

SOCIOLOGY 375
Fieldwork Seminar
Spring, 2007

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Office hours: Tues. 11:00 - Noon,
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Course content:

This course is a capstone experience designed to require students to relate classroom concepts to organizational practice. Given that students have been selecting courses designed to prepare them for the career fields in which they think they are interested, the field component of the course provides them with an opportunity to test out what they have learned in the classroom **and** assess the reality of their interest in their chosen field. In the seminar, students will compare experiences/perspectives with other students in other field placements and, thus, learn about a variety of criminal justice/human service professions, as well as their relationship to each other and to the larger society.

Course Objectives:

- (1) Gain exposure to a range of criminal justice/human service fields/activities.
- (2) Become familiar on a pre-professional level with the inner workings of a specific field study setting.
- (3) Sensitize students to the conflicts and constraints which confront criminal justice and human service workers.
- (4) Encourage mastery of the techniques of writing field and case notes through extended practice. [Note that all reports and field notes will be submitted to the instructor using Blackboard.]
- (5) Give students some practical experience in synthesizing information acquired in real world settings and finding patterns of meaning in such experiences. This objective will be formalized by the writing of a final paper in which students will summarize what they have learned in their field experiences. [Specific suggestions for the kinds of issues that deserve focus in such a paper will be circulated via Blackboard later in the course.]

Course Requirements:

(1) Field Experience:

Each student is responsible for working a minimum of 160 hours at their placement organization. (This equals approximately 12 hours per week during the term.) While the actual schedule of hours worked must be negotiated with the on-site supervisor, it is expected that students will extend their on-site work throughout the term with a regular schedule. (In cases of absence due to illness or personal emergency, students should make up time missed by negotiating with the on-site supervisor and reporting the agreement to the instructor in writing.) By the third week of the term, students will be required to report to the course instructor the schedule that they have worked out with the on-site supervisor, and the student will be required to get their supervisor's signature on time sheets each week. Students should keep these time sheets in organized fashion as a log book throughout the term and they should have them available for inspection by the instructor upon request. (Forms to facilitate this process will be distributed in class.) It is understood that students must also complete any training, attend required agency functions, and satisfactorily complete all tasks assigned by their supervisor.

Students should let the behavior of professional level staff in their organization be their guide when it comes to matters of deportment, dress, and the like. If you are unsure about matters of "local custom" ask your supervisor or other trusted staff members.

(2) Field Notes:

Students will be expected to submit weekly field notes summarizing their experiences via the Blackboard "Assignment" function. This means that the field notes should be drafted using the Microsoft WORD word-processing program available in the campus computer facilities. However, students should make notes and/or do a rough draft of their field notes at the end of the day of each on-site experience. Contemporaneous notes are best, for the longer the time between an experience and the drafting of such notes the greater the detail that is likely to be lost and confusion introduced. [A document with suggestions for the drafting of good field notes will be distributed in class.]

(3) Class Participation:

Since the benefit of the seminar experience requires active participation in the information sharing that is the essence of any seminar, it is expected that students will attend class unless absent for a valid reason. In any case, students who need to be absent should notify the instructor of the particulars. In sum, there is not a special "cut policy" in this course, but absences will affect negatively the participation grade.

(4) Self-Analysis Paper:

Each student will be expected to write a 5 to 10 page paper evaluating their field work experience. A more detailed description of the kinds of issues to be addressed is available in the Assignment section of our Blackboard course shell, but the writing of good field notes will make this task relatively easy. This assignment is due on Friday, April 27

(5) Evaluation of on-site work:

Your on-site supervisor will be asked to submit a brief written evaluation of your work to the course instructor at the end of the term. You will receive forms for this purpose to hand on to your supervisor a few weeks before the end of the term. As a courtesy, you should let your supervisors know that they will be asked to do so. The instructor will confer personally with each on-site supervisor near the beginning and near the end of the term. In this conversation, on-site supervisor's will be invited to contact the instructor at any time to confer about any concerns that have arisen about a student's performance.

In the same spirit, students should come to discuss privately with the instructor any concern that they may have about the adequacy/appropriateness of staff behavior in the organization in which they are interning.

A WORD ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

Recognized standards of honesty are part of the foundation on which the integrity of an academic community rests. Accordingly, the Moravian College Faculty in 1986 adopted a statement on Academic Honesty, the standards of which will be strictly applied in this course. You are encouraged to read carefully the description of this policy which is printed in your Student Handbook. Any student who is unsure about the propriety of a given procedure or approach for completing assigned work in this course should consult with the instructor and/or the on-site supervisor before completing the assignment.

Any breach of the College's honesty code or significant breach of the professional expectations of your agency's standards for its employees will constitute grounds for the assignment of a course grade of F.