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. Evidence-based change interventions that build on strengths and resources of children and their families at all levels of intervention will be examined in order to develop socially just and culturally-competent policies and practice. This course will address the key diversity dimensions (including ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation) as it relates to children, youth and their families.

Course Content:
Effective social work practice with children and youth requires a developmentally-sensitive, resiliency focused multisystem approach, an emphasis on prevention and early intervention, and the collaborative involvement of families, other primary caretaking adults, and involved professionals, in the identification, development, delivery, and evaluation of services. In addition to being able to assess and intervene with children and youth, social workers must also develop the skills necessary to assess the resources and the risk factors which may exist in the child’s or youth’s family, neighborhood, community, and in the larger social environment. In this course the emphasis of intervention is as much on the context as on the individual. Intervention strategies focus
on ways to bring about change at levels such as the classroom or school, the peer group, and the community or population, as well as at the individual level. Mezzo and macro practice skills covered in this course are aimed at promoting 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.

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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Describe roles, characteristics and responsibilities of the significant public and private agencies, which provide services to children, youth and their families.
- Incorporate social work values and ethical principles in planning and implementing interventions for children and youth

Relationship to 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 those 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 micro 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 of context. At the mezzo and macro practice levels, 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 and their ecosystems. Social science research concepts and methods are described in relationship to both social work practice and program and policy evaluation processes.

### Relationship 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. 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. This course emphasizes 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.

### Accommodations for STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you need an accommodation for a disability, let me know. There are resources available to help us to meet your needs. If you disclose a disability to me I will treat that information as private and confidential.
**Course Design and Requirements**

This course will use a combination of lecture, class discussion, case material, experiential activities, group discussion and video material as appropriate.

**Attendance:** 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. Absence could result in a reduction in the final grade.

**Assignments:** Assignments are expected to be submitted in a timely manner. Those that are turned in late could result in an automatic reduction in the grade.

**Participation:** Class participation is strongly encouraged and is worth a part of your final grade. This includes doing the readings and being ready to discuss them in class. It also involves your focus during our class sessions. Focus on things other than what is intended (Email, games, IPods, newspaper, conversations, etc) may not be acknowledged by me during class but will certainly be noted and will affect your participation points.

**Readings** will be found in CTools, handed out in class or located in the library reserves or my personal library.

**Grading:** The expectations listed above are the minimal expectations for class performance and if followed precisely will result in a “B+” grade for the assignment. A grade higher than “B+” 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. The grading scale is:

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\begin{align*}
A &= 100 - 95; \\
A- &= 94 - 90; \\
B+ &= 89 - 86; \\
B &= 85 - 83; \\
B- &= 82 - 80; \\
C+ &= 79 - 76; \\
C &= 75 - 73; \\
C- &= 72 - 70 \\
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**Course Texts**

CTools will be heavily used. Other readings and discussion materials for the course will come from several texts including:

- Paula Allen-Meares and Mark Fraser (2004) Intervention with Children and Adolescents