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 essay format, one at mid-term and one at the final session. The examinations will integrate both class materials and readings. Students are expected to attend all classes and excessive absences will result in the lowering of the students grade.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

Direct Practice/Research Literature Review Paper (November 15, 2002) 50%
Small Group Assignment (December, 6 and December 13th, 2002) 45%
Attendance and in-class participation in discussions and grand rounds topics 5%

**Direct Practice/Research Literature Review Paper: Specialized Child/Youth Focus**

(Due: November 15, 2002)

Select a topic that focuses on a particular population of children/youth

Conduct an extensive review of the direct practice/research literature of this specialized population using primarily peer-reviewed journal articles and selected documents or books.

For the paper, integrate the findings from your review under the following themes:
• Understanding the context and challenges of the population you’ve selected. Special emphasis on multicultural, diversity and social justice issues should be in this section. (25%)
• Present current prevention and intervention practices/research with this population, addressing strengths and limitations of the practice/research literature, (40%)
• Discuss policy/advocacy issues with this population, with a special emphasis on social change efforts. (20%)
• Discuss directions for future practice development and research (15%)

This paper should be approximately 10 pages in length and you should use APA format.

**Small Group Assignment** (Due: December 6 and December 13, 2002)

You will work with three or four other class members on one of two selected areas
• Develop a training program/intervention for working with a special child/youth population. (For example, developing an intervention group for ADHD children in a school setting, a safe sex program for incarcerated youth, or developing a mentoring program for youth at high risk for school drop-out).
• Develop a community/neighborhood change effort to address a particular need for children/youth (For example, developing a community group focusing on youth substance abuse or developing community sponsored after school activities).

You will have 30-45 minutes to present your work to the class. During this in-class presentation your group needs to identifying and describe the population you are trying to serve, identifying specific intervention/change goals, discuss the components of your intervention and how this would implemented, and potential strengths and limitations in meeting the needs of your population/community.

Each group will submit a 3-5 page summary of the task work of the group.

**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 or 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**


**Additional Readings**

Additional readings will be on reserve in the SSW Library, distributed in class or obtained from the original citation.

**Topics and Required Reading Assignments**

A. Children, Youth and Families, effective interventions and prevention

1. Burns, B.J. (2002). Reasons for hope for children and families: A perspective and overview. In B. J. Burns, & K. Hoagwood (Eds.) *Community Treatment For*


B. Children, Youth and Schools


C. Juvenile Justice and Substance Abuse


D. Community-Based Services


E. Practice and Policy Issues with Children and Youth


F. Child Welfare System


G. Homelessness and Poverty and the Effects on Children
