

**The University of Tennessee  
College of Social Work  
BSSW Program**

**SW 461 – Child Welfare I: History, Programs, and Policies**

**FALL 2007 (3 credit hours)**

|                    |                  |                      |                           |
|--------------------|------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Instructor:</b> | Christy Hickman  | <b>Time:</b>         | T/R 2:10 - 3:25 PM        |
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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 world without borders. 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 today's complex pluralistic world. 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:

- are committed to advancing social and economic justice and the principles, values, and ethics that guide the social work profession
- are committed to evidence-based practice
- are grounded in systems theory and operate within a person-in-the-environment framework
- use the problem-solving process to intervene in multiple-level client systems
- have an understanding of human diversity, special populations, and domestic and international challenges, that informs practice interventions
- use critical thinking, evaluative, and leadership skills to address the needs of a complex, changing global world
- 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;
  7. 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
  5. discuss situations that warrant involvement of the various professionals listed above and the impact of each role on interventions with families;
  6. explain the legal definitions of child abuse and neglect, laws related to reporting child abuse, and reporting requirements in Tennessee;
  7. discuss social work values with regard to child welfare practice;
  8. demonstrate the ability to engage in critical thinking and problem solving regarding child welfare through successful completion of class activities and assignments;
  9. discuss the value of implementing evidence-based child welfare practice.

**Course Description**

SW 461 is 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.

**Disability Services**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability please contact the Office of Disability Services at 2227 Dunford Hall 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*, 2007).

### **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

### **Course Format & 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.**

### **Required Text**

Crosson-Tower, C. (2007). *Exploring child welfare: A practice perspective*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

### **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 Blackboard/*Online @ UT*.

### **Suggested Text**

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

### **Grading**

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

|         |    |           |   |
|---------|----|-----------|---|
| 180-200 | A  | 140-149   | C |
| 170-179 | B+ | 120-139   | D |
| 160-169 | B  | 119-below | F |
| 150-159 | C+ |           |   |

### **Instructor's Policy**

Any alternative arrangements such as make-up exams or deadline extensions for exams or assignments will be permitted at the discretion of the instructor in the case of a verified emergency. 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. Any assignments or exams that are not completed will be recorded as a "0".

### **Research Paper (30 points)**

Write an 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. You should use at least 5 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
- Evidence-based 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).

### **Policy Analysis (30 points) & Presentation (15 points)**

For this assignment, each student will complete an analysis of a federal child welfare law and present the analysis to the class. The analysis will be based on the policy analysis framework presented in class. Detailed instructions for the assignment will be provided & discussed in class.

### **Exams (2 @ 50 points each)**

There will be two exams in this class. The first exam will be given around mid-term on October 9<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 29<sup>th</sup>. Each exam will be worth 50 points.

### **Blackboard/Online discussion board assignments (15 points)**

Participation in all online assignments/discussions is required for all students. There will be 3 of these assignments worth 5 points each. The assignments & their due dates will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard. These assignments will be opportunities for students to engage in critical analysis and thoughtful dialogue of course concepts that emerge in classroom discussions and course readings.

### **Attendance & Participation (10 points)**

Students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive punctually. Attendance will be taken in each class session. Students are allowed to be absent or tardy up to 3 times during the semester without penalty. Each additional absence will result in five (5) points being deducted from the student’s final course grade unless other arrangements have been made in advance with the instructor. Students are expected to attend class and to participate in class discussions and activities in order to earn attendance & participation points.

## **Tentative Course Outline**

### ***Unit I – Current and historical context of child welfare policies and programs in Tennessee and the United States***

**August 23**      Course Introduction  
 Review syllabus and assignments  
 Child Welfare overview  
 The relevance of policy to child welfare  
 A framework for policy analysis

**August 28** History of Child Welfare in the United States  
**Reading:** Crosson-Tower, chapter 1

**August 30** International Child Welfare  
 Reading: Unicef & International Social Service, (2004).  
 Improving protection for children without parental care: A call for  
 international standards—A joint working paper.

Access the paper online at [http://www.unicef.org/videoaudio/PDFs/call\\_international\\_standards.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/videoaudio/PDFs/call_international_standards.pdf)

**September 4** History of Child Welfare in Tennessee

**September 6** Evidence-based practice strategies  
 Family-centered practice  
 Strengths perspective  
 Cultural competence

**September 11** Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS)  
 Practice Model and Guiding Principles  
 The Practice Wheel

**Reading:** *Tennessee Department of Children's Services standards of professional practice for serving children and families: A model of practice*  
 This reading is posted on Blackboard under "Course Documents"

**September 13** TN DCS Practice Model and the *NASW Code of Ethics*

**September 18** Cultural Competence & Cultural Responsiveness  
**Reading:** Crane, K. & Ellis, R. (2004). Benevolent intervention or oppression perpetuated: Minority overrepresentation in children's services. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 9(1), 19-38.

## **Unit II – Social context of Child Welfare Practice**

**September 20** Families: Definition, Issues, and Family Systems  
**Reading:** Crosson-Tower, chapter 2

**September 25** Oppression: Racism, poverty & classism, homophobia & heterosexism  
**Readings:** Crosson-Tower, chapter 3  
 Mendel (2005). *Double Jeopardy: Why the poor pay more. Advocasey* (by the Annie E. Casey Foundation).

**September 27** Violence, Substance Abuse & Addiction, and Homelessness  
**Readings:** Crosson-Tower, chapter 4

**Shim & Haight (2006). Supporting battered women and their children: Perspectives of battered mothers and child welfare professionals. *Children and Youth Services Review*, (28), 620-637.**

**October 2** Teenage Pregnancy & Parenting  
**Reading:** Crosson-Tower, chapter 10

**October 4** The Future of Child Welfare  
**Reading:** Crosson-Tower, chapter 14

**October 9** *Exam I*

**Unit III – Child Abuse and Neglect: Definitions, Impact, and Co-occurring issues**

**October 11** **Fall Break!**

**October 16** Child Abuse & Neglect  
Physical Abuse  
Emotional Abuse  
Sexual Abuse  
Neglect  
**Reading:** Crosson-Tower, chapter 7

**October 18** Child abuse & neglect continued  
Impact of abuse & neglect

**October 23** Attachment theory & implications  
**Reading:** Mennen & O'Keefe (2005). Informed decisions in child welfare: Using attachment theory. *Children and Youth Services Review*, (27), 577-593.

- ***Research Paper is due***

**October 25** Loss & grief  
**Reading:** 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 30** Child Protective Services (CPS)  
Case management

Assessment  
Court intervention & juvenile justice  
Reporting Abuse

**Reading:** *Multiple Response Approach to Child Maltreatment Concerns*

**Access the reading online at:** <http://www.tennessee.gov/youth/services/multrespapproach.htm>

- November 1** Foster Care  
Foster care drift  
Recruitment of resource parents  
**Reading:** Crosson-Tower, chapter 11
- November 6** Adoption  
Permanency  
**Readings:** Crosson-Tower, chapter 12  
Hughes, (1999). Adopting children with attachment problems. *Child Welfare*, 78(5), 541-560.
- November 8** Juvenile Justice  
**Reading:** Crosson-Tower, chapter 9
- November 13** Family-based services  
**Reading:** Crosson-Tower, chapter 8
- November 15** Residential services  
**Reading:** Crosson-Tower, chapter 13
- November 20** School-based services  
**Reading:** Crosson-Tower, chapter 5
- November 22** Thanksgiving!
- November 27** Resources  
Formal & informal  
**Reading:** Crosson-Tower, chapter 6
- November 29** *Exam II*
- December 4** Course evaluations & wrap up  
• *Policy Analysis Assignment is due*