Research Field Placement in Applied Child Psychology  
Term 1 (2006)

Course Instructor: Dr. Tracy Vaillancourt  
Office: Psychology Building, 309  
E-mail: vaillat@mcmaster.ca  
It is my policy to answer all e-mails so if you haven’t received a reply within a reasonable time frame, please send your e-mail again.  
Office Hours: By appointment. It has been my experience that students rarely attend pre-scheduled times for office hours. As such, I am happy to meet with you anytime during the day (by appointment) and after class (without appointment).  
Extension: 27866

Course Description and Objectives:

This research field placement in applied child psychology is intended to develop students’ research skills by allowing them to participate in the research activities of selected youth serving agencies. By assisting their assigned agency with their research, students are expected to gain experience in research design as well as in data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Additionally, this course is designed to:

1. Bridge research theory to practice.
2. Create a new approach to learning that emphasizes active engagement in research in the area of applied child psychology.
3. Promote research links between the Department of Psychology, Neurosciences and Behaviour and youth serving agencies in the city of Hamilton.
4. Create new opportunities for career exploration and community involvement.

Important Dates:

1. Mandatory Classes:
   o Monday September 11th
   o Monday, September 26th
   o Monday, October 30th
   o Monday, November 20th
   ⇒ All classes are from 5:00 to 6:30pm in room 204 of the Psychology building.
2. Placements begin September 19th so please contact your assigned supervisor by September 16th.
4. Final reports are due to me no later than 4:30pm on December 11th, 2006
Students’ Responsibilities and Requirements:

A. Students participating in this research field placement course must complete the equivalent of one day per week (5 cumulative hours or two 2 ½ hours sessions per week). Eighty-five percent of your grade will be derived by your on-site performance. Your performance will be evaluated by your on-site supervisor in collaboration with me. Standardized forms developed by Social Sciences’ Experiential Education will be given to your supervisor to guide them in their evaluation. A copy of these forms will be given to you during the orientation to help guide you in terms of what is expected from you.

B. Students participating in this research field placement course are obligated to attend 4 classes that will take place on Monday September 11 and 26, October 30 and November 20th in room 204 of the Psychology building. These classes are mandatory.

C. Students participating in this research field placement course are obligated to get a Vulnerable Sector Screening clearance if required by their sponsoring agency. The clearance will take about 2 weeks and will cost you $15.00. Information about this screening is available at: http://www.hamiltonpolice.on.ca/HPS/Services/Records/CriminalRecordsSearch.htm

D. Students participating in this research field placement course are obligated to read the Risk Management Manual and sign pages 11 and 12. This manual can be found at http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca/link.php?link=eohss%3ARM+801+Field+Trips+and+Electives

E. Students participating in this research field placement course are obligated to write a maximum 5 page (excluding references) research report (APA format) that summarizes the research project(s) they have been working on during the term. One printed copy of this report is to be handed in to me on December 11th 2006 by 4:30pm. As well, an email copy of the paper is to be sent on this date. I will distribute this report to your on-site supervisor for their records. Note that this report is worth 15% of your final grade and will be evaluated by me.

F. Students participating in this research field placement course are obligated to attend all of their research days. Should you miss one of your research days, it is your responsibility to obtain a written medical certificate explaining your absence, or arrange with your field supervisor to make up the time. Failure to do so will result in an incomplete grade in the course or a lowered final grade depending on the circumstances.

On-Site Supervisor’s Responsibilities:

A. Orienting students to your agency.

B. Proving enough initial guidance so that the student can work independently (yet still supervised) on their assigned research project(s).

C. Hold weekly discussions with students regarding their performance and your mutual expectations for success. These meeting do not need to be too lengthy, rather they are intended to help guide students and ensure that they are doing what is expected of them.

D. Confer regularly with me regarding students’ performance and any issues that may arise. This can be done by email or telephone. Together we can figure out a system that works best for your organization.

E. Complete evaluation form at the end of the placement.

F. If it is anticipate that the student(s) will be in direct contact with children, it is the sponsoring agency’s responsibility to ensure that students are properly oriented for such contact. If Vulnerable Sector Screening is needed for placement with your agency it will be the students’ responsibility to obtain this check unless otherwise arranged with your agency (see C above).
McMaster University Student Field Practice Risks and Liability Insurance Coverage

There are four potential areas of risk to which students may be exposed on their field placement. These risk areas typically apply to students who are on a clinical field placement and not a research field placement. Nevertheless, they are highlighted so that you are well aware of what McMaster University’s insurance will cover and not cover. The four risk areas are:

1. “Risk to bodily injury related to travel to and from the field placement.
2. Risk of injury, physical or mental, which may occur in the performance of assigned and prescribed duties during the course of the field placement.
3. Risk of suit for negligence in which students may be named by a client or clients with whom they are or have been engaged in their roles as “caregiver”, teachers, counselors, trainers, etc.
4. Risk of a suit for bodily injury or property damage if they have passengers (such as other students or clients) in a personally owned auto involved in an accident resulting in bodily injury and/or property damage, while engaged in their field practice responsibilities”.

Again, you are on a research placement and so it would be inappropriate for you to be in direct contact with children without supervision. It would also be inappropriate for you to be transporting children or acting in anyway as their caregiver. Still, the rare occasion may arise and so, here is the University policy with respect to these four areas of risk. Finally, it is important to keep in mind that generally, working with children increases the risk of catching communicable diseases such as colds and flu. If you have any health concerns, please discuss them with your health care provider.

1. Students Traveling to and from Field Placement
   “They are at their own risk if they have provided their own transportation, either public or private. Students would have to provide their own coverage (O.H.I.P., Blue Cross, etc.) as they see fit”.

2. Injury to Student
   “In the event of personal physical or mental injury occurring to the student and the University is found responsible, then the University Liability Insurance Policy would be respond, but only in the event that the University is found negligent as a result of the judicial process”.

3. Suit for Negligence
   “The University carries Third Party Liability Insurance which would respond to a suit against the University, its faculty, staff or students in the event of a claim against any of the above parties resulting from normal legal performance of duties and responsibilities associated with the academic activities of the University”.

4. Students Transporting other Students or Clients in a Personally Owned Vehicle
   “In the event of an accident, again the student could be considered responsible and their own insurance would be looked to. If the University was named in a suit, the University’s Non-Owned Auto Insurance would become operative and protect the University’s interest in such a case—not the students’ interest”.

1 Taken and adapted from McMaster University School of Social Work’s Field Practice Manual (2005-2006).
Policy Reminder on Academic Dishonesty:
“Academic dishonesty is not qualitatively different from other types of dishonesty. It consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means. In an academic setting this may include any number of forms such as: copying or the use of unauthorized aids in tests, examinations and laboratory reports; plagiarism, i.e., the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, unless the previously submitted work was presented as such to the instructor of the second course and has been acceptable for credit by the instructor of that course; aiding and abetting another student's dishonesty giving false information for the purposes of gaining admission or credit; giving false information for the purposes of obtaining deferred examinations or extension of deadlines; improper collaboration in group work; and/or forging or falsifying McMaster University documents” (Author: McMaster University, Academic Integrity Officer). Such misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means can result in serious consequences: e.g. the grade of zero, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located at http://www.mcmaster.ca/senate/academic/ac_integrity.htm.”

All marks will be consolidated and grades assigned according to the following conventional scheme:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>57-59</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>50-52</td>
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<td>0-49</td>
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