Children and Youth Services and Social Policies  
SW 633-001 & 002  
Winter Semester, 2014  
Mondays 2-5pm, B760 & B770 SSWB  
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Office hours: Mondays 5:15-6:15pm. Tuesdays 12:15-1:15pm. Or by request.

1. Course Description:  
This course will critically analyze the various social services and policies that provide developmental, preventive, treatment, and rehabilitative services aimed at children and youth and their families. The role of social services in the broad context of both formal and informal systems that influence the life course of children and youth will be addressed. This course will examine how services are articulated at various levels of intervention and in policies and regulations and how this affects the ethical practice of social workers and other family and child serving professionals. Particular emphasis will be placed on services provided by community-based agencies, child welfare services, and the juvenile justice system. Students will develop critical frameworks for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the policies and organization and delivery of child-oriented social services based on behavioral and social science research and through the lens of multi-culturalism and social justice values. In addition, illustrative cross-national comparisons of services and policies for families with children and youth will be examined. The course will address the key diversity dimensions “ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation.”

2. Course Content:  
Substantive service and policy focal areas in this course are listed below. These areas will be critically analyzed in terms of the four curricular themes: multiculturalism and diversity; social justice and social change; promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation; and behavioral and social science research and with an analysis of the policy and services implications of power, privilege, oppression, diversity, and social justice.

- Indicators of the well-being of children and families in the United States, including historical domestic and cross-national comparisons
- Approaches to policy analysis and the legal and service delivery frameworks that shape child and youth policies, programs and services
- Family violence – child protective services and domestic violence
- Family support services, including income support, child care, Head Start, home visiting programs, and family support centers and early childhood education
- Policies and service programs designed to encourage positive youth development, including school-based programs
- Child Protective Services (including family preservation, foster care, group residential care, kinship care, adoption and guardianship)
- Juvenile justice
- Child health and mental health services and policies
Alternative solutions and future outlooks

3. Course Objectives:
Upon completion of the course
1. Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge of the policies that govern services to Children & Youth and their Families in Society in the following areas:
   a. Specify and critique the philosophies and ideologies that guide the development of policy instruments and service arrangements for children, youth and their families
   b. Specify and critique how the current policy frameworks (at the federal, state, and local levels) reflect society's social construction of the child, youth and family (e.g. do not take into account variant family/caretaking forms and structures)
   c. Specify and critique the laws, regulations and judicial interpretations that govern the delivery of social services to children, youth, and families
   d. Specify and critique the outcomes and implications of current policies for children, youth, and families
   e. Specify and critique the funding mechanisms that are available to provide services to children, youth, and families
   f. Demonstrate understanding of how the structure and historical development of policies maintain systems of power, privilege and oppression
   g. Develop the ability to identify how inequitable power is manifested on various dimensions of children, youth, and their families and how these dimensions interact with each other.
   h. Show an understanding and the ability to critique how current policy frameworks work to promote social justice or oppression.
   i. Demonstrate critical analysis using cross national comparisons

2. Students should demonstrate knowledge of how the current service delivery system disrupts or supports the oppression, discrimination, and injustice of children, youth, and their families. and articulate alternative design possibilities in the field of Children & Youth and their Families in Society to address such problems as:
   a. Level and type of attention to the basic needs of families (promotion)
   b. Lack of prevention as a focus of the service system
   c. Lack of social services attached to concrete provision
   d. Unequal distribution of services based on the current policy framework
   e. Racial and ethnic disparities among those who enter the system and the differential ways in which they are served
   f. Structural discontinuities in the public vs. private provision of services

3. Students should demonstrate in depth knowledge and the ability to apply evidence-based programming and professional knowledge in the design and implementation of comprehensive, culturally responsive services for children, youth, and families. Students should be able to critique evidence-based programming in terms of its cultural framing and how power and inequities are being initiated and reinforced.
4. Students should demonstrate in depth policy analysis research in one or more of the specific areas of services and policies to children, youth, and their families, be it family support services, child protection, foster care, juvenile justice, or the like.

4. Course Design:
Learning in this course will take a variety of formats. I will strive to keep lecturing to a minimum; instead we will tackle the issues together, either in large or small groups, in structured and less structured activities, and using a variety of mediums, including videos and news stories.

5. Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:
- **Multiculturalism and Diversity** will be addressed through, for example, discussion of the diverse client populations of the service systems covered in the course. In addition, the design of programs and how they are or are not responsive to the varying cultural and ethnic circumstances of their clients is addressed. Special child and family policy needs related to issues of poverty, race, ethnicity, discrimination, family structure, and other differences are also considered.
- **Social Justice and Social Change** will be addressed by considering the differential impact of child, youth, and family policy and services on the poor, race and ethnic groups, and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth; by identifying the mechanisms in these policies and services that support privilege and oppression; and by developing an awareness of ways to promote social justice goals within these systems.
- **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation** will be addressed by examining the continuum of care present or ideally needed in the programs and services provided to children, youth, and their families.
- **Behavioral and Social Science Research** will be addressed through review of studies and academic literature on, for example, the changing demographics that affect demand for services, and the effectiveness of services and policies for children, youth, and their families.

6. Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:
This course will cover the complexities of ethical dilemmas as they relate to services and policies for children and youth populations, as well as the ways in which the professional Code of Ethics may be used to guide and resolve value and ethical issues. In particular, this course will review the ethics and values related to confidentiality, self-determination, and respect for cultural and religious differences. The course includes consideration of the social worker’s responsibility to promote the general welfare of society (e.g., the prevention and elimination of discrimination; equal access to resources, services, and opportunities; and advocacy for changes in policy). In addition, ethical concerns of special importance to social work with children and youth will be covered, such as the child’s ability to report and understand at various levels of development, conflicts between the child’s best interest and the family’s best interest, and ethical issues related to the treatment of minors.
7. **Intensive Focus on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice (PODS):**
This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self knowledge and self awareness to facilitate PODS learning. Approved By Faculty 11/8/2006.

8. **Class Requirements**

**Class Participation**

Student attendance is expected at every class session, and attendance will be taken. Students are responsible for securing lecture notes and handouts when circumstances require them to be absent. More than two unexcused absences will result in a grade penalty.  

I hope that all students will work with me to create and foster a learning environment that promotes professional socialization, respectfulness, and broadens our mutual awareness of human differences and diversity. Students will be encouraged in this class to examine how the structure of services and policies for children, youth, and families could better reduce inequalities and promote social justice. Questioning and disagreeing are all part of the learning process, and I would encourage all students to engage in these activities with thoughtfulness and respect. Class participation, based upon your attendance the instructor’s assessment of your contributions, **will be worth 10% of your grade.**

**Required Readings**

All required readings are to be completed prior to the class session for which they are assigned. Required readings will be found in the textbook and in the resources sections of the CTools site for this course. The reading assignments are outlined in this syllabus. The textbook for this course is available at Ulrich’s Bookstore or online:


There are likely used copies available through internet retailers or other sources, but please do obtain the second edition, since it differs from the first and is more up to date.

Please make sure to check the Resource section on CTools each week before class because of possible changes or additions as the semester unfolds.

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1 I recognize that illness and other unforeseen emergencies may arise over the course of the term. Please contact me as soon as possible if you are ill or encounter an issue that would lead you to miss class. In the event of severe weather, I will try to make arrangements for an alternative forum for class (e.g., via CTools or Google).
Finally, students will also read one of the following books. All are available in paperback. It is the student’s responsibility to secure a copy of the book, through a local retailer, the public or University library, or online. If you have any difficulty finding the book, please contact me as soon as possible.

- *Transparent: Love, Family, and Living the T with Transgender Teenagers*, Cris Beam
- *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, Anne Fadiman
- *No Matter How Loud I Shout*, Edward Humes
- *The Shame of the Nation*, Jonathon Kozol
- *Random Family*, Adrian Nicole LeBlanc
- *I Love Yous are for White People*, Lac Su

**Written Assignments**

All written assignments are to be presented with a title page on which you are to include the title of the paper, the course and section number, the date on which it is being submitted, and your name and UM ID#. All papers are to be typewritten (or word processed) using a 12-point font. Please remember to number your pages and put in the page header or footer your ID# NOT your name.

All papers are to use proper grammar and bibliographic style. The suggested style to be followed is APA, [http://www.apastyle.org/](http://www.apastyle.org/). A link to OWL Purdue is also on CTools. If you need more formal assistance with your writing you can contact the SSW Career Services Office in Room 1696 (734-647-2544, Michelle Woods at micwoods@umich.edu) or the Sweetland Writing Center ([http://www.lsa.umich.edu/swc/grads/support/](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/swc/grads/support/), 734-764-0429) for assistance in writing and referencing.

**Book Review and Discussion Questions:** Students will read one of the books listed on page 4 and write a short (3-4 pages) review of the book, focusing on implications of the book’s main findings/conclusions for child and family policies and services. Book assignments and additional instructions will follow in a separate document. At the end of the review, students will list two questions that will serve to guide discussion on the book. **The review is due on February 24th and is worth 25% of your grade.**

**Program & Policy Analysis Paper:** This assignment is an analysis of a program area of the students choosing. The student will choose from one or two possible assignments: **The first option** is to do a model program analysis based on a local program of your choice. It will: 1) describe the need for the program; 2) describe the philosophical and theoretical basis for the service delivery model, 3) describe what is done in the program (program activities); 4) compare the program to others that address the same problem, found in the literature; 5) report available evaluation or demonstration research results on the model; 6) present the policy and budgeting context of the program; and 7) discuss the emerging issues in the delivery of this service. Finally, the paper will propose changes in this program based on literature or information from site visits, professional practitioner interviews, etc. The paper should make ample use of Internet, outside reading sources, and
local site visits or contacts with local service providers. The paper should reference these properly in the body of the paper and in the bibliography. APA format please.

**The second option** is to do an issue brief on a “hot topic” in the field of children and family services. The student will choose a topic and explicate why the issue is controversial. The student will then be expected to argue the two sides of the issue and then come to a reasoned conclusion as to where they stand on it. Thus, the paper will discuss why the issue is important, and then take the form of “on the one hand,” “on the other hand,” and “where I stand and why.” A final section will present service program and policy implications of your position.

The program & policy analysis paper, option 1 or 2, will be **due on Session 9 or 10 (March 24th or March 31st) depending on which you prefer** and should be about 12-15 pages in length. You will need to submit to me by email your topic, option choice, and planned date of completion before the break.

**Short answer essays:** These will be reflective of readings and class discussion/class handouts, in multiple choice format, such as choose 2-3 out of 5 to answer, with each essay ranging from 2-3 double-spaced 12-pt font pages. **The questions to address will be handed out two weeks in advance, on April 7, and due by 5:00pm on Tuesday, April 22 in my office SSW2740. This assignment is worth 25% of your grade.**

**Grading**

**Policy on Academic Integrity:**
Plagiarism and/or "borrowing" material without citing it is taken very seriously at the University of Michigan and is grounds for expulsion from the University. This also applies to materials that you prepare for other classes (i.e., you can't get credit for the same paper in different classes). It is your responsibility to be familiar with the information at http://www.lib.umich.edu/academic-integrity/resources-students.

**Accommodations/Special Needs:**
If you have a disability or impairment that requires accommodation, please contact me within two weeks of class starting to discuss what modifications are necessary. These arrangements must be specified in writing and will be kept strictly confidential. For more information and resources, please contact Services for Students with Disabilities at G664 Haven Hall (734-763-3000).

**Grading Criteria for Written Assignments**
The paper and discussion essays will be graded using the following criteria:

a) The quality of the analysis and depth of understanding of the concepts, ideas, and information presented. It must be clearly grounded in and thoughtfully reflective of the professional literature cited.
b) The clarity of expression and organization of the paper - is there a logical order to the presentation of your thoughts.

c) The appropriate use of references and resources, and the variety of resources referenced. NOTE: this applies to the paper but NOT the final essays, which are based rather exclusively on required readings and class handouts. In the essays, it is expected that direct quotes from the readings will be cited in the text but a list of references is not necessary.

d) The use of proper grammar and the over-all professional presentation of the paper. NOTE: Please make time to proofread your writing and make sure to turn in a second or third draft.

Grading Criteria for the Course
A+, A or A-  Mastery of subject content, demonstration of critical analysis, creativity and/or complexity in completion of assignment. The difference between A and A- is based on the degree to which these skills are demonstrated.
B+  Mastery of subject content beyond expected competency, but has not demonstrated additional critical analysis, creativity or complexity in the completion of the assignment.
B  Mastery of subject content at level of expected competency – meets course expectations
B-  Less than adequate competency, but demonstrates student learning and potential for mastery of subject content.
C  Demonstrates a minimal understanding of subject content. Significant areas needing improvement to meet course requirements.
E  Student has failed to demonstrate minimal understanding of subject content.

Notes on Grading:
1. I will grade all papers anonymously. Put only your student identification number on your submitted work. After I have read and graded all the papers, I will determine which paper belongs to whom.

2. It is best not to assume you will receive an “A” in this course. I grade on a relative, not absolute, grading scale. Since virtually all of you were “A” students as undergraduates there will be a natural and necessary redistribution at the graduate level. As noted above, performance at the expected level of competence is a “B.”

3. In general, I do accept challenges to grades. However, challenges must be in writing (not verbal); must be specific, and must be based on substantive arguments not on nebulous references to “fairness.” The instructor reserves the right to re-read, and re-grade, the work in its entirety in the case of a challenge. The grade may be adjusted up or down.
Schedule and Assigned Readings

Session 1: January 13th
Introductions, Course Overview, What is Child Well-being?

Video: Poor Kids

NO CLASS: January 20th
MLK DAY: ALL STUDENTS ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND ONE OR MORE OF THESE GREAT EVENTS ON CAMPUS – check out http://mlksymposium.umich.edu/ (A note of caution: you should begin the readings for session 2).

Session 2: January 27th
What is Child Well-Being? How Can Policy Help?

Jenson & Fraser, Chapter 1, pp. 1-24


Conti, G. (2012). The Economics of Child Well-Being. NBER working paper series, w18466


Look at and be familiar with these websites:
Session 3: February 3rd  
Child Poverty and Anti-Poverty Policies and Programs

Jenson & Fraser, Chapter 2, pp. 23-56


Session 4: February 10th  
Family Supports and Early Child Care


Session 5: February 17th  
Education Policies and Programs

Jenson & Fraser, Chapter 4, pp. 113-145


Session 6: February 24th: Guest Speaker. *Book Review Due
Positive Youth Development


NO CLASS March 3rd – HAVE A GOOD SPRING BREAK

Session 7: March 10th *Book Group Discussions
Topics in Child Welfare

Jenson & Fraser, Chapter 3, pp. 57-112


Session 8: March 17th
More topics in Child Welfare


Session 9: March 24th
*First Due Date Policy Paper
Child Health and Disabilities

Jenson & Fraser, Chapters 6-7, pp. 195-269


Session 10: March 31st: Guest Speaker
*Second Due Date Policy Paper
Child Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Jenson & Fraser, Chapters 5 & 8, pp. 146-194; 270-305


Session 11: April 7th *Essay questions distributed.
Juvenile Justice
Jenson & Fraser, Chapter 9, pp. 306-352


Session 12: April 14th
“Fragile Families”


**Session 13: April 21st**
**Future Policy Directions: Semester Wrap-up**

Jenson & Fraser, Chapter 10, pp. 353-370

**FINAL ESSAYS DUE Tuesday April 22nd by 5pm in my office.**