

Field Experience in Clinical Settings

A joyful welcome to the Psychology Department's field experience! You can only learn so much from your textbooks; now it is time to experience. In many respects, this internship constitutes a capstone by which you integrate your learning within psychology and by which you explore your interest and suitability for a career in a clinical setting.

Catalog Description: (Prerequisites: Psychology major; junior or senior standing with priority given to seniors; a grade of C or higher in Psyc 225 and Psyc 360; permission of instructor.) This course entails supervised field experience in a mental-health or social-service facility in the community. Students are required to spend 8 hours a week at their placement and 1.5 hours a week in a seminar throughout the semester. The professor provides classroom instruction, and the on-site supervisor provides clinical supervision. Graded Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory.

Faculty Information:

Instructor: John C. Norcross, PhD, ABPP, Distinguished Professor of Psychology
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Required Texts:

Baird, B. N. (2018). *The internship, practicum, and field placement handbook: A guide for the helping professions* (8th edition). Philadelphia: Routledge.

Kottler, J. A. (2017). *On being a therapist* (5th edition). New York: Oxford University Press.

Norcross, J. C. (2021). *Field experience in clinical settings: Readings and workbook*. University of Scranton.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Students will demonstrate the following outcomes by the end of the field experience and the accompanying seminar as evidenced by satisfactory completion of a learning contract, journal entries, weekly written assignments, group discussions, a visitation to another placement, a self-study, a supervisor's evaluation, and 100+ hours of approved field work.

- ◆ apply psychological knowledge and methods to the "real world"
- ◆ provide needed psychological services to the community
- ◆ improve observational, interviewing, and helping skills
- ◆ foster the ability to learn in a self-directed fashion
- ◆ develop a sustaining ethical perspective for clinical settings
- ◆ understand the operation of behavioral health agencies, and by extension
- ◆ clarify their educational and occupational goals.

Course Requirements:

This course necessitates your responsible involvement at the practicum setting and your active participation in the weekly seminar. The specific requirements are enumerated below. Adherence to these will largely determine both the tangible and intangible rewards of your experience.

- (1) Attendance at all seminar meetings.
- (2) Punctual completion of assigned duties at your placement. This commitment entails a minimum of 8 hours a week for 13 weeks (100 hours).
- (3) Preparation for seminar meetings, including reading and written assignments prior to class.
- (4) Documentation of your reactions and experiences throughout the semester in a journal. (Guidelines for the preparation of the journal are appended.)
- (5) Completion of a structured Self-Study at the end of the course.
- (6) Visitation to another placement accompanied by the student placed at that setting.
- (7) Receipt of a supervisor's evaluation attesting to your satisfactory completion of the field experience.

Grades (S or U) will be determined by your completion of the aforementioned course requirements as reflected in your class performance, written assignments, and supervisor's evaluation.

Fabricating or misreporting hours worked at your placement will result in a grade of Unsatisfactory for the course and will constitute academic dishonesty, which will be reported to your Dean.

Course Outline and Assignments:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Assignments</i>
Feb 1	Welcome, Introduction, Getting Started	Exercise 1 Beginning the Practicum B Chapter 1
Feb 8	Ethics: Confidentiality	B Chapter 2 APA Ethical Principles Exceptions to Confidentiality Exercise 2
Feb 15	Ethics: Relationships and Limitations	B Chapter 3 & 4 Professional Bill of Rights Four Elements of Malpractice Exercise 3
Feb 22	Supervision; Process Approach	B Chapter 5 Getting the Most Out Profiting from Supervision How Therapists' Therapy A Process Approach Exercise 4 Review Journal in class
Mar 1	Critical Thinking about Clinical Phenomena	Exercise 5

Mar 8	Problem Emotions	K Chapter 3 Don't Be Fooled by Me Exercise 6 Mid-Semester Evaluation Journal due
Mar 15	Dealing with Difficult Clients	Personality Disorders B Chapter 8 K Chapter 7 Exercise 7
Mar 22	Giving and Receiving Criticism	K Chapter 2 How We Shut People Up The Keyboard of Press Constructive Criticism Exercise 8
Mar 29	Satisfactions, Stressors, & Self-Care	K Chapters 5 & 11 Stressors & Satisfactions 12 Self-Care Strategies Exercise 9
Apr 5	Easter Monday; no class	
Apr 12	Responding Therapeutically to Anger	B Chapter 9 When Patients Express Anger Exercise 10 Supervisor Evaluations
Apr 19	Responding Therapeutically to Sexual Attraction	K Chapter 9 Concluding the Practicum Exercise 11
Apr 26	Working with Diversity	B Chapter 6 K Chapter 1 Exercise 12 & 13
May 3	Finishing the Placement	K Chapter 4 B Chapter 10 & 11 Exercise 13
May 10	Culmination, Evaluation, Goodbye	B Chapter 12 Journal & Self-Study due

JOURNAL GUIDELINES

Start a new, secure Word file to use as your journal. Immediately create a cover page and record your name, telephone number, and “Confidential” on it. Use 1.5 spacing throughout the journal.

Adhere to the principle of confidentiality in maintaining your journal. Do not write anything that would identify individual persons or institutions. This means no actual names (use initials, nicknames, or position names) and no agency identifications. It should be shared *only* for purposes of learning and teaching, and then in a professional manner.

A field journal is a collection of notes on your observations, thoughts, questions and feelings about your off-campus learning experience. Like an anthropologist in the field, you will keep notes on the activities and people around you.

Your journal will serve four major purposes: (1) recording the number of hours at your placement; (2) reporting on and assimilating your clinical experience; (3) relating the assigned readings to your field experience; and (4) facilitating your self-exploration and self-growth.

At least once a week make a dated entry about your field work experiences. Record the number of hours you spent at your placement that day, and maintain a running tally of the total number of hours.

Once a week in your journal relate your clinical experiences to the assigned readings (as explained in *d* below).

The types of topics you will address include:

- (a) *concrete details* - "what I did today," "what so-and-so did today," "what happened on the ward." Concrete incidents that are revealing, amusing, disturbing or otherwise of interest. You might include details that are not so interesting but represent a change, e.g., new admission, high staff absenteeism, which may prove significant over the long run. Write this section in the past tense.
- (b) *your personal reactions* - "how I feel today," "my opinions about an incident," "my guesses about what will happen." By recording each day your feelings and thoughts you will be able to look back at how relationships developed. Retrospectively, it is more difficult to obtain an accurate and comprehensive picture of early reactions.
- (c) *analysis or insights* - "how I conceptualize what happened," "it just occurred to me that," "changes occurring here or in me." Typically, these are based on pertinent information from readings, class, and your placement. You may have a question about something you have experienced, or something we discussed in class happened to you.
- (d) *relation to assigned readings* - "I just experienced what I read about in Chapter 3," "Just as Kottler described on p. 129, "unlike the views expressed by Baird in Chapter 6." These entries will integrate your clinical experience and intellectual learning. A **minimum of 13** of these will appear in your journal throughout the semester; please star, number, or place these connections to the readings in bold. These explicit connections must be to the assigned readings in the Baird and Kottler books; please provide the chapter or page number of the reading.

One final word: Your journal, like any sort of writing, can be a useless piece of junk and an unpleasant chore to produce; or it can be an exciting record of your work and a dynamic exploration of yourself. The difference rests with your attitude toward writing it and the commitment you make to share yourself. Only in this way will it become a useful tool for reflection and conceptualization.

During the last few weeks of the practicum, I would like you to summarize your experiences at the placement and in the seminar. This **self-study** should include the following topics, numbered as such in your journal. However, you are by no means limited to these, and you are encouraged to reflect on the entire experience.

1. Review your fears and prejudices about the experience before it began. (Refer back to your responses to Exercise 1.) Which of these were borne out? Which were not?
2. Discuss the development of your interpersonal relationships at the agency with clients, co-workers, and supervisors. What did you learn from these relationships? What do you still have to learn?
3. How did your field experience relate to and strengthen your previous course work in psychology, if at all? Please give specific examples.
4. What have you learned about yourself personally and professionally from the entire experience?
5. What do you consider your biggest successes? Your worst frustrations?
6. Fill in the blanks and discuss the following: (a) "If I were a clinician..." and (b) "If I were a supervisor..."
7. Look back through your journal and attempt an overview of the semester. Can you identify changes in your thinking and feeling over the semester? How do you account for these changes?
8. Where does this field experience leave you? Lead you? Having evaluated the experience, what do you want to do next? Has it altered or reinforced your career choice?

Adapted in part from materials provided by Jim Dalton, Bloomsburg University, and Laurie Heatherington, Williams College.