S.W. 696  
Social Work Practice with Children and Youth  
Fall 2005  
Friday 2:00pm - 5:00pm  
Office hours by appointment  

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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. There will be two examinations of short answer, short essay format, given on October 21st and December 9th. The examinations will integrate both class materials and readings. There will also be a brief child advocacy testimonial paper due


November 18th. Students are expected to attend and participate in all classes and excessive absences will result in the lowering of the students’ grade.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Examination (October 21, 2005)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Advocacy Testimonial (November 18, 200)</td>
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<td>Final Examination (December 9, 2005)</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<td>Class Attendance and Participation</td>
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**Brief Child Advocacy Testimonial (Due: November 18th; worth 25% 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 4-5 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.

**Mid-Term and Final Examinations (October 21st and December 9th, each exam is worth 35% of your grade)**

This examination will be short-answer, short-essay type. The mid-term examination will cover the contents of the lectures for the first half of the course and the final examination will cover the contents of the lectures for the second half of the course. An examination review will be completed in the session prior to the mid-term and final examination date.

**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 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.

Required Text and Readings

Readings are on electronic course reserves at the SSW Library

**Topics and Required Reading Assignments**

**A.** Children, Youth and Families, effective practice and interventions (9/9, 9/16 and 9/23)

1. Rose & Fatout text, chapters 1, 2 and 3.


**B.** Mental Health and Mental Disorders (9/30, 10/7, 10/14)

1. Rose & Fatout text, chapters 4, 5, 6 and 9


C. **Mid-term examination and Children, Youth and Schools (10/21)**

D. **Children, Youth and Schools (10/28, 11/4)**

1. Rose & Fatout text, chapter 8


D. **Juvenile Justice (11/4 and 11/11)**


E. **Child Welfare System (11/11 and 11/18)**

1. Rose and Fatout text, chapter 10


**F. Community-Based and Organizational Systems (12/2)**

1. Rose and Fatout text, chapter 7


**G. Final Examination 12/9**

**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