1. Course Description:

This integrative seminar will integrate micro and macro levels of practice; research in child welfare and related fields, as the research relates to all levels of practice; the relationship of child maltreatment and other social problems; and perspectives from several disciplines, specifically social work, other mental health professions, law, and medicine, as these disciplines address problems of child maltreatment and child welfare. The seminar will highlight issues of social justice, disproportionality—particularly the over-representation of children and families of color in the child welfare system, and disadvantaged populations, including children in general and poor children in particular.

2. Course Content:

This advanced level, integrative seminar is intended to be taken by students in their third or final term of masters level study and by advanced standing students. The purpose of this course is to integrate content related to child maltreatment and child welfare along several dimensions. The first dimension is practice level from direct practice, community, agency, and policy perspectives. The second dimension is research that describes the characteristics of child welfare and related populations, the prevalence and incidence of different types of child maltreatment, including risk and protective factors, analogue and population studies related to memory of maltreatment, studies of characteristics of high risk populations, and outcomes of interventions in child welfare. The third dimension is the relationship between child maltreatment and other problems, such as poverty and disadvantage, mental illness, substance abuse, and domestic violence. The fourth dimension involves the integration of child welfare and content from other professional perspectives, especially medicine, psychology, and law.

The course covers select topics in child welfare that are of notable currency and controversy and that allow for the integration across these four dimensions. Particular emphasis is placed on topics that reflect issues of oppression and social justice, disadvantage, and disproportionality. Examples of topics include: 1) memory and trauma, 2) abuse allegations, divorce, and child custody, 3) the needs of children in substitute care, 4) predatory behavior by clergy, 5) poverty and child neglect, 6) legal issues, such as legal liability, the use of the courts to effect safety for the child, termination of parental rights, and testifying in court, 7) the needs of Native American children and families, 8) the incarceration of juvenile offenders, 9) the problem of the over-representation of children of color in the child welfare system, 10) the transition to adulthood for vulnerable populations and 11) the incompatibility of the needs of children and parents when parents have mental illness or substance abuse problems.
3. Competencies:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the relationship of becoming a client in the child welfare system to poverty, racism, disadvantage, and discrimination.
2. Use this understanding in a critical analysis of a spectrum of interventions used with children and families.
3. Conceptualize and describe issues and interventions in child welfare problems from direct practice, community, administrative, and policy perspectives.
4. Demonstrate knowledge about research findings, as they relate to a range of child maltreatment and child welfare issues, policies, and programs.
5. Demonstrate knowledge about the relationship of child maltreatment and child welfare to other social problems.
6. Demonstrate knowledge about substantive material from other professional disciplines, such as law and medicine as they are related to child maltreatment and child welfare.

4. Course Design:

This course will make use of lectures, discussion, small group exercises, student presentations, and media, especially videos about the issues covered in this course. Guest speakers from relevant disciplines and experts in issues addressed in the course will be employed. Students will be required to demonstrate specialized knowledge related to child welfare issues of their choice, which they will explore by means of critical reviews, literature reviews, visits to relevant programs, and direct contact with impacted individuals.

5. Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity** will be addressed by examining how age, class, culture, ethnicity, race, religion, physical and mental ability, sexual orientation, national origin, and gender impact on the conceptualization of child welfare issues, the design of child welfare policy, the development of services, and the delivery of child welfare interventions.

- **Social Justice and Social Change** will be addressed by teaching students that children are at a fundamental disadvantage in systems that are controlled by adults. The child welfare system is not necessarily designed to first address the needs of clients, but may be constructed to be convenient for professionals. Although the stated goal of the child welfare system is to assure the well-being of children, in many respects, it is an institution of social control. In addition, students will learn that economically disadvantaged children and families and children and families of color are differentially responded to by the child welfare system. Students will gain a critical awareness of these issues, and thus, become more informed practitioners of child welfare social work.

- **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation**. This seminar will foster exploration of the full spectrum of child welfare interventions, through consideration of both micro and macro interventions and the relationship of child welfare to other problems. This will include a focus on how intervention into related social problems, such as child-related health care and income maintenance, can promote child well-being and child welfare. This course will also emphasize how addressing parental problems, such as domestic violence, can prevent child maltreatment.

- **Behavioral and Social Science Research** related to child welfare will be central to the material taught in this course. This includes research that describes the characteristics of child welfare and related populations, the prevalence and incidence of different types of child maltreatment, including risk and protective factors, analogue and population studies related to memory of
maltreatment, studies of characteristics of high risk populations, and outcomes of intervention research.

6. Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:

Issues related to social work values and ethics will be an inherent part of this course. For example, reporting requirements for child maltreatment raise many ethical issues that apply to social workers and other professionals who work with children. In addition, social workers must collaborate with professionals with different ethics and standards of practice than their own, for example lawyers and psychologists. Students will analyze these ethical dilemmas, as well as the ethical issues involved in the relationship of child welfare to other social problems, for example poverty.

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**Syllabus**

**SW739: Integrative Seminar in Child Welfare; Fall 2013**

**Meeting time and place:** Thurs. 6:00-9:00; B780 SSW

**Instructor:** Mary Ortega, LEO II

**Office:** 2747 SSWB, 1080 S. University

**Telephone number**: (734) 998-9703

**Email:** mbortega@umich.edu

**Office hours:** Thursdays 3-6 pm at 2747 SSWB

Or by appointment

**Course description:**

This is an advanced integrative seminar open to social work graduate students in their third and fourth terms, to Social Work Advanced Standing students, and to graduate students from other disciplines with permission from the instructor. It integrates direct practice material with material relevant to policy and planning. It also integrates material from across disciplines, incorporating information from law, medicine, mental health, and public health. The relationship of child welfare and maltreatment to other social problems, for example racial discrimination, family violence, substance abuse, and poverty, will covered in this course. Finally the course integrates findings from research with practice knowledge. The course places particular emphasis on issues of social justice in child welfare.

Select topics, chosen because they are of particular relevance to practice and policy related to child welfare, will be covered.

**Course requirements:**
1. **Attend class.** To benefit from this course, students must be there. This is not a class in which the content can be learned merely by doing the reading. A sign-in sheet will be passed out each class. Unexcused absences will affect your grade.

2. **Do the reading.** All or almost all of the readings, relevant weblinks, and the syllabus are available on the CTools website. All students who register for the class will automatically have access to the SW739 Section 001 Fall, 2014 website. To access readings, click on Resources. Each session’s reading assignments are in a separate folder, which is marked by session number.

   The reading requirements are manageable. Students are expected to do the reading before each class. Students should anticipate being asked to respond to questions and elaborate on the readings as part of their class participation. Copies of the Powerpoint slides for most class sessions will be available to students at the beginning of each class session.

3. **Participate in class discussion.** This is a course for advanced students who will have something to contribute to the discourse about these very important issues. Thus, an expectation is that students will participate in class discussions.

4. **Turn in 3 critical reviews of substantive topics covered in the course.** Usually one class session is devoted to each topic. These critical reviews should be approximately five pages in length, double-spaced. They should include the readings, the class material, and some material beyond the readings and class presentations (e.g., additional readings, information from websites, experiences and insights from field placements). Critical reviews should be reflective and integrative. Their goal is to foster critical consideration of the topic, and not be a reflection about whether you liked the session or topic. You do not need to agree with the instructor or guest presenter. Topics to be addressed in the critical reviews include: 1) The micro and macro issues relevant to the topic (continuum of levels of potential intervention; direct practice, management & programs, policies, laws, and any global implications), 2) Research and practice integration as it relates to the topic—that is, how does the research related to policy and practice?, 3) Interdisciplinary considerations related to the topic (e.g., are there legal, medical, mental health, education, etc., issues that are relevant?), 4) Social justice issues related to the topic, and 5) Other relevant issues related to the topic. Critical reviews can be turned in by email or in hard copy. Students are responsible for selecting their topics and turning in critical reviews within three weeks of the time the topic is covered in class. Please note the dates on the Syllabus when the critical reviews are due.

   You also may choose up to two alternative assignments to write about: 1) Attendance at the Michigan Statewide Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, Oct. 27 & 28, 2014) Participation in the Fauri Memorial Mini-conference, Nov 19, 9am-5pm. If you choose one of these alternative assignments, use the following format:

   1) Description of what you learned, 2) The micro and macro issues relevant to the event (continuum of levels of potential intervention; direct practice, management & programs, policies, laws, and any global implications), 3) Research and practice integration as it relates to the event—that is, how does research relate to policy and practice?, 4) Interdisciplinary considerations related to the event (e.g., are there legal, medical, mental health, education, etc., issues that are relevant?), 5) Social justice issues related to the event, and 6) Other relevant issues related to the event.

5. **Complete a final project.** FINAL PROJECT FOR SW739 INTEGRATIVE SEMINAR IN CHILD WELFARE

   Select a topic in the **CHILD WELFARE FIELD** (i.e., not mental health) that both interests you and can serve as a basis for an artifact in an ePortfolio. Therefore this should be a project that will prepare you for your future work as a social worker or for additional education. The instructor is available to assist students in planning their projects. All topics should be cleared with the instructor. Students should turn
Projects should be **MULTIFACETED**. These projects should involve literature review (research and practice) as well as field exploration relevant to a chosen topic (e.g., contacts with professionals, agencies, & clients). In some instances, your field placement will generate opportunities for the field exploration component, but in other instances, you will choose a topic that requires you to contact other agencies, professionals, and client populations. Projects should involve a critical review of the topic and suggestions for improvement in service delivery/change (aside from more money).

Projects may also entail student-initiated research. In fact research projects are encouraged. (If you wish to publish the results of your research, you will need to allow time for IRB clearance). There may also be existing data sets you can make use of. If you have interest in conducting a research based final project, please meet with the instructor early in the semester.

Joint projects are encouraged, but limit the number of people involved to three because of logistical problems if too many people work on a project. If issues arise about variability in quantity or quality of contributions to joint projects, student should seek the advice of the instructor.

Each project should have an abstract, which will be shared with classmates. The written product should be approximately 15-20 pages double spaced, including references, with the last three pages being a reflection that could be included in an ePortfolio. Add about 10 pages for each additional member who is working on the project. The paper should conform to APA style re references and formatting. Students often ask how many references—probably about 20, but these can include interviews with professionals and clients and websites. Remember you will be graded on substantive content, organization, coherence, and syntax. This should be a project that is publishable.

Final projects that are provided electronically a week ahead of the deadline will be posted on the CTools website for your colleagues to download.

The reflection section of the written product will be an **individual reflection**, even when the project is a joint one. Topics covered should include: 1) a description of the project, 2) your role on the project, if it was a joint project, 3) why the project is important to your education and/or career goals (this project should entail more than fulfilling course requirements), 4) tasks accomplished and skills gained by completing this project, 5) lessons learned from working on the project, 6) how the work on this project has enhanced your understanding of the social problem or topic you undertook to study, and 7) how this project will impact on your career. Think practically about how the final project will enhance your employability, future educational goals and ability to engage in practice or policy environments.

**CTools:**

The Integrative Seminar has a CTools website. As a student enrolled in the course, you will automatically have access to the website of SW739 Sections 001, Fall 2014.

Almost all of the required reading is on this website. Students will be expected to download these materials from the web and read them. To access readings, click on Resources. Each session’s reading assignments are in a separate folder, which is marked by session number. The instructor will make available copies of materials not on the website. Students need both sets of required materials.

**ePortfolios:**
Students are encouraged, but not required to develop ePortfolios which showcase their work not only completed for SW739, but for their entire MSW course of study. The Final Project for the course is designed so that it can be included in an ePortfolio.

**Disability Accommodation:**

If you need an accommodation for a disability, contact me as soon as possible. It is possible that aspects of the course can be modified to facilitate your learning process. There are resources available to help us to meet your needs including Students with Disabilities, the Adaptive Technology Computing Site, etc. If you disclose a disability to the instructor that information will be treated as private and confidential.

**Caveats:**

THIS IS NOT A DIRECT PRACTICE COURSE. The practice course in the Child Welfare series is SW730. Rather it is an Integrative Seminar which incorporates practice, research, other disciplines, and other social welfare domains and will address selected critical issues related to child welfare. Some of the readings and case materials are relevant to direct practice.

At the beginning of each class session, powerpoint slides will be handed out to students. They will be printed three slides to a page to facilitate note-taking. DO NOT EXPECT TO BE ABLE TO USE YOUR LAPTOP COMPUTERS IN THIS CLASS! If you turn on your computer, you will be asked to turn your computer off. The reason for this restriction is because it is too tempting to do your email, go on the internet, etc. since the SSWB is networked.

THE CRITICAL REVIEWS AND FINAL PROJECT WILL BE GRADED FOR ORGANIZATION AND WRITING QUALITY AS WELL AS FOR SUBSTANTIVE CONTENT. The grading criteria for the School of Social Work are roughly as follows:

- **A++** = extraordinary work that could not be improved upon.
- **A** = exceptional, excellent work.
- **B** = very good; the expected grade for good students who work hard.
- **B-** = good.
- **B-** = not so good; marginal for graduate school performance.
- **C++** = below the standards of graduate school performance.

The requirements will count as follows for the student’s grade: Critical reviews=10% each (Total 30%); Final project=40%; Doing the reading as reflected in class participation=20%; Reflection paper=10%.

**Course outline:**

**First session: Sept. 4—Integrative Seminar**
- Course requirements
- Child welfare in a social context
- Why the focus on child abuse?
- The child safety/family preservation pendulum swing in child welfare
- Prevalence and incidence rates of child maltreatment
Is child maltreatment declining?
Child fatalities

Readings:

   Please also follow the links for American Indian children, Black children, and white children, to note the differences in well-being by race/culture.

Students are not expected to have read and reviewed these materials before the first class. The McGowan chapter is a nice overview of the history of child welfare. The websites represent central sources of materials on child welfare. Become familiar with these websites. You can download documents from all three websites free of charge.

Videos: The Child Savers
A Life Changing Visitor: When Children’s Services Knocks

Second session: Sept. 11—Is the child welfare system broken?

Guest lecture: Kathleen Coulborn Faller, Professor Emerita

Child welfare workforce issues
Child welfare worker qualifications and training
Worker caseload size
Worker turnover
Unrealistic expectations of parents?
The public-private “partnership”
Children injured and killed when under the supervision or in the care of the child welfare system
   What is needed to “fix” the system?
   Class action lawsuits

Realistic job previews

Readings:

1. DHS and Children's Rights reach out-of-court agreement Agreement improves services for vulnerable children.—
   http://www.childrensrights.org/reform-campaigns/legal-cases/michigan/, linked to the CTools website
3. DWAYNE B., by his next friend, John Stempfle, v. Jennifer Grandholm et al. MODIFIED SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT—on the CTools website

Video: Realistic job previews (RJP): Is this the job for me? (Michigan)
Maine’s RJP
Third session: Sept. 18 — Children's accuracy in reporting traumatic experiences

Children’s memory and suggestibility
Types of normal memory
Research on children’s reports of experiences
Research on children’s suggestibility
Ecological validity of research findings

Readings:

Videos: E case example
Mousetrap study

Fourth session: Sept. 25 Abuse by clergy

Guest lecturer: William C. Birdsall, Emeritus Professor

Research on clergy abuse
Vulnerability of religious (and other caring) institutions
History of religious institutions have handled allegations of abuse
Current practices—sexual abuse prevention
Impact on victims of abuse by clergy
Impact on families of abuse by clergy
Prevention—Virtus

Readings:
2. National Survivors’ of Abuse by Clergy Network NSAC News
sheehan1777@aol.com via nsacoalition.ccsend.com
4. The Penn State Tragedy Highlights the Catholic Church’s Failure — on the CTools website

Video: The Father Porter case
Virtus

First critical review is due.

Fifth session: Oct. 2 — Testifying in court—

Frank Vandervort, J.D., Clinical Professor, UM Law School
Guidelines for court testimony
Expert testimony

**Exercise:** Are you an expert witness?

**Videotape:** My cousin Vinnie

**Readings:**

**Sixth session: Oct. 9—Child Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Child Welfare**

**Guest Lecturer:** Orli Avi-Yonah, PhD, Social Worker, Law School and Adjunct Clinical Instructor in Psychiatry, Medical School

**Outline/paragraph on Final Project due**

**Seventh session: Oct. 16 - Allegations of child abuse and divorce**

- Coaching survey—brief inventory
- The dynamics of abuse allegations and divorce
- Research on false allegations
- Calculated lies versus misinterpretations
- How the courts respond to allegations of abuse in situations of divorce.
- Responses to the failure of the legal system
- The National Center for Protective Parents
- *Mother’s Nightmare*
- The Underground
- Strategies for effectively handling allegations of abuse in divorce

**Readings:**

**Videotape:** The Morgan-Fortitch case


**Prof. Joe Ryan**

School to Prison Pipeline
Prevention and Intervention (evidence based)
Dually Involved (crossover) Youth
Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC)
The Family Context and Juvenile Offending

Readings:

32nd Annual Michigan Statewide Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect is Oct. 27 & 28. You can attend this conference for free. All you have to do is let Martha Kerr [mailto:markerr@med.umich.edu], Coordinator of the UM Child Protection Team, know. Telephone number 763 0215; link to the Conference website http://www.canconferenceuofm.org/

Ninth session—Oct 30—The needs of youth aging out of substitute care

Research findings on youth who age out of child welfare
Programs and policies to support transition
Foster Care Independence Act--1999
Fostering Connections—2008
What is permanency?
What is family?
What are issues of race and ethnicity?

Readings
2. Jim Casey Foundation Youth in Transition initiatives—http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org/ linked to the CTools website

Videos: Voices of young people who age out in foster care
Small group discussion

Second critical review due

Tenth session: Nov. 6 -- Parental mental health problems, substance abuse, domestic violence, and child welfare

Competing and conflicting agendas for children and impaired parents.
Domestic violence and parenting.
Substance abuse and parenting
Dual diagnoses
Common Elements, changes in evidence-based practice

Readings:
1. Faller & Bellamy, Mental health and child welfare—on the CTools website
2. ONLINE TUTORIALS & TRAINING: Understanding Substance Use Disorders, Treatment and Family
Recovery: A Guide for Child Welfare Professionals-
3. Substance abuse assessment form—on the CTools website

Case example: BBT family

Eleventh session: Nov. 13--- Foster Parenting

Kinship foster care versus non-relative foster care
Similarities
Differences
What it takes to be a foster parent
Licensing standards
Training for foster parents
Expectations for foster parents
Abuse in foster care
Statistics
Risk factors

Guest speakers: Foster family and representative from Catholic Social Services Foster Care Program

Readings:

Twelfth session; Nov. 20— Children of Color in the Child Welfare System

Disproportionality and disparities for children of color
Overrepresentation: African American and Native American children
Underrepresentation: Caucasian and Asian American children
Under the radar: Arab American children
Causes of disproportionality and disparities
Solutions?

Guest Lecturer: Robert M. Ortega, Professor

Readings:
2. Fred Wulczyn & Bridgette Lery (2007). Racial Disparity in Foster Care Admissions. Chicago: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. On the CTools website
Third Critical Review is due.

Nov. 27—Thanksgiving

Thirteenth session: Dec. 4—Child abuse and Indian Country

Guest Speaker: Prof. Sandra Momper, SSW

- History of assimilation of Indian children
- Impact of Federal policies on Indian families
- The Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978
- The impact of the ICWA and promise of recent Federal legislation, Fostering Connections, 2008.
- The Baby Veronica case

Videotapes:  
The Indian Child Welfare Act
Boarding Schools

Readings:  

Dec. 11—Final Projects due