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 that address the needs of children, youth and their families. This cross cutting skills course encompasses both direct/micro and indirect/macro practice methods used to address problems presented by or to children and youth in a variety of contexts. This course teaches 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. This course stresses the child and youth in context, and interventions based on this context. Intervention strategies focus on ways to bring about a change at various levels of the child's ecosystem. The aim of the course is to promote interpersonal competence, self-esteem, self-efficacy, achievement, and moral development in children and youth by making the contexts within which they develop, more responsive to their developmental needs.

Students will be taught assessment skills to be able to identify special needs, abuse and neglect, family violence, substance abuse, and circumstances of extreme stress, danger or deprivation. The students will learn how to design individual programs of intervention that are based on clearly articulated goals and priorities. Throughout the course, cultural competence and differences among families will be stressed.

The course format will combine lecture with multi media presentations, guest lecturers, and in-class student presentations.
COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

1. Apply an ecological systems perspective to social work practice with children and youth

2. Effectively communicate and establish collaborative relationships with children and youth, their families, and other significant members of their social environment

3. Apply collaboration building and consultation skills to strengthen families and organize communities in response to the needs of children and youth.

4. Assess risks to the child's and youth's safety, health and well-being and identify the strengths and resources available in the child's environment to address these concerns.

5. Demonstrate an ability to conduct culturally sensitive and competent practice, which recognizes diversity across and within groups and the uniqueness of each individual and family.

6. Critically evaluate and monitor practice, programs and services provided to children and youth, their families and communities, involving, whenever possible, children and youth, their families and other care taking adults, their communities, and other service providers in the evaluation and monitoring of services.

7. Select, implement and justify research supported interventions, which are based on identifiable goals and priorities and a thorough evaluation of children, youth and families involved.

8. Describe roles, characteristics and responsibilities of the significant public and private agencies, which provide services to children, youth and their families.

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 and early identification of children at risk, and family and community based early intervention with children and youth in a variety context. At the direct 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 emphasizes 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 of 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.
COURSE DESIGN AND EXPECTATIONS

This course will use a combination of lecture, class discussion, case material, role-plays, group discussion and video material as appropriate. Students are expected to attend all class sessions. **The instructor must be notified in the event of a possible absence due to illness or emergency.**

- More than 2 unexcused absences will result in a reduction in the final grade.
- Assignments are expected to be on time. Assignments that are turned in late will result in an automatic reduction in the grade.
- Class participation is strongly encouraged and is worth 10% of your final grade. If for personal reasons you find class participation to be difficult, please see me.

Grading:

The requirements listed below are the minimal expectations for class assignments, and if followed precisely will result in an “A-” grade for the assignment. A grade higher than “A-” will be given to work that has gone above and beyond the minimal qualifications. This would reflect more thorough, thoughtful and thought provoking work on your part. This will be discussed in detail in class. Feel free to ask questions about this policy!

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

Progress in this course will be assessed by four assignments. The aim of the assignments is to give you an opportunity to focus on your own specific area of interest, or explore new areas that may not be covered in detail in the class. My hope is that you will draw from your personal experience and choose topics that will aid you in your current internship placement, or a specific personal interest related to children and youth that you hope to pursue professionally in the future. Hopefully, the more personally interesting to you, the more effort you will put into these projects. **All papers are to be typed with page numbers, double spaced, and written in professional, clinical style.**
Assignment 1:

Small Group Assignment:

You will work with a group of three or four other class members on one of three selected areas:

• Develop a training program/intervention module for working with a special child/youth population. For example, a mentoring program for youth at high risk for school drop out, an intervention group for emotionally impaired youth in a school setting, a restorative program for youth offenders.

• Develop a community/neighborhood change initiative to address a particular need for children/youth. For example, community groups focusing on latch key kids, or a neighborhood new mom’s group and babysitting co-op.

• Develop a policy addressing a particular child/youth population and/or their families in relation to a specific environmental need.

You will have 30 minutes for your class presentation. The presentation should:

• Identify and describe the population you are serving (you might show a movie clip or use other media to demonstrate your client population)

• Identify goals for the program/policy

• Identify specific interventions and rationales for their usage

• Discuss how the implementation of these interventions would be accomplished

• Propose outcomes and outcome measurement techniques

• You may include any publicity materials that would accompany your program.

• Please submit an outline of your presentation to the instructor on the day of your presentation.

We will pick dates for the presentations during the first and second class sessions. This assignment is worth 20% of your grade.

Assignment 2: Read and critique a book of your choice on a topic related to course content. Your critique should be 4 to 6 pages in length and should include the following information:

• Your reasons for choosing this book.

• A brief summary of the book, no longer than a paragraph

• To what readership the book is directed

• Discuss the book’s strengths: this should include what you liked about the book as a social worker, and strengths for its readership

• Discuss the book’s weaknesses: this should include your hesitations about recommending this book to clients, clinicians, other social workers, etc.

• General discussion of the value of the book from a social work perspective. This should include references to the 4 curricular themes:
Multicultural, diversity and social justice issues
- Social change and social justice issues
- Promotion and prevention
- Social science knowledge
- Relationship to social work ethics and values
- Practice/policy implications

Please do not use long quotations from the book, and do not choose a book designed for children unless it is in conjunction with another book. Required texts for other classes are not permissible for this assignment. I must approve all book selections prior to completing the assignment.

This assignment is worth 20% of your grade and due on June 6, 2005.

Assignment 3:

Practice/ Research Literature Review Paper
Coursepak creation

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

Conduct an extensive practice/research literature review of this particular population using primarily peer reviewed journal articles and selected documents or books. In order to be current, these sources should have been published in the last ten years.

Integrate the findings from your review under the following themes:
1. Understanding the context and challenges for the special population.
2. How do multicultural, diversity and social justice issues relate to this population.
3. Current prevention and intervention practices with this special population. Give a critical evaluation of these practices in view of your own knowledge and experience.
4. What prevention and intervention strategies would you recommend?
5. What are policy and advocacy issues as they relate to potential social change efforts?

This paper will be 5 to 6 pages, (12 font, double spaced, proofread, spellchecked.) Please site at least 8 references using APA style.

This assignment is worth 20% of your grade and is due on June 27, 2005.
Assignment 4:

This assignment is a case study. You may choose a child or adolescent that you know or are working with, or a particular community or population. If you choose an individual client, please disguise the name and other pertinent identifying information to maintain confidentiality. The goal of the assignment is to relate the concepts presented in class readings and lectures to the client in your case study. Depending on your particular client, certain of the topics presented will not be relevant, but please list each one and state why it would not be relevant. This paper should include:

1. A brief description of the client
2. A description of how the following concepts pertain to the client:
   a. What are the client’s strengths? (3 levels)
   b. What are this client’s challenges? (3 levels)
   c. Social Justice issues: Does your client have equal access to society’s resources?
   d. Issues of culture and ethnicity
   e. Gender and Gender Socialization Issues
   f. Family Assessment
   g. Abuse, shame or trauma issues
3. Intervenitive strategies
   a. What would be pertinent micro level interventions that would be appropriate for your client(s)? Justify your intervention choices.
   b. What would be pertinent mezzo level interventions? Justify your intervention choices.
   c. What would be appropriate macro level interventions for your client(s)? Justify your intervention choices.
4. Personal reflection/ conclusion: How do you feel as a social worker after completing this assessment and intervention assignment?

This paper should be typed, double spaced and written in professional clinical style. It should be sub-headed with each of the various required elements. Paper length is not as important as thoughtful application of the concepts.

This assignment is worth 30% of your grade and is due on July 25, 2005.

REQUIRED READING MATERIAL

Allen-Meares, Paula, and Fraser, Mark W., Intervention with Children and Adolescents; An Interdisciplinary Perspective, Pearson Education, Inc. 2004
COURSE OUTLINE
The course will be taught in segments representing some of the most common arenas for working with/on behalf of children and youth. Each of these contexts will be explored in terms of strengths, challenges, possible interventive strategies and special considerations.

These segments include:
The Child as an Individual
Families
Schools
Communities
The Child Welfare System
The Juvenile Justice System
Community Based Prevention

May 9, 2005

Introduction to Course: expectations, format

May 16, 2005

The Child as Individual and in Context
Ecological Perspective
Text: chapters 1, 2

May 23, 2005

Social Justice, Cultural Issues
Anti-Bias Issues
Text: chapters 3, 4

May 30, 2005    NO CLASS

June 6, 2005: Assignment 2 due today.

Families, Effective Practice
Resources, Risk Factors, Resiliency
Text: chapters 6, 7, 8

June 13, 2005

Schools: Effective Practice
Policy Implications
Text: chapters 9, 14, 19
June 20, 2005

Community Based Prevention
Text: chapters 13, 15, 16, 20

June 27, 2005: Assignment 3 due today

Issues of Adolescence: Micro to Macro
LGBT Youth
Juvenile Justice
Addictions
Eating Disorders
Text: chapters 17, 18, 23

July 4, 2005   NO CLASS

July 11, 2005

Juvenile Justice
Text: chapters 21, 22

July 18, 2005

To be determined

July 25, 2005: Assignment 4 due today.

To be determined