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

II. Course Overview
Social Work 656 is focused on advanced social work practice issues and roles at all levels regarding the unique multi-family, multi-system circumstances of out-of-home placement of children and youth. The course is designed to foster critical thinking about policy and practice related to foster care, formal kinship care, and adoption at national, state and local levels; and reviews trends, issues, policies, law, research and practitioner and consumer experiences to assist the student in developing ethical and effective approaches for professional social work. The course emphasizes value-based, respectful, effective, and empowering social work practice with, and on behalf of, all parties involved in child welfare services. Its content focuses on separation and loss, placing practices, visitation design, multi-family contracting, the significance of biological family ties, identity and development in foster children/youth, and community/agency interventions on behalf of families is applicable for other children’s services and situations.

This course is not intended as a specific forum for clinical training practices with families in out of home care, or the systems that deal with these issues, but will expose students to current approaches, cases, and ethical dilemmas that face practitioners in social work settings. Social Work 656 meets the Advanced Practice requirement of the Children, Youth & Families Concentration and is required for Title IV-E traineeship recipients in the Advanced Year. The course uses lecture, discussion, case illustration, presentation, guest speakers and media to study foster care, kinship care, and adoption in depth, to compare recommended practice with current practice, and to develop a framework for professional social work practice.

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</th>
<th>Practice Behaviors Addressed In Course</th>
<th>Assignment(S)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Competencies Addressed In Course</strong></th>
<th><strong>Measuring Behavior</strong></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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments. (Competency 2.1.3)</td>
<td>1) Identifying and synthesizing multiple 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research. (Competency 2.1.6)</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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 (the order of session topics may change due to availability of presenters). Unless otherwise specified by the instructor, these topics and readings will correspond to the dates in the outline. **Please note that all readings for each course are listed as required, or recommended (optional).** Additional recommended readings may be given and/or be posted from time to time on the course website (Learn@UW).
**Week 1: January 21**

- Introduction and course expectations
- History of child welfare and out-of-home care in the United States, including a review of major federal legislation
- Introduction and social work role in foster care, kinship care, independent living and adoption (purpose, structure, and processes)
- Types of out-of-home care placements

**Required Readings & Materials:**
3. Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, DCF Chapter 56, *Foster Home Care for Children*.

**Recommended Readings & Materials:**

**Week 2: January 28:**

- State, National and International Perspectives on Foster Care, Kinship Care, and Adoption
- Foster Care/Kinship Licensing/Group Home and Residential Treatment
- Separation, Loss, and Grief in Child Welfare Practice
- Current Trends in Out-of-Home Care
- Legal Issues in Out-of-Home-Care

✓ **Due: Impact and Barriers of Code on Stakeholders Evaluation**

*Guest Speaker: Jonelle Brom, MSW, APSW; State Foster Care Manager, Wisconsin Department of Children & Families*

**Required Readings & Materials:**
2. "The Orphan Trains. American Experience, PBS. [To watch this video go to [https://www.kanopystreaming.com/wayf/product/orphan-trains](https://www.kanopystreaming.com/wayf/product/orphan-trains) and type “University of Wisconsin – Madison” into the institution search window. You will then be asked to login with your UW Net ID and password]."
3. National Public Radio. (September 22, 2013). *Strained Foster Care System A 'Meter Of Our Social Problems'* To read or listen to this program go to

Recommended Readings & Materials:

**Week 3: February 4:**
- Social Work Advocacy and Interventions in Out-of-Home-Care
- What Constitutes Permanency?
- Concurrent Planning
- Aging Out of Foster Care and Independent Living (IL) - Trends & Issues

**Guest Speakers:** Former Foster Youth Panel, Wisconsin Youth Advisory Council

**Required Readings & Materials:**

**Recommended Readings & Materials:**
Week 4: February 11:

- Attachment and Bonding
- Working with Children, Birth Families, and Foster/Adoptive Families
- Youth and Siblings in Out of Home Care
- Openness in Out-of-Home Care

Guest Speaker: Alice Egan, MSW, APSW; University of Wisconsin-Madison

Required Readings & Materials:


Recommended Readings & Materials:


**Week 5: February 18:**

- Race, Ethnicity, Class, and Culture
- Intersectional and Culturally Affirming Perspectives and Practice
- LGBTQ Youth and Families
- Agency Services to Children and Families - Ideal and actual worker roles
- Identity and Developmental Stages for Children experiencing Foster Care and Adoption

✓ Due: Reaction Paper

**Required Readings & Materials:**


**Recommended Readings & Materials:**


**Week 6: February 25:**

- Foster, Kin, and Adoptive Families
- Recruitment and Retention
- Social Work Advocacy and Interventions

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 7: March 4:**

- Student Presentations
- Placement Stability, Permanence, and Best Practice
- Post Adoption Services
Course Wrap-Up & Evaluation

Guest Speaker: Audrey Conn, MSW, APSW; University of Wisconsin-Madison

- Due: Analysis of Current Topic and Best Practice Paper and Presentation
- Due: Self-evaluation for Participation

Required Readings:

Recommended Readings:

V. Texts and Reading Materials for the Course
Readings are available through the Learn@UW site at the UW-Madison. Periodically, I may 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 students check the course website frequently for both required and recommended course material. The books below can be purchased via online booksellers (e.g. Borders, Barnes and Noble, Amazon, etc.), or may be found in used bookstores in your area. A small number of books are available through the UW library system and the Madison Public library system as well.


VI. Evaluation of Competencies and Practice Behaviors: Assignments, Grading and Methods
Grades are not assigned on a curve. There are no extra credit or make-up assignments. Points earned on each assignment and your final grade will be assigned as follows:

**Assignments:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points/Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact &amp; Barriers of Code on Stakeholders Evaluation (due January 28)</td>
<td>20 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another Place at the Table Reaction Paper (due February 18)</td>
<td>25 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Current Topic and Best Practice Paper and Presentation (due March 4)</td>
<td>45 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation (optional) (due March 4)</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 points</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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>

**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.

1. **Impact and Barriers of Code on Stakeholders Evaluation** (20% of final grade)

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 *Chapter DCF 56 Foster Home Care for Children* 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, 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.

The paper should be no fewer than 6 pages and no more than 8 pages long; a minimum of 5 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 unless you are using additional sources beyond Chapter 56. A grading rubric for this assignment is available on Learn@UW. The Impact and Barriers of Code on Stakeholders Evaluation is due Week 2.

Please note: A copy of the Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter DCF 56 Foster Home Care for Children is listed (via online link) in your reading list under Week 1 through the Learn@UW student web portal. You may also access it directly using the following link: http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/dcf/021_099/56.pdf.

2. Another Place at the Table Reaction Paper (25% of your grade)

This 7-8 page paper is intended for you to explore practice issues in out-of-home 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/adoptive parent (be specific about your professional role, your recommendations, and interventions)? Students will also choose a different case example from the book and describe four 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 a minimum of three potential solutions/recommendations for each systemic factor identified.

An APA citation is required for this paper. A grading rubric for this assignment is available on Learn@UW. The Reaction Paper is due Week 5.

3. Analysis of Current Topic and Best Practice Paper and Presentation (45% of your grade)

This 10-12 page paper should evaluate how well foster care, kinship care, or adoption practice, or some specific aspect of these contexts, is working. Papers should 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 used; all of which must be resources outside of what is already being 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 should be cited within the text of your paper. Please provide a phone number or email address along with your citation.

Your own professional experiences may only be used minimally and anecdotally. You must identify the relevance and importance of your chosen topic related to social work practice and policy. Go beyond your own professional or agency experience. It is expected that student’s will also include a macro level focus throughout the paper. You must identify a minimum of three ethical dilemmas and provide support of how they can be addressed within practice and/or policy. Students are also expected to identify two areas of federal and state legislation that impacts or influences the identified area of practice and provide support for their findings. Give your specific ideas, a minimum of five recommendations (in addition to your recommendations addressing potential ethical dilemmas) on how to help your identified topic work better. Be sure to provide clear and specific support and justification for these ideas.

Papers shall not exceed maximum of 12 pages and must be in APA format. You should plan to spend no more than 5 minutes discussing key points of your paper and significant findings. The presentation is a graded component of your final grade for this assignment.

A grading rubric for this assignment is available on Learn@UW. **Papers and presentations are due Week 7.**

4. **Class Participation** (10% of your grade)

Active participation in class is REQUIRED. Active 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. This includes attentive non-verbal behavior and offering comments relevant to course dialogue. It also includes be respectful towards others in the class (not talking nor whispering while others are talking). This indicates to others that you appreciate their point of view even if you do not agree with it. Participation can be challenging for some students. Please see me EARLY in the semester if you need any assistance in this or any other areas. I will try very hard to create a comfortable and open class where everyone feels comfortable speaking their mind and respects the opinions of others.

A self-evaluation rubric for this requirement is available on Learn@UW. Completing this form is **optional**. You only need to submit a self-evaluation if you want to have input on your participation grade. **The self-evaluation is due Week 7.**

General Requirements for Papers:

1. Papers must adhere to the specific instructions outlined for each assignment, and follow the requirements for written assignments in the Course Policies section (Section VII) of this syllabus.
2. Assignments are due on the date specified. Please review the late assignment policy in the Course Policies section (Section VII) of this syllabus.

3. Adherence to the APA rules for citations is expected. It is your responsibility to understand the rules for book, magazine and online source citations. For more information about using APA citation, please visit the UW Writing Center’s Handbook on APA documentation at http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/DocAPA.html (Recent updates to APA format can be obtained at http://www.apastyle.org/manual/whats-new.aspx).

4. Papers should be placed in the designated dropboxes on Learn@UW 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 make sure your paper has been downloaded properly. I will adhere to the policy on late assignments if an assignment is not received in the dropbox by the time it is due.

Criteria for Assignments

Writing assignments should demonstrate the following:

1. **Critical evaluation of the material and in-depth of analysis**—(selection of arguments, depth of analysis, objective reasoning). Chosen topic is relevant to course ideas/readings. Summary, analysis, and arguments are of significance to the field of social work, are presented in a clear and thoughtful manner, demonstrate sensible and contemplative rationale, and include evidence that clearly supports points of view and chosen recommendations. Concepts learned in class are used to evaluate and generate alternative strategies to addressing the identified issue/problem. Statements of fact or personal assertions are followed by relevant citations from the literature.

2. **Use of correct grammar, citation and spelling**—Paper follows APA style and formatting citations, has been edited for spelling and grammar errors, and follows instructors’ overall format and style instructions.

3. **Succinctness of writing ability**—(content clarity, organization of ideas). Paper has a logical flow from the introduction, to a coherent and in-depth discussion of the current problem and recommendations in the body of the paper, to the conclusion. Paragraphs have smooth transitions from one to the next. Consistent tense is used throughout the paper.

VII. Course Policies

**Code of Ethics & Academic Misconduct**

BSW and incoming MSW students read and signed electronic forms of the NASW Code of Ethics, the School of Social Work Plagiarism Policy and the Student Rights and Responsibilities. In doing so, they agreed that while in the BSW or MSW Program they would honor the NASW Code of Ethics and Student’s Rights and Responsibilities, as well as adhere to the Plagiarism Policy and that should they not do so, sanctions would be imposed. BSW and MSW students are expected to adhere to these policies in the classroom, in the field and in the preparation of course assignments.
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 a 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

**Technology in Class**
A minimal level of external distractions is essential to a productive learning environment. Students are expected to minimize use of backlit devices throughout class. If I feel your use of technology is distracting (to you or to others) you may be asked to refrain from using backlit devices during class. Cell phones should be turned off or placed on vibrate before entering the classroom.

**Reading Assignments**
Students are expected to have read all assigned material prior to the class date under which the readings are listed above. Reading and critically evaluating what you have read is necessary so that you can learn, actively participate in class discussions, and successfully complete written assignments.

**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. If you have a concern that needs to be brought to the class’s attention, please speak with me directly.

**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 every Friday evening for any updates to the student course outline, or other announcements or 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. I want all students to have an excellent learning experience. Students who are requesting an accommodation due to a disability are expected to inform the instructor and provide verification (e.g., from the McBurney Disability Resource Center) at the beginning of the semester or as soon as the need for an accommodation is determined.

Written Assignment Policy
All written assignments must meet the following criteria:
- Be typed or computer-generated;
- Formatted using double-spaced pages (not including title page), 12-point Times New Roman font, and one-inch margins;
- Include page numbers, a title page (title of the paper, your name, date turned into the instructor, course number, and course title), and a reference page;
- Follow the APA guidelines for all in-text and reference page citations, including matters of style such as whether or not to write out dates and centuries, abbreviations, capitalization, and other issues that may come up as you write (note: papers do not need to have APA headers title pages);
- Be free of spelling and grammatical errors; and
- Be a polished piece of writing that is written in a clear, concise, and engaging prose.
- Not use long block quotes, as these take up too much space that you will need for you to develop your analysis and recommendations.

Late Assignment Policy
The assignments listed above are due at the beginning of the class period 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.

Attendance
Class attendance is required of all students. Attendance is defined as arriving on time, staying through the entire class, and leaving only for scheduled breaks. In order for you and your classmates to benefit from this course, attendance and active participation are expected. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class and I will note your level of participation. If you are unable to attend class, please email me prior to class so that you can receive an excused absence; you may receive one per semester. 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. 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. Four points will be deducted from your final grade for each unexcused absence incurred; this includes arriving late to class and early departure from class.

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. 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. If classes are not cancelled but an individual student concludes they cannot safely travel to reach the class site, the student must contact the instructor(s) regarding their plan to not travel. This absence will be considered excused and makeup work will be assigned.

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 jpaul3@wisc.edu or you can call me at 608-279-4644. I will do my best to be responsive to your needs.

This syllabus is subject to change.