1. Course Description:

This integrative seminar will integrate micro and macro levels of practice; research in child welfare, as it relates to all levels of practice; the relationship of child maltreatment and other social problems; and perspectives from several disciplines, specifically social work, other mental health professions, law, and medicine, as these disciplines address problems of child maltreatment and child welfare. The substance of this seminar will highlight the impact of minority status and poverty on child welfare issues. The primary focus will be on child welfare issues in the United States, Canada, and Western European countries.

2. Course Content:

This advanced level, integrative seminar is intended to be taken by students in their third or final term of masters level study. The purpose of this course is to integrate content related to child maltreatment and child welfare along several dimensions. First, a range of issues in child welfare from direct practice, community, agency, and policy perspectives will be examined. For example, 1) memory and trauma, 2) abuse allegations, divorce, and child custody, and 3) abuse of children in substitute care will be reviewed. Second, the course will explore and integrate research findings related to child welfare issues, services, and practice. Third, the relationship of child welfare and child maltreatment to other social problems, such as poverty, domestic abuse, child health, and parental substance abuse will be covered. Finally, students will be given an opportunity to explore issues in child welfare drawing upon substantive material from different disciplines. For example, this course will integrate certain medical diagnoses, such as Battered Child Syndrome, Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy, and Non-organic Failure to Thrive with related psychosocial assessments of and intervention with children and parents when these conditions are present. Likewise, legal issues will be addressed, such as legal liability, the use of the courts to effect safety for the child, termination of parental
rights, testifying in court, and the option to criminally prosecute some types of maltreatment.

3. Course Objectives:

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

1. Conceptualize and describe interventions in child welfare problems from direct practice, community, administrative, and policy perspectives.
2. Demonstrate knowledge about research findings, as they relate to a range of child maltreatment and child welfare issues, policies, and programs.
3. Demonstrate knowledge about the relationship of child maltreatment and child welfare to other social problems.
4. Demonstrate knowledge about substantive material from other professional disciplines, such as law and medicine as they are related to child maltreatment and child welfare.

4. Course Design:

This course will make use of lectures, discussion, small group exercises, student presentations, and media, especially videotapes about the issues covered in this course. Guest speakers from relevant disciplines and experts in issues addressed in the course will be employed. Students will be required to demonstrate specialized knowledge related to a child welfare issue of their choice, which they will explore by means of a literature review, visits to relevant programs, and direct contact with impacted individuals.

5. Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity** will be addressed by examining how age, class, culture, ethnicity, race, religion, physical and mental ability, sexual orientation, national origin, and gender impact on the conceptualization of child welfare issues, the development of services, and the delivery of child welfare interventions.

- **Social Justice and Social Change** will be addressed by teaching students that children are at a fundamental disadvantage in systems that are controlled by adults. The child welfare system is not necessarily designed to first address the needs of clients, but may be constructed to be convenient for professionals. Although the stated goal of the child welfare system is to assure the well-being of children, in many respects, it is an institution of social control. In addition, students will learn that economically disadvantaged and minority children and families are differentially responded to by the child welfare system. Students will gain a critical awareness of these issues, and thus, become more informed practitioners of social work.
• *Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation.* This seminar will foster exploration of the full spectrum of child welfare interventions, through consideration of both micro and macro interventions and the relationship of child welfare to other problems. This will include a focus on how intervention into related social problems, such as child-related health care and income maintenance, can promote child well-being and child welfare. This course will also emphasize how addressing parental problems, such as domestic violence, can prevent child maltreatment.

• *Behavioral and Social Science Research* related to child welfare will be central to the material taught in this course. Two of the objectives of this course reflect this intent: 1) the inclusion of research related to child welfare practice, and 2) the exploration of the relationship of child welfare to other social problems.

6. **Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:**

Issues related to social work values and ethics will be an inherent part of this course. For example, reporting requirements for child maltreatment raise many ethical issues that apply to social workers and other professionals who work with children. In addition, since children are minors, social workers often act according to the child’s best interest rather than according to the child’s wishes. Students will analyze these ethical dilemmas, as well as the ethical issues involved in the relationship of child welfare to other social problems.
Syllabus

SW739: Integrative Seminar in Child Welfare; Fall 2002

Meeting time and place: Thurs. 6:00-9:00; SSWB

Instructor: Prof. Kathleen Coulborn Faller
Offices: 2704 SSWB, 1080 S. University; 113 555 S. Forest
Telephone numbers: Office: 734-763-3786; 998 9702
Home: 734-663-8735
E-Mail: kcfaller@umich.edu
Office hours: Tues. 5:00-6:30 at 555 S. Forest; Thurs. 5-6:00 at 2704 SSWB
By appointment at 2704 SSWB

Course description:
This is an advanced integrative seminar open to social work graduate students in their third and fourth terms, to Social Work Advanced Standing students, and to graduate students from other disciplines with permission from the instructor. It integrates direct practice material with material relevant to policy and planning. It also integrates material from across disciplines, incorporating information from law, medicine, mental health, and public health. The relationship of child welfare and maltreatment to other social problems, for example racial discrimination, family violence, substance abuse, and poverty, will covered in this course. Finally the course integrates findings from research with practice knowledge.

Select topics, chosen because they are of particular relevance to practice and policy related to child welfare, will be covered.

Course requirements:

1. Attend class. To benefit from this course, students must be there. This is not a class in which the content can be learned merely by doing the reading. A sign in sheet will be passed out each class. Three unexcused absences will affect your grade.

2. Do the reading. All or almost all of the readings, weblinks, and the syllabus are available on the CTools website. The webaddress appears below. To access readings, click on Resources. Each session’s reading assignments are in a separate folder, which is marked by session number.

https://ctools.umich.edu/portal/site/1115735950136-20041135

The reading requirements are modest. Students are expected to do the reading before each class. Students should anticipate being asked to summarize the readings as part of their class participation. Copies of the Powerpoint slides for most class sessions will be available to students at the beginning of each class session.

3. Participate in class discussion. This is a course for advanced students who will have something to contribute to the dialogue about these very important issues. Thus, an expectation is that students will participate in class discussions.
4. **Turn in 3 critical reviews of substantive topics covered in the course.** Usually one class session is devoted to each topic. These critical reviews should be approximately two pages in length. They should include both the readings and the class material. Critical reviews should be reflective and integrative. Their goal is to foster critical consideration of the topic. You do not need to agree with the instructor or guest presenter. Topics to be addressed in the critiques include: 1. The micro and macro approaches to the topic (continuum of levels of potential intervention), 2. Research and practice integration as it relates to the topic, 3. Interdisciplinary considerations related to the topic, 4. Social justice issues related to the topic, and 5 Other relevant issues related to the topic. Critiques can be turned in on the website or in hard copy. Students are responsible for selecting their topics and turning in critiques within three weeks of the time the topic is covered in class.

5. **Complete a final project.** Projects should be multifaceted. They should involve literature review (research and practice) as well as field exploration relevant to a chosen topic. Projects may also entail student-initiated research. Indeed research projects are encouraged. (If you wish to publish the results of your research, you will need to allow time for IRB clearance). I encourage joint projects, but recommend that the number of persons involved be limited to three because of logistical problems if too many people work on a project. I am available to assist students in planning their projects. All topics should be cleared with the instructor. Students should turn in a paragraph or an outline describing their topic by the seventh week of class.

**Caveats:**
This is not a practice course. The practice course in the Child Welfare series is SW730. Rather the Integrative Seminar will address select critical issues related to child welfare.

Be forewarned, the instructor is an exacting grader. Written material related to projects will be graded for organization and writing quality as well as for substantive content. The grading criteria for the School of Social Work are roughly as follows:

- **A+** = extraordinary work that could not be improved upon.
- **A** = exceptional, excellent work.
- **B+** = very good; the expected grade for good students who work hard.
- **B** = good.
- **B-=** not so good; marginal for graduate school performance.
- **C+=** below the standards of graduate school performance.

The requirements will count as follows for the student’s grade: Critiques=10% each (Total 30%); Final project=50%; Doing the reading as reflected in class participation=20%.

**Course outline:**

**First session: Sept. 8—Integrative Seminar**
- Course requirements
- Child welfare in a social context
- Why focus on child abuse?
- Child welfare workforce issues
Prevalence and incidence rates of child maltreatment
History of concerns about child maltreatment
The Backlash

Readings:

Students aren’t expected to have read and reviewed these materials before the first class, but these websites represent central sources of materials on child welfare. Become familiar with these websites. You can download documents from all three websites free of charge.

Video: The Child Savers

Second session: Sept. 15—Corporal punishment and its effects
Spanking survey
Is corporal punishment bad per se, or does it just produce different kinds of people?
Have the use of and views about corporal punishment changed over time?
What are practices in other countries?
What advice should social workers offer parents about corporal punishment?
Who decides what is appropriate parenting behavior?
Do different environments require different parenting styles?

Readings:
http://weblinks2.epnet.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/citation.asp?tb=&_ug=sid+CE55504D%2DA969%2D4CF2%2D962A%2D1D4AEC40835F%40sessionmgr2+29ED&us=hd+False+sm+ES+1C03&uso=st%5B0%2DAN++bull1284539+tg%5B0%2D+db%5B0%2Dpdh+op%5B0%2D+hd+False+FA53&

Video: Oprah Winfrey--The Spanking Debate
Third session: Sept. 22—Child welfare and the law: Testifying in court—Frank Vandervort, J.D., Manager, Child Welfare Legal Resource Center, Law School

Videotape: My Cousin Vinnie

Readings:

Fourth session: Sept. 29—Results of the Spanking survey
Remembering child maltreatment, children

- Children’s memory and suggestibility
- Types of normal memory
- Research on children’s reports of experiences
- Research on children’s suggestibility
- Ecological validity of research findings

Readings:

Video: Sally

Fifth session: Oct. 6—Abuse by clergy
Guest lecturer: William C. Birdsall, Emeritus Professor
- Research on clergy abuse
- Vulnerability of religious (and other caring) institutions
- History of religious institutions have handled allegations of abuse
- Current practices
Impact on victims of abuse by clergy
Impact on families of abuse by clergy

Readings:
2. documents on website: http://www.votf.org
4. Justice Anne Burke speaking on “Bishop Accountability” at the 2005 VOTF Indianapolis Convocation-- on the CTools website

Video: The Father Porter case

**Sixth session: Oct. 13—Remembering child maltreatment, adults:**
Research findings on repressed and false memories
Different types of memory
The media and popular assumptions about memories
Memory and the legal arena
Memory and the mental health arena
Organizations active in the memory debate
  The False Memory Syndrome Foundation
  ACCOA

Readings:
1. Faller, Important studies on repressed memory.—on the CTools website
2. Williams, L. Recall of childhood trauma. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology.* 62(6), 1167-1176.— on the CTools website

Video: Excerpts from the PBS specials, "Divided Memories"

**Seventh session: Oct. 20—Child welfare and lawsuits**
Vulnerabilities of social workers in the legal arena
Protecting yourself from lawsuits
Coping with being sued

Readings:
Faller, K.C. (1997). *Lesson learned from lawsuits*—on the CTools website

Videotape: Court testimony

**Project proposals due**

**Eighth session: Oct. 27—Allegations of child abuse and divorce**
The dynamics of abuse allegations and divorce
Research on false allegations
Calculated lies versus misinterpretations
How the courts respond to allegations of abuse in situations of divorce.
Responses to the failure of the legal system
The National Center for Protective Parents
Mother’s Nightmare
The Underground
Strategies for effectively handling allegations of abuse in divorce

Readings:
4. Richard Gardner’s website--- http://www.rgardner.com/refs —linked to the CTools website
5. Website challenging Richard Gardner’s work; http://cincinnatipas.com/richardgardner-pas.html—linked to the CTools website
6. Faller, Chapter 10 Divorce and child sexual abuse—on the CTools website (not required)

Videotape: The Morgan-Fortitch case

Ninth session—Nov. 3—Parental mental health problems and child welfare
Competing and conflicting agendas for children and mentally ill parents.
Personality disorders and parenting.
Major psychiatric illnesses and parenting.
Dual diagnoses and more.

Readings:
1. Faller & Bellamy, Mental health and child welfare—on the website

Video: Case example

Tenth session: Nov. 10—Child welfare and substance abuse
Guest lecturer Melnee McPherson, M.S.W., M.A., Ph.D., Post-doctoral Fellow
The prevalence of substance abuse among maltreating parents
Substance abuse as a causal factor in child maltreatment.
How to take a substance abuse history.
Fetal alcohol syndrome
Infants born drug addicted

Readings:
1. Substance abuse and child maltreatment—on the website
2. Blending Perspectives and building common ground—linked to the website.
3. Substance abuse assessment form—on the website
Video: Confessions of Rosalie

Eleventh session: Nov. 17---Prostituting children—An international problem
   Dynamics of child prostitution
   Role of the sex tourist
   Role of domestic users
   Role of procurers
   Who are the children?
   What is being done about child prostitution?

Readings:

Nov. 25--Thanksgiving

Twelfth session: Dec. 1---Child abuse and Indian Country
   History of treatment of Native American Children and their families
   Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978
   Challenges to the Act
   Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act
   What lies in the future for Native American children

Videotapes: The Indian Child Welfare Act
                       Family Preservation in Indian Country

Readings:
   http://www.nicwa.org/policy/research/2005/WellBeing.pdf--linked to the CTools website
   Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978—on the website

Thirteenth session: Dec. 8—Ritual abuse
   Definitions of ritual abuse.
   Does ritual abuse exist? The spectrum of belief about ritual abuse.
   Prevalence of reports of ritual abuse and contexts in which it is reported
   Legal and mental health strategies for handling ritual abuse

Readings:
   2. Faller, K.C. Ritual abuse: A continuum of belief.—on the CTools website

Video: Children at Risk
Dec. 15--Projects due
And
Celebration of the end of the term at Prof. Faller's house. 1613 S. University, across
the street from Angell School.
7:00PM