

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

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

FALL 2009 (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):

1. discuss the current child welfare philosophy and structure of the Tennessee Department of Children's Services;
2. identify and describe each of the roles of the child welfare team of professionals in Tennessee including:
 - Child Protective Services (CPS)
 - Foster care
 - Adoption
 - Juvenile justice
3. discuss situations that warrant involvement of the various professionals listed above and the impact of each role on interventions with families;
4. explain the legal definitions of child abuse and neglect, laws related to reporting child abuse, and reporting requirements in Tennessee;
5. discuss social work values with regard to child welfare practice;
6. demonstrate the ability to engage in critical thinking and problem solving regarding child welfare through successful completion of class activities and assignments;
7. 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*, 2009).

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

Downs, S., Moore, E., & McFadden, E. (2009). *Child welfare and family services: Policies and practice*, 8th 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. These readings can be accessed through the course site on Blackboard/*Online @ UT*.

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:

282 - 300	A	219 - 227	C
270 - 281	A-	210 - 218	C-
258 - 269	B+	198 - 209	D+
249 - 257	B	189 - 197	D
240 - 248	B-	180 - 188	D-
228 - 239	C+	179 - below	F

Instructor's Policy

Any alternative arrangements such as make-up exams or deadline extensions 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 as scheduled 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 choice with the instructor before writing the paper.) Your paper should incorporate APA style using a 12-point font. You should use at least 5 current peer-reviewed research articles for references. Please note: Your textbook is **not** an acceptable reference for your paper. This assignment is due in class on October 22nd.

Your paper should address:

- A description of the issue you will research. In other words, what is the issue? How is it related to child welfare? Define/describe the issue. (5 points)
 - Be sure to include:
 - Overall scope of the problem
 - Etiology of the issue
- A thorough examination of the issue (20 points)
 - Be sure to include:
 - Discussion on how the NASW Code of Ethics relates to the issue

- Discussion on how family-centered child welfare practice relates to the issue
- Any other relevant information from your research
- Evidence-based practice intervention strategies according to current literature (10 points)
- Your paper will also be evaluated on the clarity and strength of your writing. This includes grammar, spelling, use of APA style, the strength of your analysis and the appropriate use of source materials. (10 points)

This assignment evaluates competency # 3, #5, #6, and #7.

Policy Analysis Report (80 points) & Presentation (20 points)

For this assignment, students will work in pairs/groups to complete an analysis of a federal child welfare policy using the Karger & Stoesz (2006) framework below. Each pair/group will also present the policy analysis findings to the class. The written policy analysis report is due in class on December 1st. Policy analysis presentations will be held in class on November 17th and 19th.

This assignment evaluates competency # 1, #2, #3, #5, #6, and #7.

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 (15 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 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?

IV. Description of the Policy

Values & Ideology (10 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?

Benefits & Eligibility (10 points)

- What benefits, services, or goods are provided through this policy?
- What are the criteria for eligibility?

Administration (10 points)

- How is the policy expected to work? In other words, how will the policy be carried out?
- Which of the three major program areas at TN DCS is this policy related to (child protective services, foster care/permanence, or juvenile justice)? How so?

- Are there specific social programs that are associated with this policy? If so, which ones?

V. Policy Analysis (15 points)

- What is the knowledge or scientific grounding on which the policy is based?
- Describe how the policy is and/or is not meeting the goals it was intended to meet.
- 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 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?
- What are your recommendations for changes in the policy? Why?

The Policy Analysis Report will also be evaluated on the clarity and strength of your writing. This includes grammar, spelling, APA style, strength of your analysis and the appropriate use of source materials. (5 points)

Exams (2 @ 50 points each = 100 points)

Exam I is scheduled for October 1st. Exam I is worth 50 points and will cover the following: The historical & current influences on family-centered child welfare philosophy & practice; Government/welfare programs related to child welfare; Evidence-based child welfare strategies; Family centered practice; Cultural competence and cultural considerations in child welfare; TN Department of Children's Services Practice Model & Practice Wheel; 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; Conditions that warrant child welfare intervention; Family support services. This exam evaluates course competency #1—7.

Exam II will be administered via Blackboard during the exam period for this semester. The exam will be available on Blackboard beginning December 4th until December 9th at 5:00 pm. Students will take the exam at their convenience during this period of availability.

Exam II is worth 50 points and will cover the following: Legal definitions of child abuse and neglect; Impact of child abuse and neglect; Attachment theory and the implications of attachment for children in the child welfare system; Child Protective Services (CPS) roles and responsibilities; Multiple Response System; Family preservation services; Foster care roles and responsibilities; Concurrent planning; Termination of parental rights; Emancipation; Permanency services; Adoption; Juvenile Justice roles and responsibilities; Risk and prevention in juvenile justice; Classification of juvenile offenses; Overrepresentation of minorities in the juvenile justice system; Restorative justice; Federal and state laws governing child welfare practice, including child abuse reporting laws; Issues and evidence-based practice in Child Protective Services, Permanency, and Juvenile Justice. This exam evaluates course competency #1—7.

Blackboard/Online discussion board assignments (3 @ 10 points each = 30 points)

Participation in all online assignments/discussions is required for all students. There will be 3 Blackboard discussion board assignments worth 10 points each. The due date for each assignment is listed below in the assignment description 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. Each student will post her/his own response to the question(s) posed for the assignment and also respond to at least 2 other students' postings. This will mean that each student will have a total of at least 3 postings to each discussion board assignment.

Discussion Board #1: Discuss family centered practice and the TN DCS Practice Model. Are these congruent with the NASW Code of Ethics? Why or why not? Identify at least 2 benefits and 2 challenges of the family

centered approach for children and families and child welfare workers. Due date: Each student should post her/his responses on the discussion board by 2:00 pm on September 10th. This assignment evaluates competency # 1, #5, #6, and #7.

Discussion Board #2: Using the links provided on Blackboard for the TN Department of Children's Services and TN Code Annotated, explore the requirements for reporting child abuse and neglect in Tennessee. What does TN Law say about who is required to report child abuse and neglect? By when does this have to be reported? In other words, is there a point at which it is too late to report the abuse/neglect? What level of certainty should the reporter have about the abuse/neglect before reporting? What challenges do you think might exist for children and families under this law? What challenges might emerge for child welfare professionals? Due date: Each student should post her/his responses on the discussion board by 2:00 pm on October 8th. This assignment evaluate competency #1, #3, and #4.

Discussion Board #3: Based on what you have learned so far about the 3 major program areas at TN DCS (Child Protective Services, Foster Care/Permanence, and Juvenile Justice) which of these three do you think you would be best suited for as a social worker? Explain why. Also, discuss your understanding of your role and interactions with children and families in this program area. What challenges do you foresee for yourself? Due date: Each student should post her/his responses on the discussion board by 2:00 pm on November 10th. This assignment evaluates competency #1, #2, and #3.

Video/discussion board assignments (2 @ 10 points each = 20 points)

There are two video/discussion assignments. Students will view each of the two videos via links provided on the course Blackboard site. After viewing each video, students will engage in sharing perspectives and application of course concepts via discussion questions posed on the discussion board. Students will post a response to the question(s) posed and respond to at least two (2) other students' postings. Detailed instructions on accessing each video and the related questions can be found on the course Blackboard site under "Assignments" and "Discussion Board."

The video for Video/discussion board assignment #1 is *Foster care: A system in crisis* (2006). This video explores some of the current challenges of the U.S. foster care system including foster care drift and quality foster family recruitment. This assignment is due no later than 11:59 pm on October 27th. This assignment evaluates competency #2, #3, and #6.

The video for Video/discussion assignment #2 is *Punishing parents: Who is responsible for delinquent kids?* (2005). This video explores the controversy of parental responsibility in juvenile delinquency cases by looking at situations such as vandalism, casual sexuality, underage alcohol consumption and related accidents, and school shootings. This assignment is due no later than 11:59 pm on November 24th. This assignment evaluates competency #2, #3, and #6.

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

August 20	Course Introduction
	Review syllabus and assignments
	Child welfare overview
	The relevance of policy to child welfare

- August 25** **Historical overview of child welfare in the United States**
 Services for families and children
 Current issues and trends
Reading: Downs, Moore & McFadden (2009) chapter 1 (pp. 1-33)
- August 27** **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 1** **Government programs that support families and children**
 Poverty
 Welfare programs (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)
Reading: Downs, Moore & McFadden (2009) chapter 2 (pp. 37-66)
- September 3** **History of child welfare in Tennessee**
 Evidence-based practice strategies
 Family-centered practice
 Strengths perspective
 Cultural competence
- September 8** **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 10** **Family support services**
 Prevention programs
Reading: Downs, Moore & McFadden (2009) chapter 3 (pp. 70-109)
Discussion Board Assignment #1 is due
- September 15** **Cultural competence & cultural responsiveness**
 Culturally diverse families
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.
 This reading is posted on Blackboard under “Course Documents”
- September 17** **Child welfare principles and practices**
Reading: Downs, Moore & McFadden (2009) chapter 4 (pp. 117-147)
- September 22** **The social context of child welfare practice**
 Poverty, racism & classism
 Homophobia & heterosexism

Readings: Mendel (2005). Double Jeopardy: Why the poor pay more. *Advocasey*.
By the Annie E. Casey Foundation.
This reading is posted on Blackboard under “Course Documents”

September 24 **The social context of child welfare practice continued**
Violence, Substance Abuse & Addiction, and Homelessness
Readings: 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.
This reading is posted on Blackboard under “Course Documents”

September 29 **The court system and child welfare**
Juvenile court
Family court
Criminal court
Reading: Downs, Moore & McFadden (2009) chapter 5 (pp. 150-185)

October 1 **EXAM I**

October 6 **Child protective services**
Reading: Downs, Moore & McFadden (2009) chapter 6 (pp. 188-202 & 222-232)

October 8 **Child abuse & neglect**
Physical abuse
Emotional abuse
Sexual abuse
Neglect
Reading: Downs, Moore & McFadden (2009) chapter 6 (pp. 202-222)
Discussion Board Assignment #2 is due

October 13 **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.

October 15 **Fall Break!**

October 20 **Child Protective Services and TN DCS**
Multiple Response System (MRS)
Assessment
Intervention
Linkage/referral
Reading: *Multiple Response Approach to Child Maltreatment Concerns*
Online at: <http://www.tennessee.gov/youth/services/multresapproach.htm>

October 22 **Family preservation services**

Reading: Downs, Moore & McFadden (2009) chapter 7 (pp. 240-268)
Research paper is due

October 27 **Online video discussion assignment #1—class does not meet**

Permanency
 Foster care
 Kinship care
 Federal laws

Reading: Downs, Moore & McFadden (2009) chapter 8 (pp. 273-317)

October 29 **Permanency continued**

Engaging families & concurrent planning
 Termination of parental rights
 Emancipation
 Therapeutic interventions
 Intensive services

Readings: Downs, Moore & McFadden (2009) chapter 9 (pp. 326-373)
 Hughes, (1999). Adopting children with attachment problems. *Child Welfare*, 78(5), 541-560.

November 3 **Permanency continued**

Adoption

Reading: Downs, Moore & McFadden (2009) chapter 10 (pp. 387- 434)

November 5 **Juvenile Justice**

Risk & prevention factors in juvenile delinquency
 Types of offenses
 Overrepresentation of minorities

Reading: Downs, Moore & McFadden (2009) chapter 11 (pp. 441- 468)

November 10 **Juvenile justice continued**

Restorative justice
 TN Youth Development Centers (YDCs) & Residential programs
Discussion Board Assignment #3 is due

November 12 **Professional/ethical responsibilities and considerations for child welfare social workers**

Reading: Downs, Moore & McFadden (2009) chapter 12 (pp. 473-523)

November 17 **Policy Analysis Presentations**

November 19 **Policy Analysis Presentations**

November 24 **Online video discussion assignment #2—class does not meet**

November 26 **Thanksgiving**

December 1 **Course evaluations & wrap up**

- **Written Policy Analysis Assignment is due**