I. Catalog Description

Considers legislation, policies, and institutional structures that affect children, youth, and families across multiple service systems.

II. Course Overview

This course is a policies and services course within the Child, Youth and Family Welfare focus area. This course is primarily for graduate students in social work and related human service professionals. The purpose of this course is to provide students with a fundamental understanding of national, state and local child and family welfare policies, and to examine how these policies affect or are affected by social, economic and cultural trends, research evidence, and values.

Students will develop skills for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of these policies and services, for identifying, analyzing and evaluating their intersections, and for understanding their effects on children, youth and families. Particular attention will be paid to the causal logic underpinning child and family policies, how policies are implemented in practice, and to the intended and unintended outcomes of these policies. Students will enhance skills for critically consuming research and use the existing research literature as a tool for evaluating the successes and failures of various policies relevant to children, youth, and families.
### III. Course Competencies and Practice Behaviors

Successful completion of this course implies that students will have progressed towards achieving some of the core social work competencies by demonstrating the following practice behaviors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies addressed in course</th>
<th>Practice behaviors addressed in course</th>
<th>Assignments measuring behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice. | Evaluate ethical dilemmas related to problems and issues in the children, youth and families area. | Policy Portfolio  
Class Participation |
|                                  |                                        |                                |
|                                  | Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law. |                                |
| 2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments. | • Identifying and synthesizing multiple sources of knowledge to understand policy and practice issues related to children, youth and families.  
• Identifying and evaluating models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation that are appropriate to children, youth, and families | Policy Portfolio  
Critical Research Review  
Presentation  
Class Participation |
|                                  | Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information. |                                |
| 2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice. | Demonstrating an understanding of how culture and values affect diverse conceptualizations and constructions of social problems and solutions relevant to children, youth, and families | Policy Portfolio  
Critical Research Review  
Presentation  
Class Participation |
<p>|                                  | Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. |                                |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice.</th>
<th>Appraising how mechanisms of oppression and discrimination impact various groups and outcomes relevant to children, youth, and families</th>
<th>Policy Portfolio Presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice.</td>
<td>Critically evaluating and utilizing theoretical and empirical research relevant to the problems and/or populations addressed in the children, youth, and families area</td>
<td>Policy Portfolio Critical Research Review Presentation Class Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research</td>
<td>Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge</td>
<td>Assessing the impact of historical and contemporary contexts on practice and policy in the children, youth and families area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
IV. Course Content/Outline

September 3  
**Introduction to the Course**  
Review of Syllabus & Class Expectations

September 10 **Child Maltreatment Prevention (920/921 -Slack)**  
How to be a Critical Consumer of the Research  
Readings:  
[www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue_briefs/cm_prevention.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue_briefs/cm_prevention.cfm)  

In-class exercise: Practice Critical Research Review

September 17  
**National Child Welfare Policy Overview (920/921 -Slack & Smith)**  
Introduction to and Evidence Base of U.S. Child Welfare Policy  
Readings:  

In-class exercise: Practice Policy Logic Model

September 24  
**Child Welfare Policy, Cont. (920/921 -Smith)**  
Interrogating the Causal Logic of Policy  
Readings:  

October 1 **Test-Based Accountability in Education**  
No Child Left Behind and the Reauthorization Debate  
Readings:  
National Research Council. (2011). *Incentives and Test-Based Accountability in Education.* Committee on Incentives and Test-Based Accountability in Public Education, M. Hout and S.W. Elliott (Eds.). Board on Testing and Assessment, Division of Behavioral and Social
October 8

Creating Safe Contexts for LGBTQ Youth
Within and Across System Needs and Challenges

Readings:
Youth Equality Alliance (2014). Living in the Margins: A Report on the Challenges of LGBTQ Youth in Maryland Education, Foster care, and Juvenile Justice Systems. Baltimore: FreeState Legal Project. [Note: This is also an assigned reading in SW646].

Guest Speaker: June Paul, Briarpatch LGBTQ Youth Group Specialist and SSW PhD Candidate

Due: Assignment 1- Critical Research Review

October 15

Early Childhood Education and Child Care
Race to the Top in Wisconsin
Child care subsidies

Readings:

Guest Speaker: TBA

October 22

The U.S. Economic Safety Net for Low-Income Children and Families
What Is Today’s Safety Net and How Well Does It Work?

Readings:
October 29  

**Child Support Policy**  
Designing Policy for Complex Families  

**Readings:**  

Guest Speaker: David Pate, Professor, UW-Milwaukee Helen Bader School of Social Welfare

**Due: Assignment #2 – Draft of Title Page and Policy Logic Model**

November 5  

**Children’s Mental Health and the Affordable Care Act**  
Issues with Access to Care  

**Readings:**  
http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/reports/2013/rwjf404627  

November 12  

Bias or Disproportional Risk?  

**Readings:**  
November 19  
**Policy Portfolio Presentations (Assignment 4)**
1.
2.
3.
4.

November 26  
**Thanksgiving Break**
Due Friday 11/27 – Assignment 5: Policy Portfolios from Presenters on 11/19

December 3  
**Policy Portfolio Presentations (Assignment 4)**
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.

December 10  
**Course Evaluations**
**Policy Portfolio Presentations (Assignment 4)**
10.
11.
12.
13.

Due Friday 12/11 – Assignment 5: Policy Portfolios from Presenters on 12/3
Due Friday 12/18 – Assignment 5: Policy Portfolios from Presenters on 12/10

V. Reading Materials for the Course (See Weekly Class Descriptions)

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

**Grading Scale and Standards**
Grades will be earned on the following grade point system – a total of 100 points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
<td>outstanding; surpasses expectations in all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>88-93</td>
<td>surpasses expectations in most areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82-87</td>
<td>surpasses expectations in some areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>76-81</td>
<td>meets expectations in most areas; above in others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-75</td>
<td>meets expectations in most areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>64-69</td>
<td>below expectations in all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>64 &amp; below</td>
<td>fails to meet minimal expectations in all areas, not acceptable work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assignment Due Dates and Points
Assignment 1, Due 10/8/2015: Draft of Title Page and Policy Logic Model-10%
Assignment 2, Due 10/29/2015: Critical Review of Research-10%
Assignment 3, Due 10/1/2015-11/12/2015: Class Participation-15%
Assignment 4, Due 11/19/2015-11/10/15: In-class Presentation-15%
Assignment 5, Due 11/27/2015-12/18/2015: Final Policy Portfolio-50%

Assignment Descriptions

1. **Policy Portfolio (multiple components = 85%)**

A separate document describing the components of this assignment in more detail will be posted to Learn@UW.

2. **Class Participation (15%)**

Your grade will be based on the following criteria:

- Students should identify an in-depth news article, research article, or organization report that informs a discussion on topics covered in class from October 1st through November 5th. Pick three classes during this time frame to focus on, bring the article/report to class on each of these weeks, and be prepared to talk about how this piece informed your thinking on the week’s topic. You will turn in the article/report to the instructor on the weeks that you want to be graded for class participation. If the document is too lengthy to print, it is fine to email a pdf or web-link to the instructor prior to the relevant class session.

- I recognize that not everyone is able to engage in class discussions every single week (we all have our “off” days). However, I expect everyone to have completed the readings and to be prepared to discuss and answer questions about them, as well as engage with guest speakers. Turning in articles/reports is not sufficient for earning all 15 class participation points. Your attendance, general pattern of participation, and quality of participation will all factor into this grade component.

Grading Questions

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 fair and careful attention.
Code of Ethics, Student Rights and Responsibilities & Plagiarism
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.

Student Accommodations:
Students who are requesting an accommodation due to a disability are expected to inform the faculty 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.