COURSE DESCRIPTION

This advanced level methods course in the Children and Youth in Families and Society 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 this course, students will be able to

1. Apply an ecological systems perspective to social work practice with children and youth,

2. Effectively communicate and establish collaborative relationships with children and youth, their families, and other significant members of their social environment,

3. Apply collaboration building and consultation skills to strengthen families and organize communities in response to the needs of children and youth,

4. Assess risks to the child’s and youth’s safety, health, security and well-being and identify the strengths and resources available in the child’s environment to address these concerns,

5. Plan and demonstrate micro and macro interventions based on identifiable goals and priorities in a culturally sensitive and competent manner, and

6. Incorporate social work values and ethical principles in planning and implementing interventions for children and youth.
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 and early identification of children at risk, and family and community based early intervention with children and youth in a variety of context. At the direct 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 emphasizes 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 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 of 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


Other readings may be required as the course progresses.

COURSE DESIGN AND EXPECTATIONS

Material in the course will be presented by a combination of lecture, discussion and other methods as appropriate. Class participation is critically important to the benefit of the class as a whole and to your grade.

Attendance policy: Students are expected to attend all classes, be on time and to participate actively. More than 2 unexcused absences may result in a grade reduction of .3. The student is responsible for obtaining information covered in any missed class. An effort should be made to notify the instructor in advance of class absence.

Written assignments: Papers are to be turned in on time; late papers may be downgraded. All papers should be typed, double-spaced, 1” margins, with page numbers. Only 10 or 12 point font is acceptable. Correct spelling and grammar is expected. If in doubt, refer to the dictionary or for format to the APA manual. Excessive writing errors can result in a grade reduction.

GRADING

Students will be expected to demonstrate their progress in basic comprehension and integration of the course material through class attendance and discussion as well as through the assigned papers and presentation. It is expected that each assignment will be completed in a thorough and professional manner.

Grades will be given as follows: A = 4.0; A- = 3.7; B+ = 3.3; B = 3.0 and so forth. Each assignment grade will be multiplied by the weight listed below and added together. A total of 3.9 or higher is necessary to receive an A in the course. Students may be downgraded .3 for more than 2 absences or failure to participate in class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>Small Group Presentation</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 2</td>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 3</td>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>50%</td>
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ASSIGNMENT SPECIFICS

#1. Small Group Presentation (Topics, group makeup and dates for presentation to be determined during the second class).
You will work with a group of three or four other class members on one of three selected areas:

- Develop a training program/intervention module for working with a special child/youth population. For example, a mentoring program for youth at a high risk for school dropout, an intervention group of emotionally impaired youth in a school setting, a restorative program for youth offenders.
- Develop a community/neighborhood change initiative to address a particular need for children/ youth. For example, community groups focusing on latch key kids, or a neighborhood new mom’s group and babysitting co-op.
- Develop a policy addressing a particular child/ youth population and/or their families in relation to a specific environmental need.

You will have 45 minutes for your class presentation. The presentation should
- Identify and describe the population you are serving
- Identify goals for the program/policy
- Identify specific interventions and rationales for their usage
- Discuss how the implementation of these interventions would be accomplished and financed
- Propose outcomes and outcome measurement techniques.

#2. Literature Review  (Due Sept. 30th)

Read and critique a book of your choice on a topic related to course content. Your critique should be 4-6 pages in length and include the following information:

- Your reason for choosing this book
- A brief summary of the book, no longer than a paragraph
- To what readership the book is directed
- Discuss the book’s strengths: what did you like about the book as a social worker, strengths for its readership
- Discuss the book’s weaknesses: your hesitations about recommending the book to a clients, clinician or other social worker, etc.
- General discussion of the value of the book from a social work perspective: include references to the four curricular themes noted above in this syllabus.
- Relationship to social work ethics and values
- Practice/policy implications.

Failure to address all of these items will result in a grade reduction. Please do not use extensive quotations from the book, a required text for another course, or a book designed for children. Book selections must be approved prior to completing the assignment.
#3. Practice/Research Paper (Due Dec. 9th)

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

Conduct an extensive practice/research literature review of this particular population using primarily peer reviewed journal articles and selected documents or books. To be current, these sources should have been published in the past 10 years.

Integrate the findings from your review under the following themes:

- Understanding the context and challenges for the special population
- How do multicultural, diversity and social justice issues relate to the population?
- Current prevention and intervention practices with this special population. Give a critical evaluation of these practices in view of your own knowledge and experience.
- What prevention and intervention strategies would you recommend?
- What are policy and advocacy issues as they relate to potential social change efforts?
## CLASS SCHEDULE

1. **Sept. 9**  
   Introduction of Course

2. **Sept. 16**  
   Children/ Youth and their Families

3. **Sept. 23**  
   Social Work in School Settings  
   Text: Ch. 9. 14, 19-20

4. **Sept. 30**  
   Mental Health Settings  
   Text: Ch. 10-13, 23  
   Assignment #2 Due

5. **Oct. 7**  
   No Class

6. **Oct. 14**  
   Children/Youth: Grief, Loss and Trauma

7. **Oct. 21**  
   Foster Care, Neglect and Abuse  
   Text: Ch. 6-8

8. **Oct. 28**  
   Juvenile Justice  
   Text: Ch. 21-22

9. **Nov. 4**  
   Medical Settings

10. **Nov. 11**  
    Adolescent Issues  
    Text: Ch. 5, 15-16

11. **Nov. 18**  
    Special Issues: GLBT, Homeless, Parenthood  
    Text: Ch. 17, 18

   **Nov. 25**  
   Thanksgiving Holiday

12. **Dec. 2**  
    Assessment Tools

13. **Dec. 9**  
    Interventions  
    Assignment #3 Due