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 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>
<tr>
<th>Competencies addressed in course</th>
<th>Practice behaviors addressed in course</th>
<th>Assignments measuring behavior</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.</td>
<td>Evaluate ethical dilemmas related to problems and issues in the children, youth and families area.</td>
<td>Policy Portfolio, DeShaney Assignment and Discussion, Class Discussion, Extra Credit</td>
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<td><strong>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.</strong></td>
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| 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 Assignment |
| **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 |
2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice.

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.

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.

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.

<table>
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<th>Policy Portfolio</th>
<th>Class Discussion</th>
<th>Presentation</th>
<th>Extra Credit Assignment</th>
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<td>Appraising how mechanisms of oppression and discrimination impact various groups and outcomes relevant to children, youth, and families</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>Assessing the impact of historical and contemporary contexts on practice and policy in the children, youth and families area</td>
<td>DeShaney Assignment</td>
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IV. Course Content/Outline

September 3  Introduction to the Course
Review of syllabus & Class expectations
Parameters of Course

September 10  Prevention in Child Welfare (Meet in Room 114 920/921)
Dr. Kristi Shook-Slack
In-class small group exercise: Practice Critical Research Review
Readings:

September 17  National Child Welfare Policy Overview and Using a logic Model (Meet in Room 114 920/921)
In-class small group exercise: Practice Policy Logic Model
Readings:

September 24  Child Welfare Policy (Meet in Room 114 920/921)
Practice Implications and Implementation Issues
October 1  Emerging Policy in Child Welfare  
**Readings:** Child Welfare Issue Briefs: Human Trafficking  
[https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/trafficking.pdf](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/trafficking.pdf)  
Migration  
**Due:** Assignment 1 - Critical Review of the Research Paper

October 8  The DeShaney Case; Child Welfare Policy and Practice in Action  
**Due:** Deshaney Notes

October 15  Out of Home Care  
Foster Care Policy, Kinship Care, Permanency Planning, Fostering Connections  
**Guest Speaker:** Jonelle Brom, out of home care section manager, DCF  
**Recommended:** Youth Equality Alliance, “Living in the Margins: A report on the challenges of LGBTQ youth in Maryland education, foster care, and juvenile justice systems” 2014, Baltimore: FreeState Legal Project

October 22  The Indian Child Welfare Act and WICWA  
**Guest Speaker:** Heather Halonie, Training Manager for the Intertribal Child Welfare Training Partnership  

October 29  Foster Youth and Emerging Adults Policy and Services  
**Guest Speakers:** Chris Lenske, DCF  
**Due:** Assignment #2 – Logic Model

November 5  Impacting Policy Change  
How do we evaluate practice?  
Advocating for Reform  
**Guest Speaker:** Tyler Oettinger, CQI Supervisor DCF  
**Readings:**  
November 12  **Racial and Ethnic Disproportionality in Child and Family Welfare Systems**

**Readings:**

November 19  **Policy Presentations**
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

November 26  **Thanksgiving Break**

Due: Policy Portfolios from Presenters 1-6

December 3  **Policy Presentations**
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.

December 10  **Final Class/Evaluations**
**Policy Presentations (Portfolios from Presenters 13-17 due 12/17 at 1pm)**
13.
14.
15.
16.
17.

Due: Policy Portfolios from Presenters 7-12
V. Text and Reading Materials for the course

Required Text

Readings
All readings are posted online at learn@UW

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%)

Please note you *must complete all the assignments in this class* (but of course you will want to because they will all be interesting and fun!)

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, not acceptable work

Policy Portfolio- 85%
   Assignment #1=10%
   Assignment #2=15%
   Assignment #3=20%
   Assignment #4=40%

Participation - 10%

Deshaney Notes 5%

Extra Credit (3%) – All or nothing

Assignments

1. **Policy Portfolio (85%)**
   a. **Assignment 1 (Critical Review of the Research Paper) (10%)**
   This assignment requires that you identify an empirical article—an article that summarizes a research study which uses quantitative or qualitative data (and not an article that summarizes literature or discusses a research question in the absence of data)—and write a critical reading review. The papers should be 3-4 pages *maximum*, double spaced, 12-point font, and standard margins. In each, you will summarize (no more than 1 page) and critique (at least 2 pages) the substantive information in the reading. Additional Instructions in the Policy Portfolio Instructions
b. Assignment 2 (Policy Logic Model) (15%)
This assignment requires that you complete a logic model using a child welfare policy or a section of a child welfare policy. The logic model will include a summary of the policy (or section of policy), the Inputs (social/cultural/economic/political and demographic factors), The Throughputs (intermediate outcomes, resources needs and the procedures) and the Outputs (Intended and unintended outcomes)

c. Assignment 3 (In Class Presentation) (20%)
Each student will have 15 minutes to summarize their policy portfolio. The presentation should include a summary of the policy you have studied, the research findings to date, the historical context, the intended and unintended outcomes, your assessment of the policy and your recommendations. The presentation should contain at least 10 minutes of information presenting, followed by 5-10 minutes of question and answer. This assignment will be graded on the clarity of the information presented, the depth of knowledge of your topic and the ability to generate class discussion.

d. Assignment 4 (Final Policy Portfolio) (40%)
The policy portfolio is a culmination of your semester’s work. Detailed instructions for the final policy portfolio will be posted at learn@UW. The final portfolio will include your policy logic model, a title page and executive summary, a summary of the policy and historical context, the causal logic of the policy including an annotated bibliography of the research, your assessment of the policy, and your recommendations. The paper will contain between 10-15 pages of content. Good grammar and spelling, clarity, and organization are expected; lack of these things can significantly affect your grade. As advanced standing students, it is expected that you turn in professional, high quality products that reflect a thorough understanding of your topic. High quality products will be included in a policy compendium of all assignments from the 920 and 921 classes.

2. Notes on DeShaney Book (5%)

Bring to class your notes on the following (you will turn your notes in):
- Of all the actors in Joshua's case, rank order who you think was most responsible for the outcome of Joshua's case?
- Write at least one page justifying (explain) your rank order - thus for every item listed, justify why you ranked he/she/it that way.
- Your choices are: Winnebago County, the 14th Amendment, Randy, Ann Kemmeter, the State of Wisconsin, Melody, Doctors who examined Joshua, AACWA, CAPTA, the Oshkosh police and any other actors you find relevant.

No partial credit will be given.
3. **Class Participation and Attendance (10%)**

Your grade will be based on the following criteria:
- On time for class
- 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
- Demonstrating a good sense of humor
- 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, being an active contributor in group activities. It is not only good practice for being a citizen of the world and for some of you, a social worker, 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.

Regular attendance is taken for granted and attendance will be taken. 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.

**Outstanding Participation - Accomplishes all the above items (9-10)**  
**Good Participation - Accomplishes most but not all the above items (7-8)**  
**Fair Participation - Accomplishes a few of the above items (6 and under)**

Please let me know if at any point you have suggestions about how to improve the class environment. You will be asked at the end of the semester to put in writing what you think your participation grade should be and why on all of the above items.

4. **Extra Credit (3%)**

Sign up for a time to bring to class a newspaper article that within the last two weeks discusses a child welfare issue in the news. I highly recommend The New York Times, Washington Post, Chicago Tribune—a major national source for child welfare (not a blog or op-ed). Local papers are acceptable if the article you have chosen is about a local issue. That is to say, if the article you choose is on national changes to our educational system, don’t use the local paper. The article can be about policy or practice and it can be an article on child wellbeing (e.g. education, health, income) as well as public child welfare services (child protective services, foster care and adoption). Be prepared talk about
your article briefly in class. Also turn in a one page paper on the date for which you signed up (along with your article) that covers the following items:

1) **Briefly** what the article was about (2 or 3 sentences)
2) How this article has implications for Children, Youth or Families
3) What type of interventions are needed (policy or practice)
4) Ethical issues that the article presents

**You must write on all of these points in order to get your 3 points.**
**No partial points will be given.**

**Grading Questions**
I am always happy to talk with students about their grades and am willing to review grading as long as students have specific points they want to make. It is helpful if these concerns are expressed in writing before meeting. I am always willing to talk with students about how they may do better in the course and strongly suggest that if you have concerns that you see me as early in the semester as possible.

**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.