

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK  
BSSW Program**

**SW461 - Child Welfare Management I: History, Programs, and Policies  
Fall 2005**

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### **Program Mission**

The BSSW program at the University of Tennessee exists to fulfill a need for disciplined, highly educated and trained generalist social workers to help people improve their social functioning in a technologically complex, culturally diverse, and rapidly changing society. There is a focus on the reciprocal relationships between persons and their environments. Social workers are doers; they are problem-solvers who are able to intervene in multiple-level systems and perform various professional roles. Their actions are guided and informed by a broad knowledge-base, code of ethics, and professional values. Social workers are educated and trained to do things right as well as to do the right thing.

The mission of the BSSW program is to develop generalist social workers who are strategic thinkers, life-long learners and opinion shapers. The knowledge base, skills, and values necessary for generalist practice are taught in an environment that fosters professional development and prepares students for critical thinking throughout their careers. We are dedicated to preparing practitioners for the challenges of the twenty-first century. Since the amount of knowledge doubles approximately every five years, what is taught today may soon be obsolete. Our challenge, therefore, lies in the on-going development and implementation of a curriculum that prepares and energizes students for generalist practice today and in the future.

### **Program Goals**

Provision of education and training that enable students to become generalist social work practitioners who:

1. are committed to advancing social and economic justice and the principles, values, and ethics that guide the social work profession;
2. are committed to evidence-based practice;
3. are grounded in systems theory and operate within a person-in-the-environment framework;
4. use the problem-solving process to intervene in multiple-level client systems;
5. have an understanding of human diversity and special populations that informs practice interventions;
6. use critical thinking, evaluative, and leadership skills to address the needs of a complex, changing society;
7. are committed to continuous development of professional self.

### **Course Objectives:**

The objectives of this course are to provide students the opportunity to understand and analyze:

- the current and historical context of child welfare policies and programs in Tennessee and the United States;
- the relationship of racism and poverty to child welfare;
- the impact of child abuse, neglect, and co-occurring issues on children and families;
- Attachment theory and its implications in child psychosocial development and in child welfare practice;

- Systems theory as it applies to families and child welfare practice
- the guiding principles of the Tennessee Department of Children's Services practice model with particular attention to:
  1. The "one child-one worker" seamless service delivery system
  2. Permanency planning and the use of "concurrent planning" for permanency
  3. Family-centered practice and engaging families
  4. The strengths perspective as basis for assessment
  5. The use of "child and family team meetings"
  6. Culturally competent child welfare practice;
- state and federal policies and programs that outline the scope of practice in child protective services (CPS), foster care services, adoptions, and juvenile justice.

### **Behavioral Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course students are expected to be able to:

- discuss the current child welfare philosophy and structure of the Tennessee Department of Children's Services;
- identify and describe each of the roles of the child welfare team of professionals in Tennessee including:
  1. Child Protective Services (CPS)
  2. Foster care
  3. Adoption
  4. Juvenile justice
- discuss situations that warrant involvement of the various professionals listed above and the impact of each role on interventions with families;
- explain the legal definitions of child abuse and neglect, laws related to reporting child abuse, and reporting requirements in Tennessee;
- identify factors contributing to fatigue and burnout among child welfare professionals and list preventative measures for these;
- discuss social work values with regard to child welfare practice;
- demonstrate the ability to engage in critical thinking and problem solving regarding child welfare through successful completion of class activities and assignments;
- discuss the value of implementing evidence-based child welfare practice.

### **Course Description**

A study of the child welfare system that examines history, policies and programs, both state and federal, pertinent to child maltreatment and juvenile justice.

### **Course Rationale**

This course is designed to prepare students for entry-level child welfare practice. A focus on best practices will increase students' knowledge and skills for evidence-based, culturally competent, strengths-based, and family-centered child welfare practice.

### **Attendance Policy**

Students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive punctually. Attendance will be taken in each class session. Because emergencies and illnesses do occur, you will be allowed up to 3 absences during the semester. If you are absent for more than 3 class sessions during the semester, your final grade will be lowered by one letter grade. Being late to class two times will equal one absence.

### **Course Requirements**

The course format will be a combination of lecture, speakers, video, class discussion and activities. Students are expected to read, critically analyze, and discuss readings. Participation in class is a requirement and students should come to each class prepared to discuss the reading assigned for that class session. Grades will be based on 3 written assignments, 2 exams, and attendance/participation. All written assignments will be completed using APA style.

## Disability Services

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability please contact the Office of Disability Services at 191 Hoskins Library at (865) 974-6087. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

## Honor Statement

An essential feature of the University of Tennessee is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic dishonesty. By enrollment in this class, you pledge that you will neither knowingly give, nor receive, any inappropriate assistance in academic work in SW 461, thus affirming your own personal commitment to honor and integrity (*Hilltopics*, 2004).

## Inclement Weather Policy

Class will be cancelled only if the University is closed due to inclement weather. Campus and local radio and TV stations will be notified so that appropriated announcements may be made. If class is cancelled, any assignments due that day will be due the next time class meets

## Required Texts

Crosson-Tower, C. (2004). *Exploring child welfare: A practice perspective*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Samantrai, K. (2004). *Culturally competent public child welfare practice*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole

## Other Required Readings

In addition to assigned readings from our texts, there are several articles designated in our syllabus which are also required readings. They are on reserve in Hodges Library and can be accessed through *Online @ UT*.

## Instructor's Policy

Any assignments and/or exams that are not completed will be recorded as "0". Only in case of a verified emergency will make-up examinations or assignment extensions be permitted. If there are extenuating circumstances, the instructor must be informed **prior** to the date/time of the exam or the due date of the assignment.

## Grading

Students will be evaluated by total points earned in this course as outlined above. No extra credit is permitted in this course. The grading scale by total points is as follows:

270-300	A	210-224	C
255-269	B+	180-223	D
240-254	B	179-below	F
225-239	C+		

## Research Paper (100 points)

Write a 10 to 12 page analytical/research paper about one of the major child welfare issues covered in the course. (You must discuss your topic with the instructor before writing the paper.) Possible topics include: racism, poverty, addiction, homelessness, domestic violence, and sexual abuse. Other topics may also be acceptable. Your paper should be APA style using a 12-point font (page one is the title page & the last page is the reference page; an abstract is not needed). You should use at least 5 or more current peer-reviewed research articles for references. Your paper should address:

- the issue to be researched
- overall scope of the problem
- etiology of the issue
- a thorough analysis of the issue considering the "family-centered" child welfare practice

- approach
- best-practice intervention strategies according to current literature

Your paper will be evaluated on the clarity and strength of your writing (including grammar, punctuation, and syntax), use of APA style, and the breadth and strength of your analysis (including the appropriate use of source materials).

**Brian A. Settlement Agreement Reaction/Critical Analysis Paper (60 points)**

The *Brian A. Settlement Agreement* is required reading for the class. We will discuss the Brian A. lawsuit and settlement agreement in during class sessions. Students may be access the settlement agreement online at <http://tennessee.gov/youth/federal/settlement/>

Each student will read the settlement agreement and write a 5 to 8 page reaction paper focusing on:

- The implication of the conditions that resulted in the lawsuit and subsequent agreement (What was going on that made a lawsuit necessary? Or, was the lawsuit necessary at all? Why do you think it was or wasn't needed? Be sure to consider both the working environment for practitioners as well as services for children and families.)
- The potential parallels and conflicts between the *Brian A.* agreement and the Social Work Code of Ethics. What are the potential similarities and inconsistencies? How could you manage these as a child welfare practitioner?
- Do you think the *Brian A.* settlement will improve the well-being of children and families who use the child welfare system in Tennessee? If so, how? If not, why?

**Burnout: Plan for Self-Care (30 points)**

Burnout, vicarious trauma, and compassion fatigue are potential risks faced by social workers and child welfare practitioners. This assignment requires you to take a proactive approach to these risks by devising a plan for: 1. the prevention of burnout; and 2. early intervention for yourself if you do experience vicarious trauma and/or compassion fatigue. In other words, how are you going to take care of yourself?

Review the current literature about these issues and then discuss:

- How will you minimize your risk for burnout?
- Since we all respond differently to situations and stress, what are the signs and symptoms **you** are most likely to manifest if affected by one of these issues?
- What are your best options for managing these symptoms if they do appear?

**Exams (2 @ 100 points each)**

There will be two exams in this class. The first exam will be given around mid-term on October 6<sup>th</sup> and will cover information covered in the class through October 4<sup>th</sup>. The second exam will be given at the end of the course on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Each of these exams will be worth 100 points. The format for the exams will include: essay questions, short answer, definitions, and multiple choice.

**Attendance and Participation (10 points)**

Attendance (as discussed in the attendance policy) and participation in class discussions & activities are class requirements.

**Tentative Course Outline**

**Unit I**

***Current and historical context of child welfare policies and programs in Tennessee and the United States***

**August 25**

Course Introduction  
Review syllabus

**\*Begin reading the *Brian A. Settlement Agreement***

Access online at <http://tennessee.gov/youth/federal/settlement/>

**\*We will begin discussing the settlement agreement in class on September 6. You should complete reading the agreement by that date.**

- August 30** History of Child Welfare in the United States  
**Assignment: Read Crosson-Tower, chapter 1  
Samantrai, chapter 1**
- September 1** International Child Welfare  
**Assignment: Unicef & International Social Service, (2004). Improving protection for children without parental care: A call for international standards—A joint working paper.**
- Access the working paper online at**  
[http://www.unicef.org/videoaudio/PDFs/call\\_international\\_standards.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/videoaudio/PDFs/call_international_standards.pdf)
- Lewis, et al (2004). Progress report on the development of child abuse prevention, identification and treatment systems in Europe. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 28, 93-111.**
- September 6** Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS)  
Practice Model and Guiding Principles  
**Assignment: Read *Brian A. Settlement Agreement***
- September 8** TN DCS Practice Model; *Brian A. Settlement Agreement*
- September 13** TN DCS Practice Model and the *NASW Code of Ethics*
- September 15** Cultural Competence & Cultural Responsiveness  
**Assignment: Read Samantrai, pp. 29-36**  
**Smith & Devore, (2004). African American children in the child welfare and kinship system: from exclusion to over inclusion. *Children & Youth Services Review*, 26(5), 427-446.**
- Unit II**  
***Social context of Child Welfare Practice***
- September 20** Families: Definition, Issues, and Family Systems  
**Assignment: Read Crosson-Tower, chapter 2  
Samantrai, pp. 80-81**
- September 22** Racism & Poverty  
**Assignment: Read Crosson-Tower, chapter 3**
- September 27** Violence, Addiction, and Homelessness  
**Assignment: Read Crosson-Tower, chapter 4**

- September 29** Teenage Pregnancy & Parenting  
**Assignment: Read Crosson-Tower, chapter 10**
- October 4** Social context considerations when engaging families  
Worker burnout, compassion fatigue, and vicarious trauma  
**Assignment: Read Samantrai, pp. 150-152**
- October 6** Exam I  
*Unit III*  
**Child Abuse and Neglect: Definitions, Impact, and Co-occurring issues**
- October 11** Child Abuse & Neglect  
**Assignment: Read Crosson-Tower, pp. 184-210**
- October 13** **Fall Break—Enjoy!**
- October 18** Child Abuse & Neglect  
Impact of abuse & neglect  
**Assignment: Read Samantrai, pp. 69-70**  
**\*\*Burnout Assignment Due\*\***
- October 20** Attachment theory & implications  
**Assignment: Read Samantrai, pp. 64-69**
- October 25** Loss & grief  
**Assignment: Read Fish & Chapman, (2004). Mental health risks to infants and toddlers in foster care. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 32(2), 121-140.**
- Unit IV*  
**Areas of Child Welfare Practice**
- October 27** **Child Protective Services (CPS)**  
Case management  
Assessment  
Court intervention & juvenile justice  
Reporting Abuse  
**Assignment: Read Crosson-Tower, pp. 211-226**
- November 1** **TN DCS Child Protective Services & Functional Assessment**
- November 3** **Foster Care**  
**Assignment: Read Crosson-Tower, chapter 11**  
**\*\*Reaction Paper Due\*\***

- November 8 Adoption**  
**Assignment:** Read Crosson-Tower, chapter 12 Hughes, (1999). Adopting children with attachment problems. *Child Welfare*, 78(5), 541-560.
- November 10 Court-based services**  
**Assignment:** Read Crosson-Tower, chapter 9
- November 15 Family-based services**  
**Assignment:** Read Crosson-Tower, chapter 8
- November 17 Residential services**  
**Assignment:** Read Crosson-Tower, chapter 13
- November 22 Resources**  
**Formal & informal**  
**Assignment:** Read Crosson-Tower, chapters 5 & 6
- November 24 Thanksgiving holiday—Enjoy!**
- November 29 TN DCS Case Management**  
**Assignment:** Read Samantrai, pp. 117-126
- December 1 Exam II**
- December 6 Course evaluations & wrap up**  
**\*\*Research paper due\*\***