Course Description

This advanced level methods course in the Children and Youth in Families and Societies concentration, builds upon the foundation level practice methods course and prepares students for employment in the many human service delivery systems which address the needs of children, youth, and their families. This cross-cutting skills course encompasses both direct/micro (i.e., assessment, intervention, prevention) and indirect/macro (program design, evaluation, administration, community organization, policy analysis) practice methods used to address problems presented by or to children and youth in a variety of contexts. The development of social work skills applicable to promotion, prevention, remediation and social rehabilitation activities with diverse child and youth populations at all levels of intervention will be emphasized.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Apply an ecological perspective to social work practice with children and youth.
- Effectively communicate with and establish collaborative relationships with children and youth, their families, and other significant members of their social environment.
- Apply collaboration building and consultation skills to strengthen families and organize communities in response to the needs of children and youth.
- Assess risks to the child’s or youth’s safety, health, security, and well being, and identify the strengths and resources available in the child’s environment to address these concerns.
- Plan or plan and demonstrate micro and macro interventions that are based on identifiable goals and priorities in a culturally sensitive and culturally competent manner.
- Incorporate social work values and ethical principles in planning and implementing interventions for children and youth.
Format of Course

The objectives of the course will be pursued through lectures, discussions, demonstrations, case studies, guest lectures, videotapes and role-plays. Assignments include a small group assignment, a brief child policy paper, and a direct practice/research final paper.

Course Requirements and Grading

Small Group Assignment (October 29, 2004)  
25%

Brief Child Policy Essay Assignment (November 19th, 2004) 30%

Practice/Research Literature Review Final Paper (December 10th, 2004) 35%

In-class participation exercises 10%

Grading Criteria

A or A-  Mastery of subject content, demonstration of critical analysis, creativity and/or complexity in completion of the assignment. The difference between an A and an A- is based on the degree to which these skills are demonstrated.

B+  Mastery of subject content beyond expected competency, but lacking in additional critical analysis, creativity or complexity in the completion of the assignment.

B  Mastery of subject content at level of expected competency: meets course expectations

B-  Less than adequate competency, but demonstrates student learning and potential for mastery of subject content.

C- to C+  Demonstrates a minimal understanding of subject content. Significant areas need improvement to meet course expectations.

D or E  Failure to demonstrate minimal understanding of subject content.

Grades

- Grades are not an indication of personal worth, indication of ability, or potential as a social worker.
- Class attendance, punctuality, and participation are essential to a successful learning experience. Students are expected to attend class and contribute to class discussions and activities. Excessive absences will result in the lowering of the student’s grade.
- Students are responsible for information and materials missed if unable to attend.
- All students are expected to adhere to NASW codes of conduct. Please refer to issues about scholarly integrity and academic misconduct (i.e., cheating, plagiarism…) in the Student’s Guide to the Master’s in Social Work Degree Program.
• Papers that are completed for another course are not acceptable and will not receive any credit
• Students who need or desire assistance with writing are encouraged to go to the Writing Workshop, 1139 Angell Hall, 734-764-0429
• Late assignments will be graded down unless specific arrangements have been agreed upon in advance.
• Thought content and formatting are considered in the grading
• To reduce possible subjectivity, assignments will be graded “blindly”, such that the author’s identity will be unknown.
• If you believe that the grade you received is inappropriate, please contact me within a week of receiving your assignment back. It may be that there was a misunderstanding on your part or I may have made an error.

Paper Format:

Papers should be the specified number of pages in length and be in APA format. Please do not use long direct quotations from sources. Please reference other’s work as appropriate. Papers are to be typed, 12-font, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, proofread, and include references.

Small Group Assignment (Due: October 29th, 2004; worth 25% of your grade)

You will work with three to five other class members on one of two selected areas

• Develop a training program/intervention for working with a special child/youth population. (For example, developing an intervention group for ADHD children in a school setting, a safe sex program for incarcerated youth, developing a mentoring program for youth at high risk for school drop-out,…).
• Develop a community/neighborhood change effort to address a particular need for children/youth (For example, developing a community group focusing on youth substance abuse or developing community sponsored after school activities,…).

You will have 30 minutes to present your work to the class. During this in-class presentation your group needs to identify and describe the population you are trying to serve, identify specific intervention/change goals, discuss the components of your intervention and how this would implemented (including potential time-tables and sources of financial support), identify potential strengths and limitations in meeting the needs of your population/community, and briefly propose outcome measurement techniques. Students will have some time in class to work on these group projects. Groups will be responsible for taking minutes on the group’s progress throughout the process. Group minutes may also be collected during the development of the project. Each group will submit an outline capturing the content of the presentation on the due date.
**Brief Child Advocacy Testimonial** (Due: November 19th, 2004; worth 30% of your grade)

Select a current child welfare policy or initiative (i.e., Foster care, Adoption (transracial), Child Protective Services, Special Education services, Suspension/Detention policies, Zero Tolerance Policy…). Prepare a testimonial in support or opposition of this policy/initiative. Prepare the document as if you were addressing a senator, working committee, director of the Children’s Defense Fund,…

- Identify who you represent (for the purposes of the testimonial).
- Identify the name (and date) that the policy or initiative was established (as well as whether it is State or Federal)
- Briefly describe the aim of the policy or initiative.
- Present whether you support or oppose the policy or initiative and your reasoning for your position. Advocate for your stance. Be persuasive and substantiate your points by identifying evidence to support them (use Lexus Nexus, agency data, annual reports, statistics, and other resources). Critically evaluate the strengths and limitations of the policy – anticipate and address the potential opposition (has the policy been implemented as originally designed, does the policy adequately consider diversity issues, who is most impacted by this policy/implications, does this policy have practice implications …). Explain how you might amend the policy/initiative.
- Discuss the relationship between your position on this issue and social work ethics and values.

This paper should be 5 pages in length and be in APA format. Please do not use long direct quotations from sources. This paper is to be typed, 12-font, double-spaced, proofread, including at least 4 references.

**Practice/Research Literature Review Paper: Specialized Child/Youth Focus** (Due: December 10, 2004; worth 35% of your grade)

Select a topic that focuses on a particular population of children/youth.

Conduct an extensive review of the practice/research literature of this specialized population using primarily peer-reviewed journal articles and selected documents or books. Generally, these sources should be current, published within the last ten years.

For the paper, integrate the findings from your review under the following themes:
- Understanding the context and challenges of the population you’ve selected. Special emphasis on multicultural, privilege, oppression, diversity and social justice issues should be in this section. (35%)
- Present current prevention and intervention practices/research with this population. Critically evaluate these practices/research, addressing strengths and limitations of the literature. (50%)
- Discuss directions for future practice development and research. (15%)
This paper should be approximately 7-8 pages in length and be in APA format. Please do not use long direct quotations from sources. It is to be typed, 12-font, double-spaced, proofread, including at least 8 references (at least 4 references need to be from peer-review journals or books).

**In-Class Participation Exercises (ongoing; worth 10% of your grade)**

Students will be expected to submit one discussion question or comment based on critical thought on required readings on an index card at the beginning of each class. The instructor will select randomly from these cards, and will use them to initiate discussion. There will be no specific grades for these exercises, but rather credit will be granted for participation. The instructor will provide more information about these exercises at the first class.

**Relationship of the Course to the Four Curricular Themes**

_Multicultural and diversity issues_ will be emphasized throughout this course, not only in relationship to direct intervention with children and youth and their families and communities, but also in regard to the need to develop and maintain effective collaborative relationships with other community resources and service providers. Students will learn to recognize the existence of group differences in a number of areas (such as nonverbal communication, individual and family values, family and community structures, preferred and accepted responses to crisis, response to exclusion or oppression) and how these may impact intervention relationships with children, youth, and their families.

_Social change and social justice issues_ will be addressed in relationship to children and youth as populations who experience vulnerability due to developmental and status factors (i.e., age and dependence), in addition to other impacts they may experience due to membership in other groups which encounter exclusion and discrimination. In recognition of this, abuses of power within the family (i.e., domestic violence, physical and sexual abuse and exploitation) will be addressed as issues related to social justice and human rights, and not just as indicators of individual and family psychopathology. Advocacy for children and youth, especially whose families and communities are particularly impacted by social inequality and social injustice, will be emphasized at individual, family, organizational, community, and policy levels.

_Promotion and prevention_ are particularly important for child and youth populations, due to the increased likelihood of negative outcomes as services or interventions are delayed, and the “time-limited” nature of childhood and youth. These areas are addressed in the direct practice areas through family life education, family preservation activities, screening early identification of children at risk, and family and community based early intervention with children and youth in a variety context. At the indirect practice level, program development and evaluation, staff and professional training, fiscal and economic issues and policy analysis addresses the relationship between policy decisions and risks to children and youth.
**Social science knowledge** is presented as the necessary basis for conducting empirically grounded assessment, intervention and evaluation practice at all levels of intervention. Course materials draw upon research knowledge from a variety of social sciences, as well as other professions and disciplines (i.e., social work, medicine, psychology, sociology, economics, law, etc.), and emphasize the need for multidisciplinary collaboration and communication around issues related to children and youth. Social science research concepts and methods are described in relationship to both social work practice and program evaluation processes.

**Relationship of this course to Social Work Ethics and Values**

Practice with children and youth requires considerable attention to issues of ethics and values, due to the special challenges these populations offer the social work practitioner. For example, confidentiality cannot be maintained when suspected child abuse or neglect must be reported, and issues of self-determination and autonomy often arise when an adolescent discloses important information that has not been shared with a parent or other responsible adult. Social work values and social science knowledge may also conflict with the child-rearing beliefs and practices of some cultural or religious groups. Resource limitations or lack of training or sensitivity may result in inappropriate treatment for some children or youth and their families, and others may be excluded entirely. Finally, social policy decisions significantly affect the lives or children and youth, the stability of their families and communities, and their access to resources and services. Although this course emphasizes, in relationship to each of the substantive areas outlined above, the importance of examining the complexities of ethical and value issues as they apply to the problems of children and youth; social work values and ethics, as outlined in the professional Code of Ethics, are presented as the necessary and appropriate guidelines for practice when ethical dilemmas arise in social work practice.

**Intensive Focus on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice (PODS)**

This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self knowledge and self awareness to facilitate PODS leaning.

**OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS**

**Accommodations:**
If accommodations are desired or needed, I encourage you to contact me. Modifications to assignments, methods, etc. can be made in order to enhance your learning experience and accommodate disabilities. All assignments are due on the dates specified unless you and I
form another agreement **in advance**. If there are religious/spiritual/cultural observances that conflict with class attendance, assignment due dates, or participation, please let me know in advance so arrangements may be made.

**Electronic Devices**
In consideration of your classmates and myself, please turn off all phones while in class. If you require the use of a pager, please use the “vibrate” setting only.

**Required Text**
The following text will be used throughout the course:
The text is available for purchase at Ulrich’s bookstore on South University (across the street from the School of Social Work).


Other readings will be on Reserve at the School of Social Work Library or can be found through on-line UM resources.

**Topics and Required Reading Assignments (with approximate dates)**
A. **Introduction to the Course (September 10, 2004)**

B. **Children, Youth, and Families Social Work Practice (September 17, 2004; September 24, 2004)**


Recommended:


10. Chapter 4 Gender Differences in Childhood and Adolescence from *Intervention with Children and Adolescent*, 54-79.


C. Mental Health and Mental Disorders (Practice and Policy) (October 1, 2004; October 8, 2004)

1. Chapter 12 Depression during the School-Aged Years from *Intervention with Children and Adolescents*, 264-281


Recommended:


11. Chapter 11 Treatment and Early Intervention for Schizophrenia from *Intervention with Children and Adolescents*, 229-263.

12. Chapter 13 Prevention and Intervention in Youth Suicide from *Intervention with Children and Adolescents*, 282-310.


**D. Children, Youth and Schools (October 15, 2004; October 22, 2004)**

1. Chapter 9 School-Based Interventions for Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders from *Intervention with Children and Adolescents*, 175-204.


Recommended:
7. Chapter 19 Bullying and Peer Victimization in Schools from Intervention with Children and Adolescents.

E. Juvenile Justice (October 29, 2004; November 5, 2004)

1. Chapter 20 Review of Research on Predictions of Youth Violence and School-Based and Community-Based Prevention Approaches from Intervention with Children and Adolescents, 449-476.


Recommended:

7. Chapter 21 Adolescent Sex Offenders: Characteristics, Prevention, and Treatment from Intervention with Children and Adolescents, 477-492.
F. Community-Based Prevention (November 12, 2004; November 19, 2004)


1. Chapter 6 Poverty and Child Development from *Intervention with Children and Adolescent*, 106-129.


3. Chapter 7 Prevention and Treatment Strategies Targeting Physical Child Abuse and Neglect from *Intervention with Children and Adolescents*, 130-158.


Recommended:
7. Chapter 8 Sexual Abuse of Children and Adolescents from *Intervention with Children and Adolescents*, 159-174.

**Some Additional Sources**

- Children’s Defense Fund Mission Statement
  http://www.childrensdefense.org

- The Child Welfare League of America
  http://www.cwla.org

- The Official Web-site of the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics
  http://www.childstats.gov

- National Child Welfare Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice
  http://www.cwresource.org

- The Annie E. Casey Foundation; Family to Family Tools For Rebuilding Foster Care
  http://www.aecf.org

- NY Times
  http://www.nytimes.com

- The News Hour with Jim Leher (PBS or Online)
  http://www.pbs.org/newshour

- “All Things Considered” or “Morning Edition”
  NPR WKAR-FM 90.5; WUOM-FM 91.7; WEMU-FM 89.1

**Assignment Due: Practice/Research Literature Review Paper, December 10, 2004**