I. Catalogue Description
Social welfare issues from national and local perspectives, research, and foster care practice.

II. Course Overview
SW656 focuses on advanced social work practice issues and roles at all levels in regard to the unique multi-family, multi-system circumstances of out-of-home placement of children. It assesses family foster care and formal kinship care at national, state and local levels, reviewing trends, issues, policy, law, research and practitioner and consumer experiences to assist the student to develop ethical and effective approaches for professional social work. SW656 emphasizes social work values-based, respectful, effective, and empowering practice with, and on behalf of, the parties involved in these child welfare services. Its content on separation and loss, placing practices and visit design, multi-family contracting, significance of biological family ties, parent associations and community/agency interventions on behalf of families is applicable for other children’s services and situations. SW656 meets the Advanced Practice requirement of the Children, Youth & Families Concentration and is required for Title IV-E traineeship recipients in the Advanced Year.

III. Course Competencies & Practice Behaviors & Assignments
Your successful completion of this course means that you will have progressed toward achieving social work competencies in advanced direct practice by demonstrating the following behaviors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advanced Practice Competencies Addressed In Course</th>
<th>Practice Behaviors Addressed In Course</th>
<th>Assignment(S) Measuring Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly. (Competency 2.1.1)</td>
<td>1) Collaborating with and articulating the mission of social work to others, (e.g., interdisciplinary team members, volunteers, the broader community, news media, political leaders)</td>
<td>1) Stakeholder Evaluation; Critical Thinking Questions; Reaction Paper; Best Practice Paper; Class Presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply critical thinking to</td>
<td>1) Identifying and synthesizing multiple</td>
<td>1) Stakeholder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
inform and communicate professional judgments. (Competency 2.1.3) sources of knowledge to understand policy and practice issues related to the children, youth and families area. 2) Identifying and evaluating models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation that are appropriate to the children, youth and families area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research. (Competency 2.1.6)</th>
<th>1) Demonstrating ability to evaluate practice in children, youth and families 2) Critically evaluating and utilizing theoretical and empirical research relevant to the problems and/or population addressed in children, youth and families</th>
<th>1) Stakeholder Evaluation; Critical Thinking Questions; Reaction Paper; Best Practice Paper; Class Presentation 2) Stakeholder Evaluation; Critical Thinking Questions; Reaction Paper; Best Practice Paper 2) Stakeholder Evaluation; Critical Thinking Questions; Reaction Paper; Best Practice Paper; Class Presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. (Competency 2.1.10b)</td>
<td>1) Assessing individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to determine a range of potentially effective and appropriate interventions to improve practice outcome related to the children, youth and families area.</td>
<td>1) Stakeholder Evaluation; Critical Thinking Questions; Reaction Paper; Best Practice Paper; Class Presentation</td>
</tr>
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</table>

IV. Course Content

**Week 1: January 24** (Instructor at the Madison Site)

- *Introduction to SW656 and Course Expectations*
- *History of Child Welfare and Out of Home Care in the United States*
- *Introduction to Foster Care and Kinship Care (purpose, structure, and processes)*
- *Social Work Role in Foster Care and Kinship Care*

**Required Readings:**

- Reimer, Daniela. “Everything was strange and different’. Young adults’ recollections of the transition into foster care.” *Adoption & Fostering,* 34(2) 2010, 14-22
- Review the following federal child welfare legislation overviews from the Department of Health and Human Services:
* Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978
* Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994
* Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997
* Foster Care Independence Act of 1999
* Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendment of 2001
* Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006
* Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008

- Wisconsin Department of Children and Families-Chapter DCF 56 Foster Home Care for Children

**Week 2: January 31:** (Instructor at the Eau Claire Site)
- *State, National and International Perspectives on Foster Care and Kinship Care*
- *Separation, Loss, and Grief in Child Welfare Practice*
- *Foster Care/Kinship Licensing/Group Home and Residential Treatment*
- *Guest Speaker: Amanda Zuehlke, MSW, APSW; Family Works Programs, Inc.; Foster Care Licensing*

✓ Due: Impact and Barriers of Code on Stakeholders Evaluation

**Required Readings:**

**Supplemental Readings:**

**Week 3: February 7:** (Instructor at the Madison Site)
- *Foster Children and Youth*
- *Social Work Advocacy and Interventions in Foster Care and Kinship Care*
- *Guest Speaker: Kaylyn Haberland, MSW; Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin; Experiences in the Foster Care System*

✓ Due: Critical Thinking Questions
Required Readings:

Supplemental Readings:

Week 4: February 14: (Instructor at the Madison Site)
- What Constitutes Permanency?
- Independent Living Skills (ILS) - Trends & Issues
- Guest Speaker: Kelly Canter, MSW; Housing and Employment Coordinator, Office of Youth Services, Department of Children and Families

✓ Due: Critical Thinking Questions

Required Readings:

Supplemental Readings:

Week 5: February 21: (Instructor at the Eau Claire Site)
- Biological Parent and Family, Kinship Family
Required Readings:

Supplemental Readings:

Week 6: February 28: (Instructor at the Eau Claire Site)
- Foster Family
- Foster Parent Organizations
- Agency Services to, and Relationships with, Foster Families
- Guest Speaker: Mechele Pitt, MSSW, LCSW, LICSW, Chief Operating Officer; Anu Family Services, Inc.; Innovations in Foster Care

✓ Due: Reaction Paper Due
✓ Due: Critical Thinking Questions

Required Readings:

Supplemental Readings:

**Week 7: March 7:** (Instructor at the Madison Site)
- Agency Services to Children and Families - Ideal and actual worker roles
- Special Issues in Foster Care & Kin Care
- Practice Issues for Foster Care and Kinship Care
- Guest Speaker: Alice Egan, MSSW, APSW; University of Wisconsin-Madison; Attachment and Bonding

✓ Due: Critical Thinking Questions

**Required Readings:**

**Supplemental Readings:**

**Week 8: March 14:** (Instructor at the Madison Site)
- Special Issues in Adoption
- Practice Issues in Adoption
- Class Discussion on Best Practice Research Paper
- Course Wrap-Up & Evaluation

✓ Due: Best Practice Research Paper & Presentation and Self-Evaluation of Participation Form
Required Readings:

Supplemental Readings:

V. Texts and Reading Materials for the Course

VI. Evaluation of Competencies and Practice Behaviors: Assignments, Grading and Methods

Grading Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>What the point totals &amp; subsequent grade generally indicate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Outstanding work, surpasses expectations in all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88-93</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Surpasses expectations in many areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82-87</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Meets expectations in all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76-81</td>
<td>BC</td>
<td>Meets expectations in some areas; below in others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-75</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Below expectations in most areas; not acceptable graduate work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64-69</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Below expectations in all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;64</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Fails to meet minimal requirements in all areas, unacceptable work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grades are not assigned on a curve. There is no extra credit, nor additional credit given for trying hard. Trying hard is expected as part of any graduate program.

Participation is REQUIRED. Effective participation consists of having completed readings and other assignments, the ability to integrate social work concepts with experiences AND the ability to engage fully in problem solving and other exercises (presenting social work issues or other perspectives for discussion as well as responding to other students who present issues). It also includes arriving to class on time and remaining present for the duration of the class. You are required to be an alert and active participant in this class. This includes attentive non-verbal behavior and offering comments relevant to course dialogue. Participation can be challenging for some students. Please see the faculty member EARLY in the semester if you need any assistance in this or any other areas.
Assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points/Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact &amp; Barriers of Code on Stakeholders Evaluation</td>
<td>15 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking Discussion Questions</td>
<td>20 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another Place at the Table Reaction Paper</td>
<td>20 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Practice Research Paper</td>
<td>35 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 points</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Impact and Barriers of Code on Stakeholders Evaluation**

*Please note: A copy of *Administrative Code DCF 56 Foster Home Care for Children* can be found at [http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/dcf/035_059/56](http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/dcf/035_059/56)*

Administrative Codes (rules) are written by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families and must be submitted to the Wisconsin State Legislature for approval. Most often, there are statutory requirements that direct the Department to create administrative rules. Rules governing foster care may affect different stakeholders in different ways. Students are asked to choose a specific aspect of the code and consider critically how that portion of the code may affect various stakeholders. Examples of stakeholders include foster children, children’s families, kinship providers, foster families, case managers, licensing specialists, private foster care agencies, county directors, the State of WI, and others.

Select two populations (stakeholders) to consider. You may not consider a population where you are currently a member or were previously a member. For example, if you were previously a child in foster care do not select this population. This exercise is intended to evaluate the potential impact on others. Do not include your own personal and professional experiences. Give specific examples of the ways the code could impact stakeholders. These may be positive, negative, or both.

Papers should be written in a clear, concise, and professional in nature. The paper should be no more than 3 pages long; a minimum of 3 impact examples per population is expected. When referencing a specific aspect, cite the part of the code you are referring to [for example: 56:09 (1m)] and include the page number(s) if you are addressing multiple aspects. Be sure to discuss how that portion of the code impacts the stakeholder.

An APA citation is not required for this paper.

A grading rubric for this assignment is available on Learn@UW.

2. **Critical Thinking Questions for Speakers and Class Discussion**

This course will employ the expertise and experience of numerous people within the field. Guest speakers will be coming to class to answer questions and share knowledge of specific topics and/or roles in foster care, kinship care and adoption. In order to maximize learning it is important to be engaged and use critical thinking to obtain information from the speakers. You are expected to prepare and participate actively in question and answer sessions with
speakers. This is a skill used often in the field of child welfare as you will be expected to ask questions, lead discussion, advocate, enhance knowledge and problem solve with other professionals in order to help clients.

For each identified date, you will be required to have 10 potential questions prepared that you could ask the speaker or propose to facilitate class discussion. Questions should use critical thinking skills and have depth to enhance new learning. They should be written in a clear, concise and professional manner with evidence of critical thought and incorporate concepts from the weekly readings. Students should submit questions to the dropbox prior to the start of class. You will also be evaluated on participating with speakers through questions and comments. Your participation with speakers and in class does not require you use the questions you hand in. It is appropriate to go “off script” to enhance your learning, depending on the direction of the speaker and class discussion.

3. Another Place at the Table Reaction Paper
This 4-5 page paper is intended to explore practice issues in foster care as portrayed by the author. Students should choose one case example from the book. Using this case, identify and describe one striking ethical dilemma related to social work practice in out of home care. How might you have dealt with this issue as a social worker assigned to work with the child, birth parent, or foster parent? Students will also choose a different case example from the book and describe three or more systemic factors that affected services to the child or family or outcome of the case. How might practice have been changed in the absence of these systemic influences? Students will also suggest two or more potential solutions for each systemic factor identified.

A grading rubric for this assignment is available on Learn@UW.

4. Best Practice Research Paper
This 8-10 page paper is intended to evaluate how well foster care, kinship care, or adoption practice, or some specific aspect of it, is working. Papers that are more valid tend to pursue a question rather than prove a conclusion or preconceived notion.

Evidence must be given to support your statements/findings. It is expected that a minimum of 8 references will be utilized; all of them should be resources outside of what is already used in the course. Look to empirical research. Interviews may be used, but not extensively. An exception is made if you interview an expert on your topic. Expect that your interviewee may be contacted by the faculty member to verify information. Interviews are cited within the papers text. Please provide a phone number or email address along with your citation.

Your own professional experiences may be used only minimally and antidotal. You must go beyond your own professional or agency experience to a macro level. Students are also expected to identify two areas of federal and state legislation that impacts or influences the identified area of practice. Give your specific ideas on how to help it work better, and provide support for these ideas.

Papers are due Week 8. Papers shall not exceed maximum of 10 pages.
Your findings will be shared during Week 8 in a class presentation. You should plan to spend no more than 5 minutes discussing key points of your paper and significant findings.

A grading rubric for this assignment is available on Learn@UW.

5. Class Participation

Your grade for class participation is based on attendance, active participation in class discussions, and the quality of your participation (i.e., you need to demonstrate that you are prepared for class and have thought critically about the weekly readings and topics of discussion).

**Your grade will be based on the following criteria:**
- On time for class and present for entire class session
- Respectful towards others in the class (not talking nor whispering while others are talking), indicating to others that you appreciate their point of view even if you do not agree with it.
- Asking questions
- Reflecting on the class content
- Paying close attention

Students are expected to actively participate in the class. Active participation means contributing one's informed opinion, asking questions, responding respectfully to others, and being an active contributor in group activities. I highly encourage students to actively participate in class. It is not only good practice for being a citizen of the world but it also makes the class more interesting for you and me. We will try very hard to have a class environment where everyone can speak their mind with respect always given to the opinions of others. Please let me know early in the semester if this portion of the grade is problematic for you.

Class attendance will be taken each week. It is your responsibility to let me know if you will be missing class. If you are unable to attend class, you need to make sure that you find out what we talked about and take the initiative to get any handouts either from me or other class members.

The self-evaluation rubric for this requirement is available on Learn@UW.

**Criteria for Assignments**

Before turning in any assignment, consider if the following criteria are met:
1. Validity, relevance, support of main points, ability to consider other perspectives.
2. Sources, quotes and paraphrases appropriately identified a clear connection to course ideas/readings. Critical and individual thought is evident.
3. Organization, clarity, logical flow, completed as required.
4. Paragraph should have topic sentences that reflect the content of the paragraph and should have a smooth flow from one paragraph to the next.
5. Has introduction and conclusion, unless otherwise stated.
6. Has depth, includes critical evaluation, is integrative—looks at the whole.
7. Appropriate grammar, spelling, format, etc.
8. Completed on time.

General Requirements for Papers:
1. Submit a cover sheet with each paper, that includes your Name, identifies the course (SW656, Conn), and the assignment (for example Reaction Paper).
2. Papers should be double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, and standard margins
3. Papers should be placed in the Learn@UW Dropbox prior to class on the due date. You will receive a confirmation e-mail when your paper is successfully downloaded to the dropbox. It is your responsibility to be sure your paper has been downloaded properly. The instructor will adhere to the policy on late assignments if an assignment is not received in the dropbox by the time it is due.
4. Assignments are due on the date specified. Students who believe they have a legitimate reason for turning in a late assignment should contact the instructor prior to the due date. Unapproved late assignments will be marked down three points for each day they are late. You are required to contact the instructor if you will be handing in a paper late, this shows professionalism and responsibility.
5. Adherence to the APA rules for citations is expected. It is your responsibility to understand the rules for book, magazine and on-line source citations. (Recent updates to the APA form can be obtained at http://www.apastyle.org/manual/whats-new.aspx)

Note about grading: Your goal for this and other courses should be to make the most of your learning experience, and not to simply “get an A.” Your expectations about the grades you receive on assignments should be wholly based on (1) the extent to which you respond to assignment objectives, (2) the quality of your writing (to include grammar and spelling, organization, and clarity), and (3) your ability to demonstrate critical thinking. If there is something about an assignment that is unclear to you, it is your job to bring this to my attention. Grade expectations should NOT be based on what you have received in other courses—this is never a legitimate argument for appealing a grade. If you have an issue with a grade that you receive in this course, please document the reasons for your appeal in writing with specific attention to the three points raised above and I will give your appeal my careful attention.

VII. Course Policies
Attendance:
Due to the accelerated nature of courses in the University of Wisconsin-Madison Part-Time MSW Program, students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and to arrive on time.

Promptness
Prompt arrival to all courses is required.
• Instructors may take actions they deem appropriate if a student is consistently tardy
• Instructors may also consider a significantly late arrival or early departure as an absence

Absence
To ensure a quality educational experience, students must attend and participate in classes.
• Attendance will be taken at each class and students’ level of participation noted

• Excused & Unexcused Absences:
  ~ The first unexcused absence will result in a student’s grade being dropped one full grade
  ~ The second unexcused absence will place the student at risk for failing the course
  ~ On a case by case basis, it is left to the instructor’s discretion as to what is defined as an excused absence as well as to determine appropriate follow up plans

• Additional graded make-up work will be assigned for excused and unexcused absences. Students will be required to complete a 3-4 page reaction paper on missed week’s readings. The reaction papers will address a series of questions assigned by the instructor. If films were shown during the missed class, students are required to watch the film on their own and include reactions in the paper.

• Students are responsible for completing any class requirements for the day missed, and for obtaining from a fellow classmate any assignments, materials, and communications missed due to absence, late arrival or early departure.

• Students who must be absent due to inclement weather or other emergencies should contact the instructor prior to the start of class to be considered for an excused absence.

• Inclement Weather Policy
  ~ If there is inclement weather across the Program area, students will be expected to check their email prior to leaving for class to confirm whether classes are cancelled.
  ~ If classes are not cancelled but an individual student concludes he/she cannot safely travel to reach his/her class site, the student must contact his/her instructor(s) regarding his/her plan to not travel. This absence will be considered excused and makeup work may be assigned.
  ~ If classes at one or both sites are cancelled by the Program Director and Co-Director, then no makeup assignment will be required for those respective students; however, the class time will be rescheduled. The Program Coordinator will notify students by email within 72 hours of the cancellation regarding the planned class day/time additions.

Learn@UW:
All students in the class are required to access Learn@UW for additional communication and information regarding the course. Please check Learn@UW on Friday evenings for student course outlines when available and other resources pertinent to class the next day. I will respond to email communication every 24 hours. Please let me know if you have trouble accessing information in this way.

Accommodation of Student Disability:
If you require accommodations to obtain equal access to this class or to any assignments that I may give, please contact me as soon as possible. If you have written documentation of your disability, please provide it to me as additional guidance for arranging the accommodations you need.

Plagiarism:
Plagiarism involves the use of others’ words, ideas, or evidence without clearly acknowledging the source. Plagiarism in this class (and other classes) is unacceptable and will be treated as serious ethical breach with possible penalties including: a failing grade on the assignment, failing
the class, and/or referral to the Dean of Students Office.

Maintaining ownership of your work is often challenging when writing papers using multiple sources. Nevertheless, intentional plagiarism is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism occurs when you do any of the following in an assignment:

- Use someone else’s words either verbatim or almost verbatim without citation (even if the work does not have a clear author—for instance in a website)
- Use someone else’s evidence, line of thinking or idea without citation
- Turn in someone else’s work as your own, as in copying a peer’s paper or purchasing a readymade paper
- Turn in previously submitted work as if new, without the instructor’s approval

Student Behavior Policy:
In order to learn, we must be open to the views of people different from ourselves. Each and every voice in the classroom is important and brings with it a wealth of experiences, values and beliefs. In this time we share together over the semester, please honor the uniqueness of your fellow classmates, and appreciate the opportunity we have to learn from each other. Please respect your fellow students’ opinions and refrain from personal attacks or demeaning comments of any kind. Arriving late to class or leaving class early, without prior approval from the faculty member, will result in an unexcused absence. Finally, remember to keep confidential all issues of a personal or professional nature discussed in class.

Use of Technology in the Classroom:
A minimal level of external distractions is essential to a productive learning environment. Cellphones, smart phones, iPods, iPads, laptops and any other electronic devices are not to be used during class expect in unusual circumstances and with the express written permission of the faculty member.

Students are required to turn cell phones off or on vibrate before entering the classroom. Taking calls during class time interrupts teaching and learning. Please review the school’s policy on professional conduct which can be found in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook pp. 10-12 Professional Conduct in All the Social Work Degree Programs.

Note about Consultation & Feedback:
I am available to assist your learning and to discuss any aspect of the course or your work. I welcome feedback and appreciate suggestions for improving this course. I am available at amconn@wisc.edu or you can call me at 608.265.6924. I will do my best to be responsive to your needs.