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).

- Indicators of the well-being of children and families in the United States.
- The legal and service delivery frameworks that shape the current system of family and children’s services, including the Indian Child Welfare Act and other statutes and
policies relevant to Indian self-determination, and the recently passed Adoption and Safe Families Act.

- Early childhood interventions, including Head Start and child care.
- Family Support Services including home-visiting programs and family support centers.
- Programs designed to encourage positive youth development.
- Services and policies affecting children and youth with special needs (e.g. children with disabilities, gay and lesbian youth) and children in minority and/or non-traditional families.
- Child Protective Services.
- The service response to violence against women and other forms of domestic violence.
- Family preservation, family reunification, and wraparound services for families who have come into contact with the child protective service system.
- Foster family care and its alternatives, including kinship care, group homes, residential treatment facilities, institutional care, and training schools.
- Delinquency services and other issues concerned with juvenile justice.
- Adoption services, including infant adoption, special needs adoption, trans-racial adoption, open adoption, and international adoption.

**Course Objectives**

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

- Describe and critique services and policies affecting children and youth from historical and cross-cultural perspectives.
- 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.
- Identify and describe alternative strategies for delivery of services to children and youth including those found in other countries.
- Recognize and articulate concerns related to the differential impact of these services on ethnic minorities and other cultural groups.
- 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.
- 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; identifying mechanisms in these policies and services that support privilege and oppression; and developing awareness of means to promote social justice goals within these systems.

- **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 life of families.

- **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, 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.

**Textbooks and News Media Requirements**

All required readings are to be completed prior to the class session for which they are assigned. Required readings will be from textbooks, coursepack, and distributed by the instructor. The reading assignments are outlined in this syllabus. The required materials for this course are:


• COURSEPACK. Available at Exell Test Preparation, 1117 South University.

• Supplementary required materials provided by the instructor as handouts

Required texts may be purchased at Ulrich’s, Michigan Book and Supply and Michigan Union Bookstore. Supplemental materials will be distributed by the instructor the week prior to its discussion.

**Required Media**

- The *New York Times* (or Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, etc.) The NYT is available online at <http://www.nytimes.com>

**Recommended Readings**

- Several free government reports and on line journals are also recommended.
  - *Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent and Chronic Juvenile Offenders*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U. S. Department of Justice. NCJ 153681. **To order this free publication, call 1-800-638-8736 or e-mail: askncjrs@ncjrs.org**
  - *Child Welfare: Early Experiences Implementing a Managed Care Approach (October 1998)*. The publication number is: HEHS-99-8. Washington, DC: United States General Accounting Office. **To order this free publication, call 202/ 512-6061 or e-mail: <info@www.gao.gov>**
  - *Social Services Privatization: Expansion Poses Challenges in Ensuring Accountability for Program Results (October, 1997)*. The publication number is: HEHS-98-6. Washington, DC: United States General Accounting Office. **To order this free publication, call 202/ 512-6061 or e-mail: <info@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>
  - At the end of the Syllabus is a comprehensive reference list of books relevant to the course.
Evaluating Assignments

1. **Intergenerational “Family” Literature or Lyric Assignment (15%).** This assignment will require you to pick a cultural artifact (children’s book, music video, popular music, etc) dealing with “family” or “family values” and to analyze intergenerational attitudes on the topic. See separate handout for the assignment rules.

2. **“Topical” Issue Paper (40%).** 20-25 page paper. This will be a thorough, well researched, well-written paper on a topical issue. It will include a discussion on social problem construction, exploration of the social science literature and an analysis of policy or practice implications for social workers. See separate handout for the assignment rules.

3. **Final Exam (45%).** The final will be a comprehensive take-home exam consisting of short answer and essay questions. It will use current media articles, political cartoons and the like as a springboard for discussing the substantive topics covered this semester.

Evaluation Criteria

You will be evaluated on:

- The quality of analysis and depth of understanding of concepts, ideas, and information presented. You must support opinions and conclusions with facts, figures, observations or other empirical evidence.

- The clarity of writing and organization of the paper. Students who are in control of the ideas and information tend to present them clearly. For this reason writing counts because it is intrinsically linked with content. Therefore, I suggest having classmates and friends edit your work before submission. Editing is not just proof reading. It includes a serious review of the content and organization of the paper.

- The appropriate use of references and resources and the variety of resources referenced. Student papers that rely heavily on a few resources tend to appear shallow and thin compared to those of classmates who have relied on a variety of references. Beware of “the Web.” Know your sources.

- Editing, proof reading, grammar and overall presentation. Do not use slang or other informal language.
Grading Standards: The criteria for each grade are as follows:

A or A-
Mastery of subject content, demonstration of critical analysis, creativity and/or complexity in completion of assignment. The difference between A and A- is based on the degree to which these skills is demonstrated.

B+
Mastery of subject content beyond expected competency, but has not demonstrated additional critical analysis, creativity or complexity in the completion of the assignment.

B
Mastery of subject content at level of expected competency – meets course expectations

B-
Less than adequate competency, but demonstrates student learning and potential for mastery of subject content.

C or C-
Demonstrates a minimal understanding of subject content. Significant areas needing improvement to meet course requirements.

F
Student has failed to demonstrate minimal understanding of subject content.

Four Notes on Grading:

1. Class attendance and class participation are considered essential for this course. Therefore you are expected to attend, to be prepared, and to make reasonable contributions. It is your responsibility to get materials, handouts, or class notes from one of your classmates if you are unable to attend a class.

2. I grade the final exam and other individual papers anonymously. Please place your student ID number on each page of your submissions. Do NOT put your name on the papers. Only after I have read and graded all the papers, will I determine which paper belongs to whom. Please also include "Mon" or "Tue" depending on your class section.

3. It is best not to assume you will receive an “A” in this course. The instructor grades on a relative, not absolute, grading scale. In short, your work will be evaluated as it compares to that of your classmates and not on some allegedly objective external scale. Since virtually all of you were “A” students as undergraduates there will be a natural and necessary redistribution at the graduate level.

4. In general, I do accept challenges to grades. However, challenges must be in writing (not verbal); must be specific, and must be based on substantive arguments or mathematical errors not on nebulous reference to “unfairness.” The instructor reserves the right to re-read, and re-grade, the work in its entirety in the case of a challenge. The grade may be adjusted up or down.

Academic Misconduct: Please acquaint yourself with University of Michigan, School of Social Work, and NASW policies on scholarly integrity. All academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and misrepresentation, will be treated seriously. Note that using Web resources increases the risk of “accidental plagiarism.” Do not let that happen.
Communications with Instructor

I will be available after class each week. I am also willing to make appointments at other times. Feel free to consult with me on any questions you have. Please contact me by E-Mail (kstaller@umich.edu), or telephone: (763-5769) to schedule appointments.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Session 1 – Week of January 6, 2003

Introductions, Course Overview, and Child Well-Being


Session 2 – Week of January 13, 2003


Answer me this: what do photographs of missing children on milk cartoons, a 15-yr old son of Belize immigrants, AskMe.com, and the “generation gap” have in common? The social construction of age, childhood, family, victimization, race, gender, class, sexual orientation, knowledge, privilege, social institutions, and the definition of problems in public discourse.

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:

Family Policy, Child Wellbeing and Intergenerational Issues:  
An Analytic Overview and Indicators  
Frameworks for Service Delivery

What do we measure and how does it look? Disparities in well-being. Who does better? Who does worse? What should we do about it? Frameworks for service delivery: Permanency planning, Cultural competence and cultural family diversity, Family-centered services, Community-based services, Outcome-oriented services, Seamless and coordinated services. What do our service-delivery frameworks suggest about diversity and human difference? Are we working efficiently and from whose perspective?

Required Readings:

- Pecora, et. al., Chapters 1, 3-4.

Recommended Readings:


Video: A Brooklyn Family (Intergenerational family, cultural considerations, and service delivery systems). Making a difference.

Session 4 Week of January 27, 2003

Federal Legislative Frameworks for Services and Policies for Children and Youth


Required reading:

- Pecora, et. al. Chapter 2

**DUE: Assignment 1 - Literature/Lyric Social Problem**

**Video Presentation:** CBS 60 Minutes - “Adopt Me!’ (A word and reminder from the "other" side of policy and practice).

**Session 5 – Week of February 3, 2003**

**Early Intervention & Child Care**


**Required Readings:**

- Pecora, et. al. Chapter 4 pages 96 - 127.
- Kluger, et. al., Section V, pages 275 – 320. (Chapters 28-32?)
- Berrick, Needell, Barth, & Jonson-Reid, The *Tender Years*. New York: Oxford University Press. COURSEPACK.

**Video Presentation:** ABC Primetime: “Early Brain Development.”
Session 6 – Week of February 10, 2003

Family Support Services and Intergenerational Models

Historical roots of family support movement, philosophy, theoretical foundations, principles and values, common elements of family support practice, program development, family preservation and support, and other supportive services. Services for infant/toddlers; children, youth/adolescents, adults and families. How are services allocated? Is it fair? Is it just? How can we be more creative?

Required readings:

- Pecora, et. al. Chapter 8
- Kluger, et al., Section I, chapter 1, pages 1 – 10. (Chapters 1, 4, 5).
- Perschbacher, R. (1985). Making connections between the school system and the nursing home. Activities, Adaptation, & Aging. 6 (3). COURSEPACK

Session 7 – Week of February 17, 2003

Youth Development

Youth development programs, adolescent brain development and its implications, national service organizations, assets for healthy development, philosophical characteristics of successful programs, environmental characteristics of successful programs, opportunities offered by successful programs, challenges for youth development programs; diversity, gender and sexual orientation considerations.

Required readings:

- Kluger, et al., Chapters 33 and 34

**NOTE:** There is no class session on February 24 or 25 as the School will be on Spring Break

**Session 8 – Week of March 3, 2003**

**Family Violence and Child Protection**  
**Michigan’s Child Protection Law**  
**Family and Community Safety**

How has the child abuse problem grown as it become institutionalized? Maltreatment (physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, psychological maltreatment); referrals and reports, factors associated with child maltreatment, demographic distribution of maltreatment, length of stay, current protective service dilemmas, related family violence issues, community and neighborhood environments. What is safe? What are the social justice implications of this picture? Intra-family tort immunity: how far have we come?

**Required readings:**
- Michigan Child Protection Law- Past & Present. HANDOUT
- Pecora, et.al. Chapters 5, 6 & 7
- Kluger, et al., Section II-B, pp. 87-124

**DUE:** Assignment 2 Topical Paper.

**Session 9 – Week of March 10, 2003**

**Family Preservation**

Purpose of family preservation, legislative initiatives, philosophy guiding family preservation, practice principles, family preservation models, theoretical orientation guiding family preservation, Homebuilders and other intensive family preservation services, family-centered programs, wraparound services.

**Required readings:**
- Pecora, et. al. Chapter 9.
- Kluger et al., Section 1, Chapters 2 & 3, pages 11 – 32. (Chapters 2, 3)

**Video:** Understanding Family Preservation with Bill Moyers. A Family in Michigan. (Note: The link between substance abuse, child welfare, service delivery, intervention and criminal treatment).
Session 10 – Week of March 17, 2003

**Out of Home Care: Foster Care & Kinship Care (and the growing role of grandparents)**

Foster care defined, scope of problem, age, race and gender issues, financing child welfare services, core concepts, legal safeguards, service environment, services to biological parents, services to children, kinship care, foster parent recruitment, successful and unsuccessful foster care systems, after care services, termination of parental rights, independent living. Issues of cultural competence, race, ethnicity, and religion in foster care. Skip generation caretakers: where have the parents gone? Extra burdens or joys for older caretakers?

**Required readings:**
- Pecora, et. al., Chapters 10-12
- Kluger et al., Section III (Chapters 13-18).

Session 11 – Week of March 24, 2003

**Adoption and Surrogacy**

Parents in search of children, children in search of parents. Young children, older children, special needs children, barriers to adoption, foster parent adoption, post-placement services. Adoption controversies: Transracial adoptions, Multi-ethnic placement Act, International adoptions and their cultural implications; Gay and lesbian adoptions of non-biological children. Surrogacy and the "right" to have children?

**Required readings:**
- Pecora, et. al. Chapter 12.
- Kluger et al., Section IV, pages 215 – 274 (Chapters 22-27)

Session 12 – Week of March 31, 2003

Juvenile Justice &
Developing Alternative Community-based Services for Youth


Required readings:

- Kluger et al., Chapters 35 & 36.

Session 13 – Week of April 7, 2003

Runaway, Homeless, Street-based and “Missing” adolescents
“Emancipation” and Independent Living

Surviving on their own. Independence exerted early. Rights, responsibilities and limitations on minors: curfews, contracts, sexual activity, education, marriage, parenthood. When are you old enough? Drugs, mental health issues, sexual orientation, Prostitution or survival sex? Shelter services, independent living, emancipation

Required readings:


Recommended reading:


Session 14 – Week of April 14, 2003

Wrapping up and Winding down
Final Exam Distribution

Final Exam due April 21st 10:00 AM.