What are the expectations for the NR 478 Community Practicum course?

The course includes an 8-week online course and a clinical field experience. The course description is as follows:

This practicum course provides students an opportunity to apply community health nursing and health promotion concepts to clinical practice. Students engage in 45 hours of clinical practicum at an appropriate agency that provides community-oriented or community-based nursing care. Nursing roles in the community, emergency preparedness, community and family assessment, health promotion, disease prevention, and program planning and evaluation for selected populations in the student’s community are analyzed. Current issues impacting the health of communities are explored.

The course and clinical objectives are as follows:

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Upon completion of this course the student will be prepared to:
1. Develop health promotion-disease prevention strategies for individuals, families, and populations in the community.
2. Summarize key resources in the community for enhancing the health of families and selected populations.
3. Recognize current legal, ethical, diversity-related, political, and economic issues impacting the health of communities.
4. Analyze community emergency preparedness and disaster management plans.

CLINICAL OBJECTIVES: Upon completion of this course, the student will be prepared to:
1. Apply community-oriented nursing, community-based nursing, and related concepts to the safe care of individuals, families and selected populations in the community.
2. Utilize epidemiology data and evidenced-based approaches in the assessment of families and populations in the community.
3. Discuss the process of program planning and evaluation as applied to a specific population in the community.
4. Demonstrate standards of nursing practice in a clinical setting.

This course is organized around 8 weekly units. A variety of teaching strategies suitable to distance learning will be used. Reading assignments, threaded discussions, and clinical projects will be used. These include reading assignments, key websites, clinical practicum, clinical conferences, discussion forums, journals, and two major papers -- a Family Health Risk Assessment paper and a Population Assessment paper.
How many hours of field experience are required for NR 478, the Community Practicum?

Forty-five hours of fieldwork (clinical) are required for NR 478 and are to be done at any agency that provides community health nursing care.

Where do I find a community health nursing care agency?

Agencies that provide community health nursing care include: public health departments, community health departments, schools, home care agencies, palliative care/hospice (if home based), occupational health nursing units within industry, parish nursing organizations, and some community clinics where population based care is the focus. Your agency must be in a state in which you hold a current registered nurse license.

In order to prevent role confusion, the practicum site is not to be the same division or unit where you are employed. Paid time does not count as clinical practicum time.

Please Note: If you are planning a practicum experience in the Metro Denver area or anywhere in the state of Arkansas, contact the online Practicum Coordinator Sue Sciacca at ssciacca@regis.edu for specific clinical requirements.

How do I obtain a preceptor?

One of the skills you are learning in community health nursing is the role organizations play in providing population-based health care in the community. From your work in NR 466R Community Health Nursing (theory), you should be able to identify appropriate agencies in your area. Another skill to develop is how to interact with health care agencies. Once you have identified a suitable agency or agencies, you will need to call to find out the name of the person you should contact about a potential practicum experience. Make an appointment, and then when you see this person, present yourself as a skilled professional returning for a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree who lives in the area.

You need to obtain permission from the agency and a preceptor to supervise your fieldwork. The agency will need to know that you are in compliance with licensure, CPR, OSHA, HIPAA privacy, and health requirements. The preceptor must be a registered nurse with a minimum of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing qualification. You will want to download the NR 478 Preceptor Agreement and discuss it with this person while you are negotiating your practicum experience. This agreement contains the objectives for the clinical practicum experiences and identifies boundaries of your practice. You need to complete this form and give a copy of this to your preceptor and submit a copy to your course faculty in the course drop box before you start clinical experiences.
How will my clinical performance be evaluated?

Your performance in the clinical setting is evaluated collaboratively with you by your preceptor at midpoint and at the end of the course according to the criteria contained in the Clinical Competency Tool. In order to receive a passing grade for NR478 Community Health Nursing Practicum, you need to successfully complete 45 hours of clinical experiences as indicated by the preceptor on your Clinical Competency Tool. Your preceptor needs to email the completed tool to your course faculty at his/her RegisNet email account at the end of your clinical experience.