Children and Youth Services and Social Policies

SW 633-005
Date and Time: Mondays, 11:10 – 2:00
Classroom: 3001 SEB
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Winter Semester, 2004
Instructor: Trina Williams
Office: 3726 SSWB
Hours: 2:30-4:30 M or by appointment

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 service and policy areas addressed in this course are listed below. These topics will be critically analyzed 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 can use this list to select research paper topics:

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, 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.
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. 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.


8. The service response to violence against women and other forms of domestic violence.

9. Family preservation, family reunification, and wraparound services for families who have come into contact with the child protective service system.

10. Foster family care and its alternatives, including kinship care, group homes, residential treatment facilities, institutional care, and training schools.

11. Delinquency services and other issues concerned with juvenile justice.

12. 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:

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 covered 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 or ideally needed 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.
Class Requirements

1. Class Participation:

Student attendance is expected at every session of the class. However, if circumstances arise that require you to be absent, please provide me with an explanation by means of e-mail or telephone. Students are responsible for securing lecture notes, class exercises, and handouts when circumstances may require a student to be absent.

Students are responsible for assisting in the creation of a learning environment that promotes professional socialization, and helps broaden our mutual awareness of human differences and diversity. Students will be encouraged in this class to examine how the structure of services and policies for children, youth, and families could better reduce inequalities and promote social justice.

Your participation grade will be based upon class attendance (including lack of tardiness), the quality of your participation in classroom discussion, and the completion of six reactions either in writing or on-line. The reactions can be comments on other students’ group presentations or a response to a news story that has some relation to child, youth and/or family policy or services.

2. Required Readings:

All required readings are to be completed prior to the class session for which they are assigned. Required readings will be found in the textbooks, course website, and handouts. The reading assignments are outlined in this syllabus. The textbooks for this course, available at Ulrich's, Michigan Book and Supply, and Michigan Union Bookstore (and on reserve in Social Work Library), are:


The class website can be found by logging on to https://ctng.ummu.umich.edu

In addition to accessing several required articles and book chapters on-line here, you will need to check the CourseTools website periodically for important links and messages.

Readings will be available via the website, but if you prefer to buy them all at once, a coursepack is available from: Excel Test Preparation, 1117 South University
(A copy of the course pack will also be on Reserve at the SW Library).

3. Any supplementary required materials will be provided by the instructor as handouts
4. Recommended Readings, listed here for your further information on children and youth services and social policies:

- At the end of the Syllabus is a comprehensive but selected reference list of Social Work journals and books that may be useful for research for your written assignments and in-class group presentation.

- Several free government reports and online journals
  - 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)
  - Information about a new policy initiative that creates asset accounts for children [http://seed.cfed.org/about/initiative.html](http://seed.cfed.org/about/initiative.html)

5. Written Assignments:

All written assignments are to be presented with a title page on which you are to include the title of the paper, the course and section number, the date on which it is being submitted, and your name and school mailbox number. All papers are to be typewritten (or word processed) using 12 point font. All papers are to be in narrative format and are to be double-spaced. Please remember to number your pages. All papers are to use proper grammar and bibliographic style. The suggested style to be followed is APA, in: The Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (4th Edition). A brief guide can be found online at: [http://www.lib.umich.edu/ugl/research/citationguide/APA5thed.pdf](http://www.lib.umich.edu/ugl/research/citationguide/APA5thed.pdf)

**Research Paper, Part 1:**

Students are to select a local program that has great interest for you, but not something that is directly part of your field placement. You are to conduct a local visit and learn about how the program operates, the model on which it is based, the target population, staffing and funding patterns, etc. You should write up a service program description of 5-10 pages,
exclusive of the title page and bibliography, based on the site visit, information obtained from interviews with staff and library research on the program model on which it is based. The program area to be selected for study requires prior approval from the instructor. This paper should focus on a specific child welfare, family service, prevention program or juvenile justice issue that is related to the course content. Use the course content (on pp. 1-2 in this syllabus) as a guide for selecting a topic. Part 1 of the Research Paper is to be submitted no later than the fourth session of the class, which is February 9, 2002. However, it may be submitted earlier than the fourth session. We can discuss your topic over email or via meeting with me before you begin the write-up.

Research Paper, Part 2:

The second half of this paper will consist of researching the policy and social work research context for this program model. What state and federal policies structure and fund this program and guide its objectives and its approach to working with families and children? How does the funding structure and policy framework provide both positive potential and problematic constraints on what the program can do? What does the research in this area evaluating such programs suggest for the ways such programs should be designed, organized and/or reformed? And, what recommendations do you have for improving the local program’s capacity for promoting the well being of disadvantaged children and youth? Students are to write this part of the paper in 7-10 pages, exclusive of the title page and bibliography (typed, double-spaced, 12-pt. font). Part 2 of The Research Paper is to be submitted on April 5 or April 12. In either part 1 or part 2, the research paper should focus on a particular population of color, gender, or special needs and should indicate how this group is affected by the problem area or service system in your chosen topic. The paper should attend to the challenges of how to promote more culturally competent and socially just policies and services in the case of this specific policy and service area.

Library research and the use of references beyond the textbooks and handouts are required. You are encouraged to use the Internet and to cite material from at least two different professional journals. The majority of your citations/bibliographic references are to be from books and journals.

6. Group Presentation:

Students will be required to choose a class session date on which to present on a recent special issue of a Social Work professional journal devoted to new research in the topic for that session, be it on foster care, adoption, early infant care, juvenile justice, etc. The group of 3-5 people will divide up the journal issue and review and critique the articles and prepare a presentation to the class, highlighting what you learned from the recent research in this area of services and policies. Each group member must present, and the total presentation can take from 20-30 minutes. Handouts can be prepared and the group should discuss the implications of the new findings in these articles for improving services to particularly disadvantaged population groups and/or promoting more socially just services and policies for children, youth, and their families in this topic area.
Group presentations will occur on selected sessions throughout the course. Sign ups and
group assignments will be organized by the second or third class session. See the syllabus
for those class sessions that are designated for group presentations. The instructor will help
in the selection of journal special issues or in the creation of a special issue where students
pull articles together from a variety of journals. Professional journals from which to draw the
articles may be found in the Social Work Library and on-line.

7. Comments on six group presentations/class sessions, due by last class day, April 19 at
the latest.

Each student is required to write up a one page report on six class sessions in which there is a
group presentation or a topic that is relevant to a news article. The one-pager should
highlight what you learned from the readings, class material, and group presentation or news
article. Discuss the ways in which the student group presentation or news article increased
your awareness of the policy and service challenges in this topic area, be it early childhood
programs, foster care, family support, child protection, juvenile justice, youth development,
etc. It is best to write these soon after each class while the readings and materials are fresh
on your mind, but you can turn them in up to the last day of class.

8. Final essay exam, due Monday April 26 at the latest.

Grading

1. Grading Criteria for Written Assignments:

   Session comments, the two-part research paper, analytic oral and written parts of the group
   presentation, and the final essay exam will be graded on the basis of:

   a) The quality of the analysis and depth of understanding of the concepts, ideas, and
      information presented. I will be looking for objective documentation in support
      of stated opinions or conclusions. This is the most important criteria, but I also
      consider:
   b) The clarity of expression and organization of the paper - is there a logical order to
      the presentation of your thoughts.
   c) The appropriate use of references and resources, and the variety of resources
      referenced.
   d) The use of proper grammar and the over-all professional presentation of the
      paper.

2. Grading Criteria for the Course:

   Each written assignment will be given a letter grade. The criteria I use 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 are 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.

**E**  Student has failed to demonstrate minimal understanding of subject content.

Please understand that grading is a subjective process. I use these criteria and read and evaluate your papers anonymously. If, after you read my feedback, you have further questions, please see me about them.

The student’s final grade for the course will be based upon the following:

a) Class Attendance, Participation, and six 1-page Session Comments 15%

b) Part 1 Research Paper 20%
c) Part 2 Research Paper 20%
d) Group Presentation 20%
e) Final essay exam 25%

**Communications with Instructor**

I will be available after class each week. I am also willing to make appointments at other times. It is important to meet with me on your paper topics and group presentation, to make sure I am aware of your topic selections, that you are on the “right track” with preparing these assignments, and to consult with me on any questions you have. Please contact me by E-Mail or telephone: trwilli@umich.edu; phone: 764-7411.

If you need help with writing, please contact the UM Sweetland Writing Center for workshops, tutoring, and online support. The SW Office of Student Services may also be helpful to you.

Any student who feels that he/she may need an accommodation for any sort of disability, please make an appointment with me.


For other information, such as on proper citations for papers see the SW Library online information page: [http://www.lib.umich.edu/socwork/researchpaper.html](http://www.lib.umich.edu/socwork/researchpaper.html)
Course Outline

Session 1 – January 12, 2004
Introductions, Course Overview, and Child Well-Being Indicators

Video: Orphan Train

Handouts:
• Course Syllabus & Class Assignments

NOTE: JANUARY 19, NO CLASS, ATTENDANCE REQUIRED AT MLK ACTIVITIES

Session 2 – January 26, 2004
Policies for Families: An Analytic Overview, Legal and Service Delivery Frameworks in Child Welfare; Components of a Social Just Children and Youth Services and Policies

Required Readings:
• Textbook (Pecora) chapters 1 - 3, pp. 1-127
Session 3 – February 2, 2004  
Early Intervention & Child Care

Video: ABC Primetime: “Early Brain Development.”
Group presentation

Required Readings:
- Textbook (CWLA) section V, pp. 275 – 320.

Session 4 – February 9, 2004  
The Economic Security of Families and its Impact on Children

Required readings:
- Textbook (Pecora) chapter 4, pp. 95 – 127.

Handout (for next week, Feb. 16):

Note: Part 1, Research Paper is due today, Feb. 9.
Session 5 – February 16, 2004  Family Support Services

Group presentation

Required readings:
- Textbook (Pecora) chapter 8, pp. 229 – 261.
- Textbook (CWLA) section I, chapter 1, pp. 1 – 10; Section IIA, pp. 33-86

NOTE: There is no class session on February 23 as the School will be on Spring Break.

Session 6 – March 11, 2004  Youth Development

Group presentation

Required readings:
- Textbook (CWLA) chapters 33 and 34, pp. 321 – 336.

Handouts (for next week, March 8):
- Michigan Child Protection Law
Session 7 – March 8, 2004  
Michigan’s Child Protection Law, Violence Against Children, and Social Policies

Group presentation

Required readings:
- Michigan Child Protection Law. HANDOUT
- Textbook (Pecora) chapters 5, 6 & 7, pp. 128-228.
- Textbook (CWLA) sections IIB, pp. 87 – 124.

Session 8 – March 15, 2004  
Family Preservation

Video: “Understanding Family Preservation” – with Bill Moyers.

Group presentation

Required readings:
- Textbook (Pecora) chapter 9, pp. 262-296.
- Textbook (CWLA) section I, chapters 2 & 3, pp. 11 – 32.

Session 9 – March 22, 2004  
Foster Care

Group presentation

Required readings:
- Textbook (CWLA) section III, chapters 14-17, pp. 139-176.
Session 10 – March 29, 2004

Kinship Care

Group presentation

Required readings:
- Textbook (CWLA) chapter 13, pp. 127-138

Handouts (for next week, April 5):

Session 11 – April 5, 2004

Adoption, Independent Living, Emancipation

Video: CBS 60 Minutes - “Adopt Me!’

Group presentation

Required readings:
- Textbook (Pecora) chapter 12, pp. 363-405.
Session 12 – April 12, 2004

Juvenile Justice & Developing Alternative Community-based Services for Youth

Group presentation

Required readings:

Session 13 – April 19, 2004

Residential/ Group Care, Last Class In-class review

Required readings:
- Textbook (CWLA) Chapter 18, pp. 177-186.

Handout of Final essay exam, due no later than April 26

Recommended Additional Resources

Selected Social Work Journals

Adoption Quarterly  Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal
Children and Schools  Children and Youth Services Review
Child Welfare  Crime and Delinquency
Family Preservation Journal  Families in Society
Future of Children  Journal of Children & Poverty
Social Service Review  Social Work Research
Selected Bibliography for Research Paper

Child Welfare – General:


Child Development and Child Care:


School Social Work:

Family Support:

Children in Historical Perspective:

Child Protective Services:
Family Preservation:

Kinship Care:

Foster Care:


Adoption:


**Youth Development:**


**Runaway, Homeless, and Abandoned Youth:**


Juvenile Justice:


