Children and Youth Services and Social Policies

SW 633-004
Date and Time: 2-5 P.M. Wednesday
Place: 3752 SSWB
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Winter, 2001
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Course Description

This course will critically analyze the various human/social services and policies that provide preventive, case management, treatment, and rehabilitative services aimed at children and youth. 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 historical and cross-national comparisons of services and policies for families with children and youth will be included.

Course Content

Substantive areas addressed in this course will be critically analyzed and addressed in terms of the four curricular themes: social change and social justice, multiculturalism and diversity, social and behavioral science research, and the continuum of care (promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation). Students should use this list to select research paper topics for their policy briefing and program design papers. The following topics will be covered in the course:
1. Indicators of the well-being of children and families in the United States.
2. The legal and service delivery frameworks that shape the current system of family and children’s services.
3. Early childhood interventions, including Head Start and child care.
4. Family Support Services, including home-visiting programs and family support centers.
5. Programs designed to encourage positive youth development.
6. Child protective services and family violence
7. Family preservation services for families who have come into contact with the child protective service system.
8. Foster family care and its alternatives, including kinship care, group homes, and residential treatment facilities.
9. Family reunification and independent living services.
10. Adoption services.
11. Delinquency services and other issues concerned with juvenile justice.

Course Objectives

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

1. Describe and critique services and policies affecting children and youth from historical and cross-cultural perspectives.
2. Assess services to children and youth in regard to their scope (the extent to which they provide necessary and appropriate services to populations in need) and their effectiveness.
3. Identify and describe alternative strategies for delivery of services to children and youth including those found in other countries.
4. Recognize and articulate concerns related to the differential impact of these services on ethnic minorities and other cultural groups.
5. Understand the relevance of advocacy for clients in the children and youth services delivery system and knowledgeably, ethically, and professionally advocate for children and youth at the policy and/or direct service level.
6. 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 discussed 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 (e.g., the Indian Child Welfare Act, and international and transracial adoption).
• **Social Justice and Social Change** will be addressed by considering the differential impact of policies and programs on the poor and minorities.

• **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation** will be addressed by examining the continuum of care present in the programs and services provided to children, youth, and families. Thus, neighborhood based or community-based programs will be contrasted with approaches that target families at risk or services recommended for families once they are referred to protective services, services that are court-ordered, or other services that are available only once the state has intervened into the families’ life.

• **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 comparative legal and administrative policies and services and their impacts on families. Finally, we program evaluations that can inform child and family welfare policies and service delivery are discussed.

**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.

**Required Texts**


A coursepack of required readings, reprinted through Dollar Bill’s Copying, 611 Church Street.
**Recommended Readings**

Several free government reports are recommended and each student can order their own copies or download them from the web:


**To order this free publication, call 1-800-638-8736 or e-mail askncjrs@ncjrs.org**


**To order these free publications call (202) 512-6061 or e-mail info@www.gao.gov. They may also be downloaded from the GAO website at www.gao.gov.**

Further, 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), and are therefore not included in the coursepack.

**Course Structure**

The course will follow a lecture/discussion format. Class will start on time, end on time, and enjoy a 15 minute recess in the middle. Students are required to: 1) come to class on time; 2) read required readings before each class session; and 3) read a newspaper/periodical/internet source every day. Depending on the content of the news, each class session will commence with a 10-15 minute
discussion of a current policy issue addressed in a newspaper, and students are required to bring articles to class which are relevant and interesting.

**Course Requirements**

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 10 pages of narrative, and may include additional pages for charts or tables the student may wish to use in illustrating points made in the narrative. The briefing should make ample use of internet and outside reading sources and reference these properly in footnotes/bibliography. This paper will be due 2/21/01.

**Program Analysis Paper** This assignment is an analysis of a program area of the students choosing derived from topic area from the Course Content section listed above. While a detailed assignment will be provided to the student prior to winter break, the program analysis will, in general: 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 12 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. This paper will be due the last day of class.

For helpful hints on writing and conducting research for papers, please refer to the section “Writing term papers and research papers at the University of Michigan” in the Student Guide to the Master’s in

Students are encouraged to make use of the LSA writing workshop, which provides assistance in writing specific assignments. To take advantage of this free program call (734) 764-0429. The writing workshop is available at 1139 Angell Hall, Room 1003. Student papers will be judged on clarity of writing, clear organization of ideas (headings and subheadings help), ability to incorporate class readings and lectures in the assignment, demonstration of additional research, brevity, and basic grammar.

All written assignments submitted by students should be double spaced in no less than 12-point font. Please use page numbers and proofread your papers. Margins for written assignments should be no less than 1 inch all around. Students are strongly encouraged to make and keep a copy of their written assignments as either the instructor or the student may occasionally lose these items.

In addition to these two major writing assignments, there are three additional assignments for the class:

**Newspaper Clippings:** Each week, the student is required to bring at least one newspaper/periodical/internet 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 on the top of the article prior to giving it to the instructor.

At least twice during the semester, students should prepare a summary of the article and its relevance to family and children’s policy and services in written form (no more than one page) and attach it to the article when it is submitted.

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 three pages) 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 supports their arguments using facts from sources cited (APA style).

**Grading Criteria and Policy**

All written assignments must be typed, double spaced (except for the advocacy letter), and illustrate an absence of typographic, spelling, and grammatical errors. Submission of late papers will be penalized.
While written assignments will be graded for content, students should be aware that grammar, clarity, organization of materials, and writing style will also be considered in determining the grade on each written assignment.

The student's final grade in this course will be based on the following formula:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislative Brief</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper Article Summaries</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter to the Editor</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Analysis Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following grading standards will be used in this course.

> The grade of A+ is rarely used, and is given only to work that exceeds all expected standards of excellence.

> Grades of A or A- are reserved for student work that not only demonstrates mastery of content, but also shows the student has undertaken a complex task, has applied critical thinking skills to the assignment, and/or has demonstrated creativity in her or his approach to the assignment. The difference between these two grades will be determined by the degree to which these skills have been demonstrated.

> A grade of B+ is given to work that is judged to be very good. This grade denotes that a student has demonstrated a more than competent understanding of the material being tested in the assignment.

> A grade of B is given to student work that meets the basic requirements of the assignment. It denotes that the student has done adequate work on the assignment and meets basic course expectations.

> A grade of B- denotes that a student's performance was less than adequate on an assignment, reflecting only moderate grasp of content and/or expectations.

> A grade of C (C+, C, C-) reflects that the student has achieved a minimal grasp of the assignments. It may mean that there has been poor organization of ideas and/or several significant areas within an assignment requiring improvement.

> Grades between D and F denote a failure to meet minimum standards, reflecting serious deficiencies in all aspects of a student's performance on the assignment.
Attendance and Participation:

Students are expected to attend all sessions of all classes, participate in class discussions, and submit work promptly. Failure to meet these expectations may result in reduction in grades. Students with more than two unexcused absences may risk failure. Thus, attendance at classes is required unless legitimate and special reasons exist for absences or tardiness. Any such absences or tardiness should be discussed directly with the course instructor.

Weekly Outline

Session 1  Introductions, Course Overview, and the Idea of Family Policy
1/10/2001

REQUIRED READINGS:

Coursepack


Session 2  Policies for Families and Child Well-being: An Analytic Overview and Indicators
1/17/2001

REQUIRED READINGS:

Pecora, et al., Chapter 4

Handouts: Indicators of Family and Child Well-Being

Coursepack:


**Session 3  Frameworks for Service Delivery**
**1/24/2001**

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

Pecora, et al., Chapters 1 and 3.

**Coursepack:**


**RECOMMENDED READINGS:** (on line)


**Session 4  Legal Frameworks for Services and Policies for Children and Youth**
1/31/2001

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

Pecora, et al., Chapter 2

**Coursepack:**


**Session 5  Early Childhood Intervention**
2/7/2001

**REQUIRED READINGS:**


Kluger, et al., Chapters 28-32.

**RECOMMENDED READINGS:** (on line)


Session 6 Family Support Services
2/14/2001

REQUIRED READINGS:

Pecora, et al., Chapter 8
Kluger et al., Chapters 1, 4, 5.


Coursepack:


Session 7 Youth Development
2/21/2001
REQUIRED READINGS:

Kluger, et al, Chapters 33, 34.


Coursepack:


2/28/2001 Winter/Spring Break

Session 8 Family Violence and Child Protection

3/7/2001

REQUIRED READINGS:

Pecora, et al., Chapters 5, 6, 7.

Kluger, et al., Chapters 6-12


Handout:

State of Michigan Child Protection Law

Coursepack:


Session 9  Family Preservation  
3/14/2001

REQUIRED READINGS:

Pecora, et al., Chapter 9.

Kluger, et al., Chapters 2 and 3


Coursepack:


Session 10  Out of Home Care  
3/21/2001

REQUIRED READINGS:

Pecora, et al., Chapter 10,12

Kluger, et al., Chapters 13-18.

Coursepack:


### Session 11  Leaving Foster Care: Family Reunification and Independent Living 3/28/2001

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

Pecora, et al., Chapter 11

Kluger, et al., Chapters 19-21

**Handout:**

Materials on Chafee Independent Living Act and HUD supplement for housing for emancipating youth.

**Coursepack:**


**RECOMMENDED READING:**

Session 12  Leaving Foster Care -- Adoption
4/4/2001

REQUIRED READINGS:

Pecora, et al., Chapter 12

Kluger, et al., Chapters 22-27.

Coursepack:


Session 13  Juvenile Justice
4/11/2001

REQUIRED READINGS:

Kluger, et al., Chapters 35 and 36.

Coursepack:


**RECOMMENDED READINGS:**