

# HSC 3801: CLINICAL OBSERVATION

**Instructor:** Varies by student and site selected; the student can select any College faculty member who agrees to serve as the local faculty supervisor.

**Purpose:** This course is designed to provide the student with an opportunity to learn about a specific health care field or gain knowledge about specific patient or client populations or issues through direct observation. It also is designed to provide an opportunity for the student to consider his or her own values and responses to different health care situations and patient circumstances.

## **Objectives:**

- Students expand their knowledge of the roles of specific health care personnel in specific settings
- Students learn about specific patient or client populations or specific health care issues facing individuals or communities
- Students gain practical experience at a site offering individual or community-based health services
- Students acquire basic knowledge of specific assessment, care, and treatment decisions and tools used by practitioners and administrators
- Students learn about different communication approaches with patients and families with diverse health care needs
- Students enhance self-awareness of perceptions, values, and emotional responses to specific health-related situations
- Students develop or enhance skills in analyzing, synthesizing, and integrating health-related information or experiences into written presentations
- Students develop or enhance professional work habits

**Course Design:** This is a variable credit course (1-4 credits repeatable to a maximum of 16). Credit hours are determined by the length and intensity of the observation. Students complete approximately 50 hours of work on-site for each credit hour.

**Registration:** Students cannot independently register for the clinical observation course. To be registered, the student must turn in three documents: (1) the Contractual Agreement for Course Completion, (2) the Site Form, and (3) a Site Letter. No student will be registered until this documentation is completed, signed, and received by the Dean's Office. All forms should be returned to room HPNP building, room 3189.

## **Course Requirements:**

1. Students identify a practicum site and a College of Public Health and Health Professions (PHHP) faculty member who will serve as the local supervisor.
2. Students must submit to their PHHP faculty supervisor a draft of the Contractual Agreement for Course Completion delineating their goals, hours for the experience, and on-site supervisor

contact information. Goals must incorporate skill development or knowledge relevant to the career path of the student.

3. Students must acquire authorization from the site – this requires two steps. First, the site supervisor, along with the student, must complete and sign the site form. Second, a letter from the supervisor with site contact information and agreement regarding number of hours is required prior to registration. The specific number of hours must be included in the letter. Please inform the site supervisor that this letter needs to be on organizational letterhead; the letter itself only needs to be one or two lines long. We simply need confirmation of the site supervisor's willingness to supervise for the number of hours required for each course credit. Selecting more than one site is acceptable but a letter is required from each site at which the student desires to observe.

4. The PHHP faculty member will review all documents and, if acceptable, add grading requirements (e.g. journal review frequency, when paper is due, etc.). The faculty member and student will then both sign the proposal indicating approval of the proposed experience. A completed proposal is required prior to engaging in activities at the practicum site and prior to academic registration.

5. Students must keep a daily journal of their experience, incorporating health science knowledge and relevance of experience to personal/professional growth. This journal must be turned in to the faculty mentor based on an agreed upon schedule reflected on the *Contractual Agreement*. The time frame for journal submission must be at least biweekly. The faculty member may provide feedback about journal content and style as well as request revisions or additional material for future journal entries.

6. Students must maintain a log of hours worked, signed by the on-site supervisor on a regular basis. The completed Log of Hours On Site form must be turned in at the end of the term.

7. Students must complete a 5-page paper, which represents a synthesis and integration of the overall observation/volunteer experience. The paper must address how the student met the objectives for the on-site experience. The paper is due by the date indicated on the Contractual Agreement and is graded by the faculty supervisor.

8. The student's on-site supervisor must complete the Supervisor Evaluation Form at the end of the term rating the student's professional work behavior. The completed rating must be sealed in an envelope with the supervisor's signature over the seal. The student is responsible for ensuring this form is turned into the faculty supervisor by the deadline noted on the *Contractual Agreement*.

9. Students must satisfactorily complete all aspects of the practicum requirements by the end of the term to receive an S grade.

**Grading:** This course uses satisfactory/unsatisfactory grading only. Students will receive an incomplete grade if any required element (i.e. the signed hours log, paper, final journal entries, or supervisor evaluation form) is not turned in by the deadline noted on the contract the student has made prior arrangements with the faculty supervisor to have a course extension. Students

with missing components who have not made arrangements prior to the end of the term for an extension will receive an unsatisfactory grade. In order to receive a passing grade, all elements must be completed at a satisfactory level. Grading is based on the student completing the number of hours agreed upon, evaluation of work habits/behavior by the on-site supervisor, completion of all journal entries, and evaluation of the journal entries and final student paper by the faculty member. If an initial paper submission does not warrant a passing grade but all other aspects of the experience have been successfully completed, the student will be given the opportunity to rewrite the final paper to raise the overall grade to a satisfactory level.

**Academic Integrity:** Each student is bound by the academic honesty guidelines of the University and the student conduct code printed in the Undergraduate Catalog. The Honor Code states: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity." Cheating or plagiarism in any form is unacceptable and inexcusable behavior.

**Attendance:** Students are responsible for fulfilling the hours to which they have agreed. They are expected to handle all absences in a professional manner with the on-site supervisor and to document in the journal any missed dates with the reason resulting in missed time. If ill, students are expected to make up hours at the site if they are needed to fulfill the total number of hours required per credit. Policy on Make-Up Work:

If a student misses time because of an illness or other unanticipated circumstances warranting a medical excuse, documentation from a health care provider is required for the student to be able to make up the hours. In general, the student is expected to make up hours missed for reasons beyond the student's control at the observation or volunteer site, such as illness of their supervisor. Missed work for any other reason will result in an unsatisfactory grade.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Students requiring accommodations must first register with the Dean of Students' Office. The Dean of Students' Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the faculty member when requesting accommodation. The College of Public Health and Health Professions is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to assist students in their coursework.

## **GUIDELINES FOR JOURNAL ENTRIES**

**Purpose of Journal:** To reflect upon and integrate daily experience with professional goals and development.

**Content:** Journal entries should include three basic components. First, the entry should include a brief summary of the daily activities in which you participated, including a description of your role in those activities (i.e. observation, facilitator, organizer, etc.). Second, the entry should include a description of what you learned or discovered during observation. This should include commentary on new knowledge acquired and what you have learned about your own values, perceptions, and reactions to the specific health care situation for that day. Third, your entries should incorporate/connect concepts you have been learning in the BHS program to the observation/volunteer experience and include a discussion of the relevance of the experience to professional and/or personal growth and goals, as appropriate. The third element is not required for every entry but should be incorporated over the course of the semester.

**Format/Length of Each Entry:** Entries may be written or typed. If handwritten or printed, they must be legible. Each instructor reserves the right to require you to type your entries. Entries should be no longer than one page (handwritten or double spaced typed, 12 point font) for each hour on site. Journal entries must be completed at the end of each day you are at the site. If you are at one site for several hours a day, you are free to complete more than one entry for that day, especially if you change activities. This should be negotiated with your PPHP faculty supervisor.

**Turning in Your Journal:** Journals should be submitted to your instructor on a biweekly basis at a minimum. The specific frequency is determined by your PPHP faculty supervisor, who may require more frequent submissions. For example, the time frame may be adjusted for students completing volunteer work in large time chunks. The actual submission rate is written on your contract. You may submit your journal either electronically or by hard cover. However, you must pick only one method of delivery. Depending upon the frequency with which you visit your site, electronic submissions may be preferred so that you have access to your journal when you need it.

**Feedback:** Your instructor will provide you with summative feedback regarding your journal entries. This feedback may include comments on any or all of the following: (1) the content of your entry; (2) journal writing style; and (3) suggestions for additional material to incorporate/comment upon or revisions to focus of current material. Instructors will typically provide electronic or written feedback to you within two class days. In addition, you may be required to meet in person with your instructor periodically during the semester, negotiated on an individual basis.

**Grading:** Journals are graded on a pass-fail basis. You must pass the journal entry portion of the course to receive a passing grade. You can miss one entry per credit hour without penalty. After that, only missed entries because of illness will be accepted, and a medical excuse must be produced.