Social Work 921 Child Welfare Policies and Services
Fall 2016

University of Wisconsin-Madison
School of Social Work
1350 University Avenue
Madison, WI  53706

Instructor:  Kristen Slack, Ph.D.
Class Day and Time:  Thursdays 1:20-3:15
Location:  School of Social Work, Room 110
Office:  School of Social Work, Room 215
Office Hours:  By appointment
Phone:  608-263-4630
E-mail:  ksslack@wisc.edu (preferred mode of contact)

I. Catalog Description

Implications of knowledge from the social and behavioral sciences and public welfare policy on child welfare problems and services.

II. Course Overview

This course is a policy 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.  It is a required course for the IV-E Child Welfare Training students.  The purpose of this course is to provide students with a fundamental understanding of national, state and local child welfare policies and to examine how these policies affect and inform child welfare programs, and how social events and knowledge from the social and behavioral sciences inform child welfare.

Students will develop skills for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of these services and policies, for identifying, analyzing and evaluating their intersections, and for understanding their effects on children, youth and families.  Particular attention will be paid to the ways in which involvement in multiple service systems may affect children, youth, and families, as well as innovations in policies and programs to serve families with multiple needs.  The course primarily focuses on the public child welfare, but other policies and services affecting children and families will also be identified and analyzed.
### 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>
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<th>Competencies addressed in course</th>
<th>Practice behaviors addressed in course</th>
<th>Assignments measuring behavior</th>
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| 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 Discussion  
DeShaney Discussion |
| 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 is appropriate to children, youth, and families | Policy Portfolio  
Class Discussion  
Presentation  
DeShaney Discussion |
| 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  
Class Discussion  
Presentation |
| 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. | | |
| 2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice. | Appraising how mechanisms of oppression and discrimination impact various groups and outcomes relevant to children, youth, and families | Policy Portfolio 
Class Discussion 
Presentation |
|---|---|---|
| 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. | Critically evaluating and utilizing theoretical and empirical research relevant to the problems and/or populations addressed in the children, youth, and families area | Policy Portfolio 
Class Discussion 
Presentation |
| 2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research | 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 | Assessing the impact of historical and contemporary contexts on practice and policy in the children, youth and families area | Policy Portfolio 
Class Discussion 
Presentation |
| 2.1.9 Respond to contexts that shape practice | 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. | | Policy Portfolio 
Class Discussion 
DeShaney Discussion |
IV. Course Content/Outline

September 8
Introduction to the Course
Review of syllabus & Class expectations

September 15
The Deshaney Case
Guest Speaker: Ellen Smith, Faculty, SSW

Readings:

September 22
National Child Welfare Policy Overview

Readings:

In-Class Exercise: Policy Logic Model

September 29
Critical Review of Research: Selected Policy Topics

Readings (practice CRR template with two articles; skim others):

In-Class Exercise: Critical Review of Research

October 6
Overview of Federal Policy in K-12 Education

Readings:
### October 13

**Creating Safe Contexts for LGBTQ Youth**

**Guest Speaker:** June Paul, Briarpatch LGBTQ Youth Group Specialist and Doctoral Student, SSW

**Readings:**


**Due by 11 p.m.: Policy Logic Model (Assignment 1)**

### October 20

**Disproportionality and Disadvantage in Child Welfare and Education Systems**

**Readings:**


### October 27

**Child Welfare Policy and the Social Work Profession:**

**Examining the Connections**

**Guest Speaker:** Joan Zlotnick, Senior Consultant, NASW and Consultation and Partnership Development

**Readings:** TBA
Due by 11 p.m.: Critical Reading Review (Assignment 2)

November 3

**Out-of-Home Care Policy**

**Guest Speaker:** Jonelle Brom, Department of Children and Families

**Readings:** TBA

November 10

**Early Child Care and Education**

**Guest Speaker:** Alejandra Pilarz

**Readings:**


November 17

**U.S. Social Safety Net Policy**

**Readings:**


**NOVEMBER 24-THANKSGIVING-NO CLASS**
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**Final Policy Portfolio Due for Presenters on 12/1/16**

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**Final Policy Portfolio Due for Presenters on 12/8/16**

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V. Text and Resources for the Course

Required Text:

Select Resources for Policy Portfolio Assignment:
U.S. Children’s Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb


Wisconsin statutes related to child abuse and neglect: http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/children/CPS/statsadmin/statsINDX.htm


Wisconsin policy memoranda: http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/children/CPS/polmemo/polmemoINDX.htm


Center for Education Policy Analysis: https://cepa.stanford.edu

National Education Association: http://www.nea.org


Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction: http://dpi.wi.gov

Human Rights Campaign: http://www.hrc.org

American Civil Liberties Union: https://www.aclu.org/

National Child Traumatic Stress Network: http://www.nctsn.org/resources/policy-issues#q1

National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma, and Mental Health: http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org

Justice Policy Institute: http://www.justicepolicy.org/

Coalition for Juvenile Justice: http://www.juvjustice.org

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 (100%)

A  94-100  Outstanding; surpasses expectations in all areas
AB  88-93  Surpasses expectations in most areas
B  82-87  Surpasses expectations in some areas
BC  76-81  Meets expectations in most areas; above in others
C  70-75  Meets expectations in most areas
D  64-69  Below expectations in all areas
F  64 & below  Fails to meet minimal expectations in all areas

Grading Questions
Your goal for this and other courses should be to make the most of your learning experience, and not simply “get an A”. Your expectations about the grades you receive on assignments and exams should be wholly based on (1) the extent to which you respond accurately to assignment or exam objectives, (2) the quality of your writing (to include grammar and spelling, organization and clarity), (3) the extent to which you demonstrate critical thinking related to course readings and topics, and (4) the extent and quality of your participation in class. 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, nor on what you “need” to get into another degree program. If you have an issue with a grade you receive in this course, please document the reasons for your appeal in writing with specific attention to the four points raised above.

Assignments:

I. Policy Portfolio (85%)
   Assignment 1 (Policy Logic Model)-10%
   Assignment 2 (Critical Review of Research)-10%
   Assignment 3 (In Class Presentation)-15%
   Assignment 4 (Final Policy Portfolio)-50%

II. Class Participation and Attendance (15%)
   • 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 to group activities. We will all work to maintain a class environment where everyone can have a chance to speak, and with respect always given to the opinions of others even when you do not personally agree.
• Regular attendance is expected and missing class sessions will likely affect your final grade. Please let me know ahead of time if you will be missing class. If you are unable to attend a class, take the initiative to get any handouts from other class members. You are responsible for asking a classmate to share notes.

**Code of Ethics, Professional Conduct & Plagiarism**
Incoming BSW and MSW students read and signed electronic forms of the NASW Code of Ethics, the School of Social Work Plagiarism Policy and the School’s Principles of Professional Conduct. In doing so, they agreed that while in the BSW or MSW Program they would honor the Code of Ethics and Principles of Professional Conduct, 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 and in the preparation of course assignments. *A plagiarized assignment can result in a failing grade for this course.*

**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.