

The University of Tennessee
College of Social Work
BSSW Program

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

FALL 2008 (3 credit hours)

Instructor:	Christy Hickman	Time:	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.

Course Competencies:

By the completion of this course, the students are expected to be able to demonstrate (through course activities, assignments, and/or exams):

- 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;
- 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

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, 2008*).

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*, 4th 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:

270-300	A	210-224	C
255-269	B+	180-209	D
240-254	B	179-below	F
225-239	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 (50 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.) 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 (100 points) & Presentation (20 points)

For this assignment, students will work in pairs or groups of three to complete an analysis of a federal child welfare policy and present the analysis to the class using the following framework:

Policy Analysis Framework Karger & Stoesz (2006)

I. Name & Goals of the Policy (5 points)

- What is the official name & legal citation of the policy?
- What are the stated goals of the policy?
- What are the unstated goals of the policy?

II. Description of the Problem (20 points)

- What problems, needs, or conditions led to the creation of the policy?
- What are the causes of the problem?
- Who is affected by the problem and how are they affected?
- How was the problem handled prior to the implementation of the policy?
- How widespread is the problem currently?

III. History of the Policy (10 points)

- When did the policy originate?
- How has it been changed over time? What is the policy's legislative history?
- Has the policy been challenged in state or federal courts? Why? What was the outcome?

IV. Description of the Policy

Values & Ideology (15 points)

- What are the underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions of this policy?
- What is the NASW position on the issue addressed in the policy?
- Identify the major stakeholders regarding this policy?
- Identify any special interest groups, advocacy groups, or others who support the policy? Why?
- Identify any special interest groups, advocacy groups, or others who would like to eliminate or change the policy? Why?
- Is the political base for the policy bi-partisan? Or, does one political party support it more than another? If so, why?

Benefits & Eligibility (15 points)

- What benefits, services, or goods are provided through this policy?
- What are the criteria for eligibility?
- Who benefits from this policy?
- Who is left out?

Financing & Administration (10 points)

- How is the policy expected to work? What is the delivery system for the policy?
- Are there specific social programs that are associated with this policy? If so, which ones?
- What is the funding base & mechanism for the policy? How often is the funding reauthorized?
- What measures are in place to ensure that the benefits of the policy are provided in a fair and equitable manner?

V. Policy Analysis (25 points)

- What is the knowledge or scientific grounding on which the policy is based?
- Are the goals of the policy just & democratic?
- Describe how the policy is and/or is not meeting the goals it was intended to meet.
- Who is being left out or placed at a disadvantage because of the policy?
- How does (or doesn't) the policy contribute to greater social equality?
- Are the values, beliefs, and assumptions that underlie the policy congruent with NASW Code of Ethics? Why or why not?
- How do the goals of the policy positively affect the redistribution of income, resources, rights, entitlements, rewards, opportunities, and status?
- How do the goals of the policy contribute to a better quality of life for the target population?
- Will the goals adversely affect the quality of life for the target population in any way?
- How does the policy contribute to positive social relations between the target population and the overall society?
- Identify any strengths and weaknesses in the policy not already addressed.
- What are your recommendations for changes in the policy? Why?

Exams (2 @ 50 points each = 100 points)

There will be two exams in this class. Each exam will be worth 50 points.

Exam I will cover:

1. The historical & current influences on "family-centered" child welfare philosophy & practice;
2. Evidence-based child welfare practices including the TN Department of Children's Services Practice Model;
3. The influence of the social context on child welfare & child welfare practice including poverty, racism, violence, substance abuse, attachment, teen pregnancy, homelessness, and family systems & structure;
4. Conditions that warrant child welfare intervention.

Exam II will cover:

1. Legal definitions of child abuse;
2. Federal and state laws governing child welfare practice, including child abuse reporting laws;
3. Roles and responsibilities Child Protective Services, Foster Care & Adoption, and Juvenile Justice;
4. Issues and evidence-based practice in Child Protective Services, Permanency, and Juvenile Justice;
5. Child welfare services provided in home, schools, and private agencies.

Blackboard/Online discussion board assignments (30 points)

Participation in all online assignments/discussions is required for all students. There will be 3 of these assignments worth 10 points each. The due date for each assignment 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.

Discussion Board #1: Discuss your understanding of purpose and implications of the 1989 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child. Then, discuss your response to the United States position on this treaty.

Discussion Board #2: Discuss the relationship between racism and poverty to child welfare. How can evidence-based practice address this relationship?

Discussion Board #3: Discuss the varying timelines among states for terminating parental rights. What are the intended and unintended consequences of shorter timelines? What is your opinion on the duration of the timeline for parents' meeting goals to regain custody? Why?

Attendance & Participation

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 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.

Tentative Course Outline

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

- August 21** Course Introduction
Review syllabus and assignments
Child Welfare overview
The relevance of policy to child welfare
A framework for policy analysis
- August 26** History of Child Welfare in the United States
Reading: Crosson-Tower, chapter 1
- August 28** 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

- September 2** History of Child Welfare in Tennessee
- September 4** Evidence-based practice strategies
Family-centered practice
Strengths perspective
Cultural competence
- September 9** 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 11** TN DCS Practice Model and the *NASW Code of Ethics*

September 16 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 18 Families: Definition, Issues, and Family Systems
Reading: Crosson-Tower, chapter 2

September 23 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 25 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.

September 30 Teenage Pregnancy & Parenting
Reading: Crosson-Tower, chapter 10

October 2 The Future of Child Welfare
Reading: Crosson-Tower, chapter 14

October 7 *Exam I*

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

October 9 **Fall Break!**

October 14 Child Abuse & Neglect
 Physical Abuse
 Emotional Abuse
 Sexual Abuse
 Neglect
Reading: Crosson-Tower, chapter 7

October 16 Child abuse & neglect continued
 Impact of abuse & neglect

Attachment theory & implications
Loss & Grief

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

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 21 Child Protective Services (CPS)
Reading: *Multiple Response Approach to Child Maltreatment Concerns*
Online at: <http://www.tennessee.gov/youth/services/multresapproach.htm>

- ***Research Paper is due***

October 23 Child Protective Services continued
Assessment
Intervention

October 28 Permanency
Foster Care
Foster care drift
Recruitment of resource parents
Reading: Crosson-Tower, chapter 11

October 30 Permanency continued
Adoption
Readings: Crosson-Tower, chapter 12
Hughes, (1999). Adopting children with attachment problems. *Child Welfare*, 78(5), 541-560.

November 4 Juvenile Justice
Risk & prevention factors
Juvenile court
Reading: Crosson-Tower, chapter 9

November 6 Juvenile Justice continued
Youth Development Centers
Residential Programs
Reading: Crosson-Tower, chapter 13

November 11 Resources
Formal & informal
The child & family team
Reading: Crosson-Tower, chapters 6

November 13 Family-based services

Reading: Crosson Tower, chapter 8

November 18 School-based services
Reading: Crosson-Tower, chapter 5

November 20 DCS Guest Speaker

November 25 *Exam II*

November 27 Thanksgiving

December 2 Course evaluations & wrap up
Policy Analysis Presentations
Written Policy Analysis Assignment is due