School of Social Work
University of Wisconsin-Madison
1350 University Avenue
Madison, WI 53706
SW 646 Child Abuse and Neglect
Fall 2014

Instructor: Jennifer Fahy, MA
Class Time: Saturdays, 9:00am-1:00pm
Location: Social Work Building, Room 106
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I. Catalogue Description
This course is concerned with physical, emotional and sexual abuse of children, child neglect and exploitation.

II. Course Overview
Social Work 646 is a concentration elective in the Child, Youth, and Family Welfare Concentration, and a required course for students in the Title IV-E Public Child Welfare Training Program. This course is concerned with the physical, emotional and sexual abuse of children, and child neglect. The course is designed to foster critical thinking about child maltreatment as a social phenomenon. Students will be exposed to conceptual, theoretical, and state-of-the-art empirical literature on the causes and consequences of different forms of child maltreatment; historical and current perspectives on child maltreatment intervention; systems- and family-level prevention models; policies that relate to or affect child maltreatment rates; cultural issues in the identification and assessment of child maltreatment; and issues unique to particular subgroups (e.g., families in poverty, minorities). There is a particular emphasis in this course on the prevention of child maltreatment.

This course is not intended as a forum for clinical training in working with children, families, or in systems that deal with child maltreatment issues. However, students should gain a broad understanding of the scope, causes, ethical issues, and consequences related to child abuse and neglect, and be able to apply this knowledge in a wide range of settings that deal with child development and child protection.

III. Course Competencies & Practice Behaviors & Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies Addressed in Course</th>
<th>Practice Behaviors Addressed in Course</th>
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| 2.1.2: Apply SW ethical principles to guide professional practice | * Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts.  
* Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions. | Turning Stones Reaction Paper  
Turning Stones Reaction Paper |

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| 2.1.3: Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments | * Identify & synthesize multiple sources of knowledge to understand policy/practice issues related to advanced practice;  
* Identify and evaluate models of assessment, prevention, intervention and evaluation that are appropriate to advanced practice;  
* Utilize effective communication skills with diverse [parties] related to advanced practice | Current Topic in Child Protection Paper  
Leading Discussion Assignment & Current Topic in Child Protection Paper |
|---|---|---|
| 2.1.4: Engage diversity and difference in practice | * Gaining sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values when working with diverse groups.  
* Demonstrate an understanding of how culture and values affect diverse conceptualizations and constructions of social problems and solutions in advanced practice | Turning Stones Reaction Paper  
| 2.1.6: Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research | * Critically evaluate and utilize theoretical and empirical research relevant to the problems and/or populations addressed in advanced practice | Critical Reading Review, Leading Discussion Assignment, & Current Topic in Child Protection Paper |
| 2.1.8: Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services | * Evaluate, formulate and advocate for policies that advance outcomes relevant to advanced practice | Critical Reading Review, Leading Discussion Assignment, & Current Topic in Child Protection Paper |
| 2.1.10c: Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities | * Initiate actions to achieve organizational goals. | Current Topic in Child Protection Paper |
| 2.1.10d: Evaluation | * Apply research skills to analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions in advanced practice | Critical Reading Review, Leading Discussion Assignment, & Current Topic in Child Protection Paper |
IV. Course Content
The following is an outline of the topics and required readings to be covered in the course, in order of their presentation. Unless otherwise specified by the instructor, these topics and readings will correspond to the dates in the outline. Please note that all readings listed are required; additional recommended readings will be posted from time to time on the course website. Guest lecturers will be introduced as they become available.

WEEK 1: November 1

PART I: Course overview and review of syllabus

Required Readings

In the first half of our four-hour class, we will introduce ourselves and review the course syllabus. Then we will use an in-class exercise to development awareness of personal values related to child maltreatment that potentially influence professional practice.

In-class exercise: Values Survey

PART II: Introduction, scope and trends in CPS

Required Readings

In the second half of class, we will briefly examine the history of the child protection field. Then, we will gain a sense of the scope or prevalence of child abuse and neglect, recent trends in the incidence of abuse and neglect, and the various sources used to estimate these trends. We will begin to discuss gaps in our knowledge base about child maltreatment and understand the implications of these knowledge deficits.

The Turning Stones reaction paper will be handed out and is due week 2 (Learn@UW dropbox).

WEEK 2: November 8
ASSIGNMENT DUE: Turning Stones reaction paper

PART I: What does child protection work look like?

Required Readings
First, we will review and discuss the Wisconsin statutory definitions of abuse and neglect, the principles and origins of mandatory reporting, and discuss the influence of societal and personal values on definitions of maltreatment. Next we will discuss the complexities of CPS practice for workers. Then we will examine how parents, children, and families experience the protection system examining particularly how power inequities impact child protection policy and practice. Finally, we will view a film on emergency child protection work. Our discussion of the film and required readings will highlight ethical dilemmas and ambiguities in CPS practice, and focus on strategies to improve CPS practice.

**In-class film:** *Frontline: Failure to Protect, Part Two.* Public Broadcasting Service (PBS).

**PART II: Parenting: socioeconomic status and child disability**

**Required Readings**


In this half of class, we will begin to look at the intersection of familial factors and risk of child maltreatment beginning with family socioeconomic status and whether one or more children in the family have a disability.

**WEEK 3: November 15**

**PART I: Parenting and culture, race and ethnicity**

**Required Readings**


Today we will discuss whether race and ethnicity are related to parenting styles, and whether they influence the judgments we make about others’ caregiving abilities. We will also discuss the intersection of race and class given the pervasive over-representation of both African American children and poor children in child welfare systems in the US. Then, we will examine data about
racial disparity in child welfare outcomes in Dane County from a recent report from the Wisconsin Council on Children and Family’s Race to Equity project. Finally, we will identify several cultural practices that can be confused with maltreatment.

PART II: Risk/safety Assessment


In this half of class, we will discuss different models for assessing risk of child maltreatment in CPS practice and when risk/safety assessment occurs during the case process. Differences in “risk” vs. “safety” assessment will be highlighted. We will also discuss whether certain risk/safety assessment tools could aid agencies and workers in combatting racial disproportionality in the child welfare system.

*In-class exercise: Comparison of state risk/safety assessment instruments*

WEEK 4: November 22

PARTS I & II: Prevention of Child Maltreatment


Today, we will examine child maltreatment prevention programs. First, we will look at alternative/differential response initiatives that aim to prevent child maltreatment for those children at lower risk for abuse/neglect. Next, we will examine specific child abuse and neglect prevention strategies: home-visiting programs, parent education, interventions in early childhood and school settings, etc., and discuss the strengths/weaknesses of the approaches.
WEEK 5: November 29

PART I: Neglect


Neglect is one of the most difficult forms of maltreatment to define, and can be more easily confused with poverty than other forms of maltreatment. We will discuss several typologies and causal theories of neglect, the role of poverty in child neglect, and current perspectives on “failure-to-thrive” as it pertains to child neglect. We will also consider the risk and protective factors for child neglect that are identified in empirical literature.

PART II: Sexual abuse


This session will include discussion on controversies in defining sexual abuse, the primary theories and risk factors associated with child sexual abuse victimization, and an overview of normative and atypical sexual behaviors in children. We will also address issues in sexual abuse disclosure by a child and the role of non-offending caregivers upon disclosure. An in-class film shows survivors of childhood sexual abuse telling their stories.

In-class film: Breaking Silence. Aquarius Productions.

WEEK 6: December 6

PART I: Physical Abuse


In the first half of class, we will focus on physical abuse including a review of common visual signs of abuse and various conditions and folk remedies that may be confused with physical abuse. We also consider various theories of why physical child abuse occurs and discuss how racial and class biases may influence definitions and reports of physical abuse. We will also consider the risk and protective factors for physical abuse that are identified in empirical literature. A short in-class film will examine the difficulty of identifying whether maltreatment contributed to the cause of death for infants and children who die under suspicious circumstances.

**In-class film:** *Frontline: The Child Cases.* Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)

**PART II: Emotional abuse**


In the second half of class, we will consider emotional abuse; an abuse typology that researchers have found difficult to define and child protection workers have found difficult to assess and substantiate.

*In-class exercise: CPS case studies: Identifying maltreatment types and case planning*

**WEEK 7: December 13**

**PART I: Substance abuse and child maltreatment: Effects on children of prenatal drug and alcohol exposure**


In this segment, we will discuss the state of the knowledge base on the effects of prenatal substance exposure on the fetus and developing child. We will also consider the debates on child welfare policies related to mandatory reporting of substance-exposed infants and universal screening for fetal substance exposure.

**PART II: Substance abuse and child maltreatment: Effects of substance abuse on parenting**

In the second half of class, we will explore how the use of various types of substances may affect parenting/care-giving behaviors. We will also discuss how parental substance abuse and recovery can present unique challenges to meeting timely reunification standards mandated by the Adoption and Safe Families Act.

**WEEK 8: December 20**

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Final paper – Analysis of Current Topic in Child Protection**

**PART I: Domestic violence and child maltreatment**


In this class session, we will review the prevalence of co-occurring domestic violence and child maltreatment, and the mechanisms linking domestic violence to various forms of child maltreatment. We will also focus on how CPS handles cases of alleged maltreatment when domestic violence is a co-occurring factor and controversial “failure-to-protect” child welfare policies.

**PART II: Brief Presentations of Final Paper Findings and Class Wrap-up**

In our last session, students will be given time to discuss their final papers with other students who wrote on the same topic, if applicable. A brief presentation of the findings will be prepared and students will present and lead discussion on their topic area. We will then discuss strategies for disseminating this information to the policy and practice community, and for integrating these results into future practice with families at risk for child maltreatment. Finally, time for feedback to the instructor on course strengths and areas for improvement will be allotted.
V. Texts and Reading Materials for the course
Readings are available through the Learn@UW site at the UW-Madison. Periodically, I will post additional articles to the course website—these readings will be recommended rather than required. Other course material (e.g., handouts, further instructions on course assignments, etc.) will be posted to the course website. It is essential that you check the course website frequently for both required and recommended course material. The book, Turning Stones, by Marc Parent, can be purchased (approx. $16) via online booksellers (e.g. Borders, Barnes and Noble, Amazon, etc.), or may be found in used bookstores in your area.

VI. Evaluation of Competencies and Practice Behaviors: Assignments, Grading and Methods
The assignments for 646 offer some flexibility so that each student can focus their coursework on topics of personal and/or professional interest. However, the issues covered in every week of class are likely to be relevant across interest areas, and students are expected to read weekly material ahead of time, come to class with questions and comments, and participate in class discussions. Please see section VII: Attendance Policy for details on how missed classes will affect your grade.

Students will be evaluated on the following assignments:
1. Turning Stones reaction paper 20%
2. Critical reading review 25%
3. Leading classroom discussion 10%
4. Final paper – Current Topic in Child Protection 40%
5. Class participation 5%

Grades are not assigned on a curve. Each of the above components is worth 100 points, and these components are then weighted (i.e., multiplied by .2, .25, .1, .4, .05, respectively) to arrive at your final grade. There are no extra credit or make-up assignments. Points earned on each assignment and your final grade will be assigned as follows:

A  94-100  Outstanding; surpasses expectations in most areas
AB  88-93  Surpasses expectations in many areas
B   82-87  Meets minimum expectations in all areas
BC  76-81  Meets expectations in some areas; falls below in others
C   70-75  Falls below expectations in most areas, not acceptable graduate work
D   64-69  Below expectations in all areas
F   <64   Fails to meet minimal expectations in all areas, not acceptable work

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), (3) your ability to demonstrate critical thinking, and (4) your level of effort and engagement with the course and assigned material. If there is something about an assignment that is unclear to you, it is your job to bring this to my attention. Grade expectations
Assignments

1. **Turning Stones Reaction Paper (20% of final grade)**
Papers should be 3-4 pages **maximum**, double spaced, 12-point font, and standard margins.

Address the following questions in your reaction paper:

1. Choose one case example from the book. Using this case, identify and describe one striking ethical dilemma related to CPS work. How might you have dealt with these issues similarly or differently? Why?
2. Choose a different case example from the book and describe 2 or more CPS systemic factors that affected the investigation. How might the investigation process have been changed in the absence of these systemic influences? Suggest one or more potential solutions for the systemic factors you identified.

This assignment is due by or at the beginning of class on week 2. A grading rubric is available on the Learn@UW course website.

2. **Critical Reading Review (25% of final grade)**
Papers should be 3-4 pages **maximum**, double spaced, 12-point font, and standard margins. You will summarize (approximately 1 page) and critique (at least 2 pages) the substantive information in the reading. The critique should include a statement of the strengths (what the authors did well, and why it is important for social work practice) and weaknesses (what they did not do well or failed to do). The content should demonstrate a critical reaction to the reading, not only a summary or statement of delight or disgust re: the content. You are expected to be an intelligent consumer of research content, based on comparisons of related material, your education and experience, and the applicability of the material to your practice.

The articles that count toward this assignment must be empirical in nature (rather than conceptual or theoretical only. Those with asterisks (*) in the syllabus are considered empirical. The critical reading reviews are due at the beginning of the class session in which the reading will be discussed. If you miss this deadline, you must choose a different week on which to base your critical review. Adherence to the APA rules for citations is expected (recent updates to the APA form can be obtained at [http://www.apastyle.org/manual/whats-new.aspx](http://www.apastyle.org/manual/whats-new.aspx) ) It is your responsibility to understand the rules for book, magazine and on-line source citations. Details on this course assignment and a grading rubric will be posted to the course website by week 2.

3. **Leading Class Discussion of Assigned Reading (10% of grade)**
For this assignment, you will facilitate discussion of one class reading. You will be allotted no more than 15 minutes of class time. You must: 1) summarize the key points, themes and/or findings from your reading and 2) formulate at least 3 questions based on the reading that will stimulate lively, insightful classroom discussion. Presentations will be timed to allow only 5 minutes for summary of your reading. Please focus the majority of your time on facilitating class
discussion. Visual aids are optional and the computer/projector will be available for those students wishing to use them.

In addition, this assignment requires you to submit a one page (maximum) briefing sheet that contains: one to two paragraphs answering question 1 above and your 3 discussion questions. Briefing papers must be uploaded to Learn@UW by the beginning of class on the day you facilitate discussion. A grading rubric for this assignment will be available on Learn@UW by week 2 of class. Students will sign up for a reading during the first week of class.

NOTE: Your grade is based on your oral presentation in class NOT what is stated on your briefing paper, i.e. if you did not say it, even if it is in your briefing paper, it does not count. This assignment measures your ability to analyze a reading and communicate it efficiently and effectively to others and to initiate thoughtful discussion of the material.

4. Final Paper – Analysis of Current Topic in Child Protection (40% of final grade)
This assignment requires you to utilize research literature to discuss a current topic in child protection and then make recommendations to improve child welfare practice in this area (a list of pertinent topics will be provided by the instructor). The format for this assignment is a 3-4 page single-spaced memorandum. This paper will be due week 8 of class. Students will also be required to participate in a group presentation on their topic that is worth 10% of this assignment’s total grade. Class time in week 8 will be allotted to prepare for these in-class presentations. Details on this course assignment and a grading rubric will be posted to the course website by Week 3.

5. Class Participation (5% of final grade)
Your grade for class participation is based on 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).

Expectations
Students are expected to:
• Attend class weekly and read required materials prior to the lecture class. Please see Section VII of this syllabus for the attendance policy.
• Attend and actively participate in in-class discussion, including any on-line discussions initiated by the Instructor.
• Turn off all cell phone tones and pagers during class (set them to vibrate) and to refrain from taking calls, ”tweeting”, texting, using instant messaging, sending or responding to any social networking or email venues during class, or using the internet for anything other than directed class work. You will be able to check messages during breaks each class session. (If you experience a personal or family crisis, please notify the instructor upon arriving for class or beforehand that you may need to respond to a call during class.)
• Complete all assignments as required.
• Respond to any requests by the instructor to re-write assignments due to deficiencies in the written product, including grammar and or APA style requirements.
Advocate for yourself and present any questions or concerns to the instructor that may require the instructor to adjust her presentation to enhance learning for all.

The instructor is expected to:
- Be available to students to answer questions and to respond to student concerns.
- Begin and end classes on time.
- Create a comfortable and open atmosphere conducive to learning.
- Assure that course objectives are met.
- Assure that the classroom and course materials are accessible (per ADA requirements) to all students.

VII. Course Policies

Attendance Policy
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 and 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 appropriate for the content missed will be assigned for excused and unexcused absences. Students in SW646 will be required to complete a 6-page reaction paper on the missed week's readings.
- 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 will 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.

**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. Finally, remember to keep confidential all issues of a personal or professional nature discussed in class.