evaluation skills to enhance resiliency, support recovery and build capacity with individuals and families.

### CSWE Core Competencies and Associated Advanced Practice Behaviors:

#### 2.1.1: Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly:

AP1: Develop, manage, and maintain professional relationships with individuals and families from strengths-based, human rights and social justice perspectives;

AP2: Enhance professional strengths and work to overcome limitations and challenges through a commitment to lifelong professional development.

#### 2.1.2: Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice:

AP3: Identify and use knowledge of relationship dynamics, including power differentials in work with individuals and families to support recovery and enhance resiliency;

AP4: Apply ethical reasoning to address dilemmas when working with individuals and families.

#### 2.1.3: Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments:

AP5: Evaluate, select, and implement appropriate multi-dimensional, research-informed, strengths-based assessment, intervention, and evaluation strategies with individuals and families;

AP6: Communicate professional decisions and outcomes to the individual and/or family system and to other professionals in effective written and oral format.

#### **2.1.4: Engage diversity and difference in practice:**

AP7: Identify a range of engagement, assessment, and intervention strategies for individuals and families from diverse backgrounds;

AP8: Engage diversity and difference in practice to enhance inclusive, critical evaluation of assessment, intervention and evaluation strategies for individuals and families.

#### **2.1.5: Advance human rights and social and economic justice:**

AP9: Use knowledge of the effects of oppression, discrimination, and historical trauma on individual and family systems to guide assessment, planning, and intervention;

AP10: Implement change strategies when necessary to advance social and economic justice for individuals and families in their communities.

#### **2.1.6: Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research:**

AP11: Evaluate, select, and utilize research-informed practices in assessment and intervention with individuals, and families;

AP12: Participate in the generation of new social work practice knowledge through research and practice; and

AP13: Use research methodology to evaluate practice effectiveness and/or outcomes.

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

AP14: Synthesize and differentially apply theories of human behavior to guide assessment, intervention plans, and evaluation of work with individuals and families.

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

AP15: Communicate to stakeholders the implication of policies and policy change in the lives of individuals and families in their communities;

AP16: Develop plans to advance social change in collaboration with administrators, consumers, community partners and/or legislators to affect policies and practices that advance social and economic well-being of individuals and families.

#### **2.1.9: Respond to contexts that shape practices:**

AP17: Assess the quality of individuals' and families' interactions within their social contexts;

AP18: Work collaboratively with others to affect systemic change that is sustainable and enhances social and economic well-being of individuals and families.

#### **2.1.10 (a)-(d): Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities:**

##### **2.1.10(a): Engagement**

AP19: Establish a collaboratively based process that encourages individuals and families to be partners in the establishment of goals and expected outcomes.

##### **2.1.10(b): Assessment**

AP20: Use research-informed and collaborative assessment strategies to arrive at an understanding of individual and/or family strengths, limitations, and mutually agreed upon intervention goals and objectives;

AP21: Assess individuals' and families' readiness for change;  
AP22: Assess individuals' and families' coping strategies to enhance resiliency and support recovery in the face of life situations and events.

**2.1.10(c): Intervention**

AP23: Critically evaluate, select, and implement appropriate best practices and research informed interventions that enhance individuals' and/or families' resiliency and support recovery.

AP24: Demonstrate the use of appropriate practices for a range of presenting concerns including trauma-informed interventions that enhance an individual's and/or family's resiliency, recovery, and capacity building.

AP25: Facilitate transitions to other services and/or endings of present services by collaboratively assessing progress toward mutually agreed upon outcomes.

**2.1.10(d): Evaluation**

AP26: Use research knowledge and skills, and practice experiences to continuously improve assessment, intervention, and evaluation strategies with individuals and families that enhance resiliency, support recovery and build capacity.

## **X. Standards for Professional Behavior**

Students are expected follow the Graduate Social Work Department's Standards for Professional Behavior at all times. The policy can be found on the program's website:

[http://www.wcupa.edu/academics/sch\\_sba/g-sw.html](http://www.wcupa.edu/academics/sch_sba/g-sw.html)

Additionally, students are expected to comply with the University's policies on academic integrity and student conduct, as outlined in the Graduate Catalog:

<http://www.wcupa.edu/INFORMATION/OFFICIAL.DOCUMENTS/GRADUATE.CATALOG/>

## **XI. Field Hours**

The MSW Program publishes a Field Calendar each semester with specific dates pertinent to Field Practicum. Students must complete 252 hours of Field Practicum over the course of each semester, and in accordance with the Field Calendar, averaging 18 hours per week. A regular weekly schedule is negotiated with the Field Instructor and approved by the Field Liaison in the Learning Agreement at the beginning of the semester. Because these are required practicum hours, any days or hours that are missed for illness or other reasons must be made up. Hours should be made up during the semester at times negotiated with the Field Instructor. In certain circumstances, hours can be made up over breaks the Thanksgiving, Winter and Spring breaks with prior approval from the Field Instructor and the Field Liaison. Students are not permitted, however, to accumulate hours over breaks and end their field practicum early in the semester.

Students with a field placement in a school setting should take the field placement school's fall, spring or holiday breaks rather than WCU's to avoid losing too many practicum days/hours.

Students with employment, caregiving or other responsibilities who are unable to attend field practicum regularly for 20 hours per week may be eligible for an "extended" Field Practicum. The "extended" program allows Students in certain field sites to design a schedule that satisfies an average of 13 hours per week over a longer period of time. Proposals for the extended program must be formally submitted to and approved by the Director of Field Education prior to the start of the semester. They are then submitted to the Faculty Field Liaison and to the Field Instructor with the Learning Agreement.

## **XII. Attendance**

Students are expected to attend Field Practicum regularly and arrive when expected, prepared to engage in the assigned tasks. Students must notify Field Instructors and any other pertinent individuals of their

lateness or absence ahead of time. Failure to attend Field Practicum with regularity and punctuality will constitute a violation of the *Standards for Professional Behavior*.

Students are expected to attend Field Practicum during the Fall Break in October if these are regularly scheduled days. Per the Field Calendar, Students are not expected to be at Field Practicum during the following times:

- Labor day
- Wed, Thurs or Fri of Thanksgiving Week
- Mon-Fri of spring break, (unless a school placement has different spring break dates)
- After the last day of the semester (assuming hours have been completed and unless a student is doing an approved “extended” field placement)

Clients are often best served when Students are available on a consistent basis. Students often choose to continue to work over the breaks, especially those in the second year of field practicum or who are in sites where this would be particularly important to client well-being.

If the University closes for inclement weather or other reasons, Students are still expected to attend Field Practicum unless the field site closes or delays opening, in which case students are not expected to attend, but are expected to make up the field hours. If a Student feels that travel is unsafe, s/he must alert the Field Instructor and arrange to make up the hours at another time. The Student and the Field Instructor are encouraged to create a contingency plan for how the Students’ activities will be handled in the Student’s absence.

### **XIII. Assessment of Course Outcomes**

Course outcomes are assessed through the following measures: (details and specific grading rubrics will be available on D2L):

1. Learning Agreement

Working with their Field Instructor and Field Liaison, students will develop a learning agreement to define mutual expectations of specific field practicum experiences that support the development of practice competencies.

2. Participation in Field Seminars

Students will attend three field seminars, led by the Field Liaison, over the course of the semester. Active participation and engagement in the seminars is expected.

3. Practicum Evaluations

Field Instructors, in collaboration with the Student, will complete two evaluations of practice behaviors during the semester: one at mid-semester and one at the end of the semester.

### **XIV. Course Grading Rubric**

	<b>Course Outcome(s) Assessed</b>	<b>% Grade</b>
Learning Agreement **	2.1.1	15
Participation in Field Seminars	2.1.1	15
Mid-Semester Evaluation	2.1.1-10	20
Final Evaluation **	2.1.1-10	50

\* Refer to section IX for explanation of the Course Outcomes

\*\* Key Indicator Assignment

## XV. MSW Grading System

Numerical Grade Range	Letter Grade	GPA Calculation	Explanation
100-94	A	4.00	Superior graduate attainment
93-90	A-	3.67	
89-87	B+	3.33	Satisfactory graduate attainment
86-84	B	3.00	
83-80	B-	2.67	
79-77	C+	2.33	Attainment below graduate expectations
76-74	C	2.00	
73-70	C-	1.67	
69-0	F	0	Failure

West Chester University does not recognize a grade of D for graduate study. Therefore, any grade below a C- in a graduate course is considered a failure. A graduate student earning an F grade in any course will be dismissed from the University.

Graduate students whose cumulative grade point average falls below 3.00 will be placed on *Academic Probation*. Graduate students must raise their GPA to 3.00 by the end of the next semester (or full summer term) in which they register. Graduate students earning a cumulative GPA of 2.00 or lower will be dropped from their graduate program without a probationary period.

Students should consult the Graduate Catalog for a full listing of academic policies:

<http://www.wcupa.edu/INFORMATION/OFFICIAL.DOCUMENTS/GRADUATE.CATALOG/gdstndg.htm>

## XVI. Disabilities

We at West Chester University wish to make accommodations for persons with disabilities. Please make your needs known by contacting the course instructor and/or the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities at ext. 3217.