School of Social Work  
1350 University Avenue  
Madison, WI 53706  
SW656 Family Practice in Foster and Kinship Care  
Spring 2014

Instructor: Audrey M. Conn, MSSW, APSW  
Class: Tuesday, 1:20-3:15 pm; Room 106  
Office: School of Social Work, Room 308  
Phone: 608.265.6924 (office)  
Office Hours: By appointment  
Email: amconn@wisc.edu

I. Catalogue Description  
Social welfare issues from national and local perspective, 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 focus and is required for Title IV-E traineeship recipients in the Advanced Year.

The course uses lecture, discussion, case illustration, presentation, guest interviews and videotapes, to study family foster care and kinship care 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 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) Stakeholders; Presenter Questions; Reaction Paper; Research Paper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments. (Competency 2.1.3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments. (Competency 2.1.3)</th>
<th>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.</th>
<th>1) Stakeholders:  Presenter Questions: Research Paper:  Reaction Paper: 2) Stakeholders: Presenter Questions: Research Paper:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<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>
<td>1) Stakeholders: Research Paper: 2) ) Stakeholders: Reaction Paper: Research Paper:</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>
<td>1) Stakeholders: Presenter Questions: Reaction Paper: Research Paper:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. Course Content

**Week 1: January 21, 2014**
- Introduction to SW656 and Course Expectations

**Week 2: January 28, 2014**
- Introduction to the History of Child Welfare and Out-of-Home-Care in the United States
- Introduction of Foster Care and Kinship Care (purpose, structure, and processes)
- Social Work Role in Foster Care and Kinship Care

**Required Readings:**
- State of Wisconsin Foster Parent Handbook – Read Welcome, Chapter 1 (Foster Care Overview), and Chapter 2 (Expectations of Foster Parents).

**Supplemental Reading:**
- Reimer, Daniela. “Everything was strange and different’. Young adults’ recollections of the transition into foster care.” *Adoption & Fostering*, 34(2) 2010, 14-22.
**Week 3: February 4, 2014**

- History of Child Placing
- Foster Care Legislation
- Foster Care/Kinship Licensing/Group Home and Residential Treatment

✓ Due: Critical Thinking Questions

**Required Readings:**
Review the following federal child welfare legislation overviews from the Department of Health and Human Services website:


- *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*

- The instructor will provide (via Learn@UW) a copy of DCF 56 Foster Care for Children code. (Students do not need to print off copies.)

**Week 4: February 11, 2014**

- State and National Perspective in Foster Care and Kinship Care

✓ Due: Impact and Barriers of Code on Stakeholders Evaluation

**Required Readings:**


**Supplemental Reading:**


**Week 5: February 18, 2014**

- Foster Children and Youth in Care

✓ Due: Critical Thinking Questions
Required Readings:


Supplemental Reading:


**Week 6: February 25, 2014**

- Separation, Loss and Grief in Child Welfare

✓ Due: Critical Thinking Questions

Required Readings:

- State of Wisconsin Foster Parent Handbook – Read Chapter 3 (Caring for Children in Foster Care), Chapter 4 (Developing and Maintaining Family Connections), Chapter 5 (Foster Family Self Care), and Appendix.

Supplemental Reading:

- Folman, Rosalind D. “‘I was token.’: How children experience removal from their parents preliminary to placement into foster care.” *Adoption Quarterly*, 2(2), 1998, 7-35.

**Week 7: March 4, 2014**

- What Constitutes Permanency?
- Independent Living Skills (ILS) - Trends & Issues

✓ Due: Critical Thinking Questions

Required Readings:

Supplemental Readings:

Week 8: March 11, 2014
- Biological Parent and Family

✓ Due: Reaction Paper Due

Required Readings:

Supplemental Readings:

March 18, 2014
No Class-Enjoy Spring Break 😊

Week 9: March 25, 2014
- Kinship Care
- Social Work Advocacy and Interventions

Required Readings:

**Supplemental Reading:**

**Week 10: April 1, 2014**
- Foster Family
- Foster Parent Organizations
- Agency Services to, and Relationships with, Foster Families
- Due: Critical Thinking Questions

**Required Readings:**

**Supplemental Readings:**

**Week 11: April 8, 2014**
- Agency Services to Children and Families-Ideal and Actual Worker Roles
- Special Issues in Foster Care & Kinship Care
- Practice Issues for Foster Care & Kinship Care
Required Readings:
- CWLA Best Practice Guidelines for Serving LGBT Youth in Out-of Home Care, Chapters 1-3.

Supplemental Reading:

Week 12: April 15, 2014
- International, National, and State Perspectives in Adoption
- Post Adoption Resources

Required Readings:
- Wisconsin Chapter DCF 50
- Wisconsin Chapter DCF 51
- Wisconsin Chapter DCF 53

Week 13: April 22, 2014
- Social Work Practice in Adoption-Focus on Attachment

Required Reading:
- FOCUS, Newsletter of the Foster Family-based Treatment Association, Fall 2010. 16(3).

Week 14: April 29, 2014
- Special Issues in Adoption

Required Readings:
Supplemental Reading:

Week 15: May 6, 2014
- Class Discussion on Good Practice Research Paper
- Course Wrap-Up & Evaluation

✓ Due: Good Practice Research Paper & Self-Evaluation of Participation Form

V. Texts and Reading Materials for the Course

Required:


Additional readings are available through the Learn@UW site. 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.

Throughout the semester we will incorporate media reports on out-of-home-care. We will review these samples of media reports. Students are encouraged to share articles and news reports they have found pertaining to the designated week’s topics. The class will discuss how these portrayals do and do not match up with what we have learned.

VI. Evaluation of Competencies and Practice Behaviors: Assignments, Grading and Methods
The assignments for SW656 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.

Assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact &amp; Barriers of Code on Stakeholders</td>
<td>15 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking Discussion Questions</td>
<td>25 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another Place at the Table Reaction Paper | 20 points
Good Practice Research Paper | 30 points
Class Participation | 10 points
**Total Points** | **100 points**

Points earned on each assignment and your final grade will be assigned as follows:

**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 class.

**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 responsibility 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 four points raised above and I will give your appeal my careful attention.

**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. 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 instructor EARLY in the semester if you need any assistance in this or any other areas.

**Assignments:**

1. **Impact and Barriers of Code on Stakeholders**
   - Due by the beginning of class 2/11
   - Length 3 pages
   - 15 points
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/56.pdf

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 children in foster care, 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**
   Due beginning of class on 2/4, 2/18, 2/25, 3/4, and 4/1
   Length 1 page maximum each
   **25 points**
   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 and submitted 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.

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

3. Another Place at the Table Reaction Paper
Due by the beginning of class on 3/11
Length 3-4 pages
20 points
This 3-4 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? Suggest two or more potential solutions for each systemic factor you identified.

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

4. Good Practice Research Paper
Due prior to beginning of class on 5/6
Length 6-8 pages
30 points
This 6-8 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 5-7 references will be utilized; almost 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 instructor 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. Give your specific ideas on how to help it work better and provide support for these ideas.

Papers are due on Week 15. Papers shall not exceed maximum of 8 pages.

A grading rubric for this assignment is available on Learn@UW.
5. **Class Participation**  
   **Self-Evaluation of Participation due prior to the beginning of class on 5/6**  
   **10 points**

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 make sure you sign the attendance sheet each week. Please 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. Paragraphs 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 Critical Reading Review).
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.

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.
• 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

Academic Misconduct:
Please note the following definition of academic honesty. “Academic honesty requires that the course work (drafts, reports, examinations, papers) a student presents to an instructor honestly and accurately reflects the student’s own academic efforts. UWS14.03 cites that (among other things) Academic Misconduct Subject to Disciplinary Action includes an “act in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation”.
Examples include, but are not limited to: “cutting and pasting text from the web without quotation marks or proper citation; paraphrasing from the web without crediting the source, using another person’s ideas, words or research and presenting it as one’s own by not properly crediting the originator, etc.

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.

Written Assignment Policy:
All written assignments are to be either typed or computer-generated. Please format these assignments using one-inch margins, double-spacing, and a Times New Roman 12-point font. Always include a cover sheet (not counted as one of the required pages) with the title of the paper, your name, the date turned into the instructor, course number, and course title (do not put this information on the first page of your paper). All assignments should be checked thoroughly for correct spelling and grammar.

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.

Student Accommodations:
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 my students to have an excellent learning experience.
Technology in class:
A minimal level of external distractions is essential to a productive learning environment. Cell phones and iPods are not to be used in class, and laptop computers/tablets/iPads are to be used only for unobtrusive note-taking (and only if there are no complaints from classmates). If you choose to use a computer in class, you cannot have a web browser open at any time.

Attendance & Class Participation Policy:
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 fellow 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 two per semester. Two points will be deducted from your grade for each unexcused absence incurred.

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. The following is a list of expectations of student’s display of personal integrity.

- Please turn off cell phones before entering the classroom.
- Respect another person’s viewpoint with which you may disagree.
- Respect another student’s right to be heard.
- Read the material and be prepared for class.
- Actively participate in classroom discussion.

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

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.