Course Description

This course will critically analyze the various policies and social services that provide developmental, preventive, treatment, and rehabilitative services aimed at children, youth and their families. The role of social services in the broad context of both formal and informal systems that influence the life course of children and youth is addressed. The course will examine how services are articulated at various levels of intervention, and in policies and regulations, and how this affects the ethical practice of social workers and other family and child serving professionals. Particular emphasis will be placed on services provided by community-based agencies, child welfare services, and the juvenile justice system. Students will develop critical frameworks for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the policies, organization, and delivery of child-oriented social services based on social and behavioral science research evidence and through the lens of multi-culturalism and social justice values. In addition, illustrative cross-national comparisons of services and policies for families with children and youth will be discussed.

Course Content

Substantive service and policy areas addressed in this course are listed below. These topics will be critically analyzed in terms of the four curricular themes: social change and social justice, multiculturalism and diversity, social and behavioral science research.

1. Indicators of the well-being of children and families in the United States, and the comparison of the state of children and families in US compared with other developed nations.
2. Common frameworks used in policy analysis
3. The legal frameworks that shape the current system of family and children’s services and the role of the courts in the implementation of social policy.
4. Family support services – child care, Head Start, home visiting programs, and family support centers
5. Programs designed to encourage positive youth development.
6. Family Violence -- Child protective services and domestic violence
7. Family preservation services
8. Kinship care
9. Foster family care
10. Group homes, residential treatment
11. Adoption services
12. Delinquency services and other issues concerned with juvenile justice.
13. Proposed alternatives to the current child welfare system

**Course Objectives**

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

1. Demonstrate in depth knowledge of the policies that govern services to Children & Youth and their Families in Society in the following areas:

   a. Show understanding and critical awareness of the philosophies and ideologies that guide the development of policy instruments and service arrangements for children, youth and their families
   b. Show understanding and the ability to critique how the current policy frameworks (at the federal, state, and local levels) reflect society’s social construction of the child, youth and family (e.g. do not take into account variant family/caretaking forms and structures)
   c. The ability to understand and critique the laws, regulations and judicial interpretations that govern the delivery of social services to children, youth, and families
   d. The ability to understand and critique the outcomes and implications of current policies for children, youth, and families
   e. The ability to understand and critique the funding mechanisms that are available to provide services to children, youth, and families
   f. Demonstrate understanding of how the structure of current policies maintain systems of power, privilege and oppression
   g. Demonstrate critical analysis skills, including the ability to assess cross national comparisons

2. Demonstrate knowledge of the current service delivery system and articulate alternative design possibilities in the field of children, youth, and families to address such problems as:

   a. Lack of attention to the basic needs of families
   b. Lack of prevention as a focus of the service system
   c. Lack of social services attached to concrete provision
   d. Unequal distribution of services based on the current policy framework
   e. Racial and ethnic disparities among those who enter the system and the differential ways in which they are served
   f. Structural discontinuities in the public vs. private provision of services

3. Demonstrate in depth knowledge and potential applications of evidence-based programming in the design and delivery of comprehensive, culturally responsive services to children, youth, and families.

4. Demonstrate skills in policy analysis in one or more of the specific areas of services and policies to children and youth in their families.
5. Describe and critique services affecting children and youth in regard to their scope and effectiveness.

6. Identify and describe alternative strategies for delivery of services to children and youth including those found in other countries.

7. Recognize and articulate concerns related to the differential impact of these services on ethnic minorities and other cultural groups.

8. Understand the importance of advocacy for clients in the children and youth services delivery system, and develop the skills to advocate at the policy and/or direct service level.

9. Discuss typical ethical concerns related to services and policies for children and youth.

Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity** will be addressed through, for example, discussion of the client populations served by the service systems covered in the course; the design of programs so that they will be responsive to the special cultural and ethnic circumstances of their clients; and the special child and family policies related to issues of ethnicity.

- **Social Justice and Social Change** will be addressed by considering the differential impact of policies and programs on the poor, minority groups, and gay and lesbian youth; identifying mechanisms in these policies and services that support privilege and oppression; and develop awareness of ways to promote social justice goals within these systems.

- **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation** will be addressed by examining the continuum of care present or ideally needed in the programs and services provided to children, youth, and families.

- **Behavioral and Social Science Research** will be addressed through review of studies and academic literature on, for example, the changing demographics that affect demand for services, and the effectiveness of the services covered in this course.

Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values

This course covers the complexities of ethical dilemmas as they relate to services and policies for children and youth populations, as well as the ways in which the professional Code of Ethics may be used to guide and resolve value and ethical issues. In particular, the course will review the ethics and values related to confidentiality, self-determination, and respect for cultural and religious differences. The course includes consideration of the social worker’s responsibility to promote the general welfare of society (e.g., the prevention and elimination of discrimination, equal access to resources, services, and opportunities, and advocacy for changes in policy). In addition, ethical concerns of special importance to social work with children and youth are considered, such as the child’s ability to report and understand at various levels of development,
conflicts between the child’s best interest and the family’s best interest, and ethical issues related to treatment of minors.

**Class Requirements**

**Class Participation**

Student attendance is expected at every session of the class. Students are responsible for securing lecture notes and handouts when circumstances require them to be absent. More than two absences will result in a grade penalty.

Students are responsible for assisting in the creation of a learning environment that promotes professional socialization, and helps broaden our mutual awareness of human differences and diversity. Students will be encouraged in this class to examine how the structure of services and policies for children, youth, and families could better reduce inequalities and promote social justice.

Your participation grade will be based upon class attendance and the quality of your participation in classroom discussion.

**Required Readings**

All required readings are to be completed prior to the class session for which they are assigned. Required readings will be found in the textbooks, coursepack, and handouts. The reading assignments are outlined in this syllabus. The textbooks for this course are:


A coursepack of readings is available at Ulrichs. A copy of the course pack will also be on Reserve at the SW Library. Some of the required readings are not included in your coursepack because they are available on line. These include:

All articles that appear in any issue of *The Future of Children* can be downloaded from the web at [www.futureofchildren.org](http://www.futureofchildren.org).

Information on comparative social policies and the comparative state of children and families in western countries can be found at [www.childpolicyintl.org](http://www.childpolicyintl.org).

Publications from the Center for Law and Social Policy can be found at [www.clasp.org/publications](http://www.clasp.org/publications).

Publications from the Census Bureau can be found at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)
Publications from the USDHHS, Administration for Children and Families, can be found at www.acf.gov.

Publications form the USDHHS, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation can be found at www.aspe.os.dhhs.gov

Written Assignments

All written assignments are to be presented with a title page on which you are to include the title of the paper, the course and section number, the date on which it is being submitted, and your name and school mailbox number. All papers are to be typewritten (or word processed) using 12 point font. All papers are to be in narrative format and are to be double-spaced. Please remember to number your pages. All papers are to use proper grammar and bibliographic style. The suggested style to be followed is APA, in: The Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (5th Edition). A brief guide can be found online at: http://www.lib.umich.edu/ugl/research/citationguide/APA5thed.pdf.

The class assignments require students to conduct additional research that builds upon the information contained in both the readings and lectures. Students will be responsible for completing all assignments by the due date and in accordance with the guidelines that follow.

There will be two major papers required for this course, a Legislative Briefing Paper and an Analysis of a Social Service Delivery Issue.

Legislative Briefing Paper: This assignment is a simulation that requires students to think like a policy analyst working for a member of Congress or a state legislator. While a detailed assignment will be distributed to the students, it is expected that students will select a piece of legislation that impacts children and families. The briefing paper should review: 1) the legislative history of the law; 2) the strengths and weaknesses of the policy in terms of its philosophy and values, the service delivery structure it requires, its funding mechanisms, and its mandated professional practices and procedures; and 3) relevant comparative historical or cross-national policies, where available. The paper should also: 4) recommend policy changes if needed; and 5) identify the pros and cons of the recommended policy changes. These briefing papers should not exceed 8 pages of narrative. This paper will be due Feb. 22, 2005.

Program Analysis Paper: This assignment is an analysis of a program area of the students choosing. The student will choose from one or two possible assignments.

While a detailed assignment will be provided to the student, the first option is to do a general program analysis. It will: 1) describe the need for the program; 2) describe the philosophical and theoretical basis for the service delivery model, 3) describe what is done in the program (program activities); 4) compare the program to others that address the same problem; 5) report available evaluation or demonstration research results on the model; and 6) discuss the emerging issues in the delivery of this service. Finally, the paper will propose changes in this program based on literature or information from site visits, professional practitioner interviews, etc. The paper should not exceed 10 pages in length and should make ample use of internet, outside reading sources, and local site
visits or contacts with local service providers. The paper should reference these properly in the body of the paper and in the bibliography.

The second option is to do a issue brief on a “hot topic” in the field of children and family services. The student will choose a topic and explicate why the issue is controversial. The student will then be expected to argue the two sides of the issue and then come to a reasoned conclusion as to where they stand on it. Thus, the paper will discuss why the issue is important, and then take the form of “on the one hand,” “on the other hand,” and “where I stand and why.” This paper will be due April 25, 2004 and should be no more than 12 pages.

Newspaper Articles and Letter to the Editor: In addition, during specified classes, students will be required to bring a newspaper/periodical article to class that is relevant to ANY topic concerned with policy or service delivery to families and children (not necessarily the topic being covered during that week in class). Students should be prepared to summarize the article for the class, discuss its relevance to family and children’s policy and/or services, and hand in the article at the end of the class section. Be sure to put your name top of the article prior to giving it to the instructor.

In addition, students will select one newspaper article and write a letter to the editor of that newspaper in response to the article’s content. The assignment should be in letter format (double-spaced, no more than 250 words) and addressed to the newspaper’s editorial page editor or the paper’s publisher. The grade for this assignment depends on how well the student’s supports their arguments he/she makes using facts from sources cited in an appendix. This assignment can be turned in at any point during the semester.

Grading

Grading Criteria for Written Assignments

Papers will be graded using the following criteria:

a) The quality of the analysis and depth of understanding of the concepts, ideas, and information presented.

b) The clarity of expression and organization of the paper - is there a logical order to the presentation of your thoughts.

c) The appropriate use of references and resources, and the variety of resources referenced.

d) The use of proper grammar and the over-all professional presentation of the paper.
Grading Criteria for the Course

Each written assignment will be given a letter grade. The criteria I use are as follows:

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

**B+**  Mastery of subject content beyond expected competency, but has not demonstrated 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 or C-**  Demonstrates a minimal understanding of subject content. Significant areas needing improvement to meet course requirements.

**E**  Student has failed to demonstrate minimal understanding of subject content.

The student’s final grade for the course will be based upon the following:

- a) Class Participation 15%
- b) Group Presentations 20%
- c) Letter to the Editor 10%
- d) Paper 1 25%
- e) Paper 2 30%

Final Grades

Final grades will be determined by multiplying the worth of the assignment (or class participation or presentation) by the following grade points: [A+ = 4.3]; A = 4.0; A- = 3.7; B+ = 3.3; B = 3.0; B- = 2.7; C+ = 2.3; C = 2.0, etc., and rounding the score to the nearest letter grade, with some discretion left to the instructor to round up if other factors come into play. Issues of student attendance and tardiness will, if necessary, be factored into this score after this calculation has been completed.

Academic Integrity

Students have already been provided with information regarding plagiarism at their orientation, and materials addressing this issue appear in the Student Handbook. Students are reminded that this class will operate under the Student Code of Academic and Professional Conduct which appears on page 18 of this Student Handbook: http://www.ssw.umich.edu/studentGuide/2004/studentGuide2004.pdf. This section of the handbook describes plagiarism, procedures for processing alleged infractions, and the range of possible sanctions.

For other information on academic integrity and proper citations for papers see SSW Library online tutorial on this topic http://www.lib.umich.edu/ugl/searchpath/index.html as well as the SSW Library web page on writing a paper, with links to plagiarism information at http://www.lib.umich.edu/socwork/researchpaper.html. University Library and CRLT web resources on academic integrity can be found at http://www.lib.umich.edu/acadintegrity/
Course Outline

Session 1    Introductions, Course Overview, and the Idea of Family Policy
January 11, 2005

Session 2   Family and Child Well-being: An Overview of Indicators
January 18, 2005

Pecora, et al., Chapter 4

Group Assignments for Class Presentation

*Trends in the Well-Being of America’s Children and Youth: 2003
USDHHS, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation,
2004, Sections 1 and 2.

Group 2: Health and Health Insurance – US
*Trends in the Well-Being of America’s Children and Youth: 2003
USDHHS, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation,
2004, Section 3

Income, Poverty and Health Insurance: Coverage in the United States.
U.S. Census Bureau, pp 14-19

Group 3: Social Development and Education – US
*Trends in the Well-Being of America’s Children and Youth: 2003
USDHHS, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation,
2004, Section 4 and 5

Group 4: Child Maltreatment – US

Group 5: International Comparisons – Demographics, Employment and Poverty

1 ON THE FOLLOWING OUTLINE:

* DENOTES THAT THE MATERIAL IS AVAILABLE ON LINE

+ DENOTES THAT THE MATERIALS ARE IN YOUR GROUP COURSEPACK PROVIDED BY THE INSTRUCTOR

^ DEONOTES THAT THE MATERIAL IS IN THE COURSEPACK FOR THE COURSE AND AVAILABLE AT ULRICH'S
Group 6: International Comparisons – Health, Education and the Well-being of Youth

*Tables 2.11, 2.12, 2.14, 2.15a, 2.17b, 2.18, 2.31b, 2.33, 2.35, 3.21, 3.22, 3.23, 3.26 from www.childpolicyintl.org

Group 7: International Comparisons – Child Maltreatment


Group 8: International Comparisons – Some Basic Policies

*Tables 1.121, 1.11, 1.15, 1.22 from www.childpolicyintl.org

Session 3  An Introduction To Policy Analysis  January 25, 2005

Group Assignments for Class Presentation

Groups 1 and 2


Groups 3 and 4


Groups 5 and 6


Groups 7 and 8

Session 4 Policies for Families: An Analytic Overview, Legal and Service Delivery Frameworks in Child Welfare

Feb. 1, 2004

Pecora, et al., Chapters 1 – 3


Session 5 Family Support Services

Feb. 8, 2005

Video this class

Pecora, et al., Chapter 8

Kluger et al, Chapters 1, 4, 5, 28-32.


**Session 6**

**Positive Youth Development**

Feb. 15, 2005

Newspaper Article this class

Kluger, et al, Chapters 33, 34


**Session 7**

**Family Violence and Child Protective Services**

Feb. 22, 2005

**FIRST PAPER DUE THIS CLASS**

Michigan Child Protection Law. HANDOUT

Pecora, et al, chapters 5, 6, 7

Kluger, et al., 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11


**NO CLASS MARCH 1, 2005 – HAVE A GOOD SPRING BREAK**

Session 8 Family Preservation
March 8, 2005

Video this session

Pecora, et al., Chapter 9.

Kluger, et al., Chapters 2, 3


Session 9  Kinship Care
March 15, 2005

Video this session

Pecora, Chapter 11, pp. 330-362.

Kluger, et al, Chapter 13


Session 10  Foster Care
March 22, 2005

Video this session

Pecora, Chapter 10

Kluger, et al., Chapters 12, 14-17, 19-21.


Session 11    Residential/ Group Care
March 29, 2005

Newspaper Article this session

Pecora, Chapter 13, pp. 406-430.

Kluger, et al., Chapter 18.


Session 12    Juvenile Justice
April 5, 2005

Video this session

Kluger, et al., Chapters 35, 36


Groups 1 and 2 -- Children in Confinement and Adult Jails
Groups 3 and 4 – Minorities and Disproportionate Minority Representation within the Juvenile Justice System

*www.buildingblocksforyouth.org/issues/dmc
*www.buildingblocksforyouth.org/issues/latino
*www.buildingblocksforyouth.org/issues/nativeyouth


Groups 5 and 6 – Transfer to Adult Courts

* www.buildingblocksforyouth.org/issues/transfer

Groups 7 and 8 – Zero Tolerance Policies

* www.buildingblocksforyouth.org/issues/zerotolerance

**Session 13**

**Adoption**

**April 12, 2005**

Newspaper Article this class

Pecora, Chapter 12, pp. 363-405.

Kluger, et al, Chapters 22-27


Session 14
Thinking About Alternative Systems
April 19, 2005


Group Assignments for Class Presentation

Groups 1 and 2


Groups 3 and 4


Groups 5 and 6


Groups 7 and 8


FINAL PAPER DUE APRIL 25