1. Course Description:

This methods course is intended to develop practice skills in child welfare, with special attention to child maltreatment. This course will prepare students to practice in the child welfare field by teaching them about the various contexts in which child welfare practice takes place and the skills and modalities that are used with children, youth, and families who are the focus of child welfare intervention. Ethical issues for social workers, in particular, the sometimes conflicting needs of children and families and legal system impact on child welfare practice, will be addressed, as the various methods are taught. The first term will focus on assessment and the second on treatment.

2. Course Content:

This course will cover the following areas: 1) personal, professional, and societal responses to children at risk, 2) client issues and responses to child welfare intervention, 3) theories that explain child maltreatment, 4) assessment of children and adults with child welfare issues, 5) interventions employed in the child welfare system, and 6) treatment strategies used with traumatized children. This course will draw upon practice in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe.

In the realm of personal, professional, and societal responses, students will be sensitized to their personal reaction to child maltreatment. They will be apprised of professional expectations, such as mandatory reporting of child maltreatment, and students will be taught about the general structure of service delivery to child welfare clients, which constitutes the context within which they will provide services to clients.

Client issues will include several concerns. First, students will become cognizant of different impacts and implications, depending upon who is defined as the client (e.g., the child, the parent(s), the family, or the child protection system). Second, students will learn to appreciate the impact of the involuntary nature of many social worker-client relationships in the child welfare system. How services are perceived by clients and how involuntariness affects choices in interventions will be examined. Third, students will be
made aware of how differences between themselves and clients of child welfare services affect service delivery. These differences will include race, developmental status, economic status, education, gender, and physical well-being.

The knowledge students will acquire about assessment will include evaluating children, adults, and families who are involved in the child welfare system. Students will learn how to evaluate overall functioning, conduct developmental assessments, and make a determination about the likelihood of child maltreatment and other endangering behaviors. They will learn different models of assessment and the role of medical examinations and psychological testing in the evaluation process. They will also become acquainted with widely used assessment practices in child welfare, such as screening, risk assessment, and structured decision making.

Students will learn about different approaches, such as ego psychological, cognitive behavioral, trauma focused, and family systems theoretical frameworks and interventions. They will also learn about interventions, such as parenting instruction, parent aids, solution-focused therapy, intensive family preservation services, and wrap-around services as programmatic approaches with child welfare clients.

Students will learn how to evaluate direct practice, for example, by using single subject design and standardized measures, such as the Child Behavior Checklist, the Child Sexual Behavior Inventory, the Trauma Symptom Checklist, and the Child Dissociation Scale. They will also become acquainted with outcome criteria employed in the child welfare system, for example, re-abuse of a child, re-referral to child protective services, and permanency. Finally, they will be given tools to critically evaluate programs, such as wrap-around services and parenting instruction.

3. Course Objectives:

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

1. Understand the roles and responsibilities of social workers practicing in child welfare, including mandatory reporting of child maltreatment, multidisciplinary approaches to child maltreatment, assessment, case management, and therapeutic roles, as well as statutory requirements related to case management within the child welfare system.

2. Recognize the consequences of the involuntary nature of the client’s relationship with them as service providers, of the impact of economic, racial, ethnic, gender, and other differences on their relationships with clients, and of the effect of their personal experiences on their practice in child welfare.

3. Demonstrate beginning ability to conduct individual and family assessments related to child welfare, including determining the likelihood of child maltreatment, evaluating parent child attachment, evaluating overall functioning of clients, setting appropriate treatment goals, and making case management plans.

4. Demonstrate beginning mastery of intervention and treatment skills. Students will know how to intervene at a range of levels, such as individual, family,
environmental, and systemic. They will develop beginning mastery of appropriate treatment approaches, derived from different conceptual frameworks, for example ego psychological, cognitive behavioral, trauma focused, and family systems. In using these approaches, they will know how to take into account differences based on age, class, culture, ethnicity, race, religion, physical and mental ability, sexual orientation, national origin, and gender.

5. Demonstrate beginning ability to evaluate intervention and treatment and revise interventions based upon evaluations. They will also be able to critically evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of specific child welfare programs and interventions for particular client populations.

4. Course Design:

This course will make use of lectures, demonstrations, discussion, media such as videotaped interviews with clients and individuals impacted by child welfare intervention, small group exercises, and role plays. This course will span two terms meeting two hours a week. Students will demonstrate their knowledge acquisition by means of videotapes and short papers about their child welfare practice.

5. Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity** will be addressed by teaching students sensitivity, respect, and competence when working with clients where there are racial, cultural, ethnic, class, religious, gender, or nationality differences. Case examples will highlight how differences and being poor and involuntary affect the therapeutic relationship and the success of 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. In addition, the economically disadvantaged and racial minorities are differentially responded to by the child welfare system. Hence, students will learn that an appropriate role for social workers in the child welfare system is often that of advocate.

- **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation.** The full spectrum of interventions in child welfare will be taught in this course. Major emphasis will be placed on prevention of child maltreatment, through early intervention and through treating the effects of child maltreatment so that they do not repeat themselves in the next generation. Similarly, students will learn that philosophically, if not in reality, child welfare intervention aims to promote child well-being and to prevent child maltreatment.

- **Behavioral and Social Science Research** that relates to child welfare will be at the center of the material taught in this course. Empirically based practice will be taught, which necessarily implies reliance on social science knowledge.
6. Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:

Issues of values and ethics will be an inherent part of this course. Students will learn that the child welfare field requires stalwart social workers who will put issues of the child’s best interest first, even though the stance may at times be unpopular. In addition ethics as they relate to mandated reporting, client confidentiality, and decisions about who the client is (child, parent, family) will be addressed.
SYLLABUS

SW 730: CHILD WELFARE AND CHILD MALTREATMENT: ASSESSMENT & TREATMENT; FIRST TERM 2001

Instructor: Kathleen Coulborn Faller  
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by appointment at 2704 SSWB  
Meeting time and place: Wed., 2-4:30; 555 S. Forest

Child Welfare and Child Maltreatment: Assessment and Treatment is a methods course intended to develop practice skills in child welfare, with special attention to child maltreatment. The course prepares students to practice in the child welfare field by teaching them about the various contexts in which child welfare practice takes place and the skills and modalities that are used with children, youth, and families who are the focus of child welfare intervention. Ethical issues for social workers, in particular the sometimes conflicting needs of children and families and legal system impact on child welfare practice, are addressed, as the various methods are taught.

This seminar was developed as part of a specialized curriculum in child welfare. It is a requirement for FIA Part-time Child Welfare Specialist students, students whose field placements are at the Family Assessment Clinic, and is open to other students. The course is focused on direct practice skills for working in child welfare.

This seminar will meet for two and a half hours a week over two terms, Fall and Winter, for a total of three hours course credit. It will be graded Satisfactory, Marginal, Unsatisfactory. Students wishing to take only one term of the course can negotiate a special arrangement with the instructor.

The first term will provide an orientation to working in the field of child maltreatment and focus on case assessment procedures. The second term will address treatment techniques and case management issues and will be taught by Laura Sanders, M.S.W., A.C.S.W. Case discussions and illustrative case examples will be an integral part of the course.

COURSETOOLS WEBSITE

The Seminar will have a Coursetools website. However, there will still be a coursepack because some students may have difficulty accessing the website, the confidentiality of and some materials used in the course, and the fact that some of the articles employed in the course cannot be incorporated into the website.
The course syllabus, PowerPoint overheads, articles that can be included will be on the website.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. Students must attend class. Time spent attending this class is greater by one third than in other courses for the number of credit hours. However, there is a compensatory decrease in reading and written work. This means attendance is crucial to understanding the content of the course. Students should make class attendance a priority. When class must be missed, the student must have a valid excuse. Three unexcused absences will automatically result in a grade of marginal.

2. Do the reading before class and be prepared to discuss it. This will not be a great burden because there will not be extensive reading. Except for a limited number of handouts, material is available in a course pak. The course pak is at Kolossas Publishing Company.

3. Participate in class discussions and exercises.

4. During the first term, there will be no written assignment. During the second term, there will be a project that involves doing a videotape of an intervention with a client. *You should let your field placements know that this will be one of your class assignments when you interview for your placement.* If you take this class, it is important that you have a placement that will allow you to videotape. Those students in unusual situations in which they have no clients can negotiate with the instructor an alternative assignment.

**Sept. 5**  
**Session 1**  
**Course requirements**  
**Counter-transference issues; exercise on counter-transference**  
**A child-centered approach**

**Video:** Scared Silent narrated by Oprah Winfrey  
part 1

**Reading:** Faller, *Child sexual abuse: Intervention and treatment issues*, chapter 1 (students not expected to have read this before the first session).

**Sept. 12**  
**Session 2**  
**Mandated agencies and child maltreatment**  
Child maltreatment reporting statute  
Role of children’s services  
Role of law enforcement  
Role of the courts  
Role of treatment agencies

**Reading:** Bases for intervention in response to child abuse and neglect  
Investigation of child sexual abuse  
Juvenile Court flowchart
Video: Child Protective Services

Sept. 19  
Session 3  
Feedback from counter-transference exercise  
Ethnicity and assessment of child maltreatment

Video: Scared Silent narrated by Oprah Winfrey  
part 2

Case example: Robert

Reading: Faller, Issues in cultural competency and sensitivity  
Fontes, L. Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 10.  
Dunkerly & Dalenberg, Secret-Keeping Behaviors  
Terao, Borrego, & Urquiza, A reporting and response model for  
culture and child maltreatment

Sept. 26  
Session 4  
Medical identification of child abuse—Elaine Pomeranz, M.D.

Reading: Smith et al., Understanding the Medical Diagnosis of Child  
Maltreatment

Oct. 3  
Session 5  
Models for assessment  
Physical abuse  
Sexual abuse  
Neglect  
Emotional maltreatment

Case example: Sherry

Reading: Faller, Indicators of child abuse  
Faller, Indicators of child sexual abuse  
Faller, Models of assessment (child maltreatment).  
Faller, Assessment Processes for Child Maltreatment  
APSAC Guidelines Psychosocial Evaluation of Suspected Sexual  
Abuse in Children:  
APSAC Guidelines on Investigative Interviewing in Cases of  
Alleged Child Abuse

Oct. 10  
Session 6  
Gathering data from children  
Abuse focused questioning  
Media for interviewing children  
Anatomical dolls
Anatomical drawings
Free drawings
Gingerbread drawings

Case example: Stephanie

Reading: Michigan Forensic Interview Protocol—to be handed out
Faller, Focused Questions for Interviewing Children about Maltreatment and Traumatic Experiences
Faller, Child Interviewing When Sexual Abuse is Suspected

Oct. 17
Session 7
Gathering data from children, Laura Sanders
Assessing and interviewing young children.

Reading
Lyon, Speaking with children: Advice from investigative interviewers
Faller, Child assessment: Overall functioning
Faller, Important developmental milestones
Denver Developmental Screening Test

Oct. 24
Session 8
Interview exercise
Laura Sanders to assist
Interview exercise--select students interview real children

Reading: Orbach, Lamb, Sternberg, Esplin, & Horowitz, 1999
Form for evaluating child forensic interviews
Orbach & Lamb, 2001

Oct. 31
Session 9
Gathering data from children’s caretakers
  Developmental history
  Medical history
  Mental health history
  Peer relationships
  School performance
  Abuse specific information

Illustrative case example
Role play of an interview

Faller, Interview data gathered from the mother
CSBI, CBCL, ABC, Dartmouth Inventories, Trauma Symptom Checklist for Young Children
Nov. 7  
**Session 10**  
**Interviewing maltreating parents**  
Assessing overall functioning  
Assessing for problem areas of functioning  

**Case example:** Murray  

**Reading:** *Child sexual abuse: An interdisciplinary manual*, chapter 7.  
Faller, Interview data gathered from the offender  
Family Assessment Clinic, Guidelines for taking a sexual history.  
Faller, Screening for Child Maltreatment: Parent/Adult Interviews

Nov. 14  
**Session 11**  
**Decision-making**  
Was the child abused?  
Risk & safety assessment  

**Case example:** A case  

**Reading:** Faller, Decision-making in child sexual abuse  
Faller & Corwin, Children’s interview statements and behaviors: ...  
Michigan FIA, Safety Assessment & Structured Decision-making

Nov. 21  
**Session 12—no class**

Nov 28  
**Session 13**  
**Family Assessment**  
Parent-child interaction  
Family functioning  

**Case example:** H case  

**Reading:** Faller, Parent-child interaction: Assessment and treatment.  
Assessing for substance abuse

Dec. 5  
**Session 14**  
**Assessment of adolescents**  
Physical abuse  
Neglect  
Sexual abuse  
Behavior problems  

**Case example:** Nicole  

**Reading:** Protocol for diagnosing sexual abuse in adolescence
Handouts

Dec. 12  Session 15—Assessing for substance abuse, mental illness, and domestic violence in parents

Reading: Substance use/abuse assessment guidelines for psychosocial interviews of suspected child abuse or neglect.

Exam week: Celebration of the end of the term at Prof. Faller's. Dec. 13 at 7:00; 1613 S. University—across from Angel School.