

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

**Syllabus: SW540 GENERAL TOPICS IN SOCIAL WORK: CHILD WELFARE
POLICY AND SERVICES**

Spring 2006

CODE OF CONDUCT:

It is the student's responsibility to have read the College of Social Work Ethical Academic and Professional Conduct code that is in the College of Social Work MSSW Handbook (<http://www.csw.utk.edu/mssw/>).

THE HONOR STATEMENT:

An essential feature of The University of Tennessee is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the University, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity (*Hilltopics, 2005*).

DISABILITY:

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

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course establishes a connection between child welfare policy and services, and social work practice. It builds upon the foundation course in social welfare policy, and enables students to use an action-based advocacy approach to provide policy-informed services and to participate in policy implementation and change. The history, evolution and current status of child welfare policies and services in the United States are presented and critically analyzed in terms of their responsiveness to the needs of the society in general and to the needs of vulnerable, high risk groups in particular, children, youth and families, within the principles of equality, social and economic justice and fairness, non-discrimination, and cultural diversity. Second, theoretical frameworks pertaining to formulation and analysis of child welfare policies are addressed. Current child welfare policies and services as well as the contemporary economic, social, political, and organizational processes, factors and forces shaping these policies are examined within these frameworks. Finally, professional self-development for competent child welfare policy practice is emphasized.

COURSE RATIONALE:

This course is one of a series of electives courses, along with Substance Abuse and Policy, Aging and Health Care Policy, and Advanced Policy Analysis and Action, providing

the students with the knowledge about, and orientation to, the integration of policy and practices into the designs and functioning of child welfare policies, programs, and services. Through their participation in this course, students will appreciate and learn the place and influence of child welfare services and policies in the society and make professional use of them for the attainment, maintenance and/or enhancement of the quality of health and well being of their clients.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the course, students' will **have** acquired the following knowledge and skills (through course activities, assignments and/or exams):

1. Knowledge of sociopolitical-history, mission and philosophy of child welfare policies and practices guiding us into the second millennium and twenty-first century;
2. Knowledge of the etiology and epidemiology of child welfare **issues** i.e., child abuse and neglect, child maltreatment;
3. Critically assess the complex organizational, financing, and regulation of the current child welfare system, especially as it relates to vulnerable populations served by the child welfare system;
4. Define and critically discuss current child welfare policy and practice dilemmas involved with prevention and remediation of child maltreatment;
5. Apply the NASW Code of Ethics to value conflicts inherent in child welfare policy formulation, practice, and service delivery;
6. Describe and critically assess the effectiveness of strategies for prevention of child abuse and neglect;
7. Comprehend the relationship between policy and practice decisions for dependent youth, available financing for services, and access to **services** that hinder service delivery to unserved, under-served, and over-represented populations;
8. Understand the importance of consumer perspectives on child welfare services and policies; including child and family rights, self-help movements, and advocacy programs;
9. Understand the implication of child welfare policies for social work practice and program management;
10. Utilize explanatory theories for child maltreatment to identify significant causal factors, complete an ecological-systems assessment, and develop appropriate theory-based interventions to prevent or remedy child maltreatment.