1. Course Statement

1. Course description

This is a methods course intended to develop skills for child welfare practice, with special attention to child maltreatment. Students learn about the various contexts in which child welfare practice takes place and the skills and modalities that are used with children, youth, and families who are the focus of child welfare intervention. This course will prepare students to work with diverse client populations and will help them appreciate the imbalance of power between clients and professionals. Understanding the needs and responses of involuntary clients is an integral part of the course. Relevant evidence-based practices are taught and child welfare policies and practices are subjected to critical review. The first term will focus on assessment and the second on treatment.

This course will cover the following areas: 1) personal, professional, and societal responses to children at risk for maltreatment, 2) diversity in the child welfare population and skills for working with diverse client populations, 3) client issues and responses to child welfare intervention, including power differentials and involuntariness, 4) theories that explain child maltreatment and their social construction, 5) assessment strategies to be used with children and adults with child
welfare issues, 6) interventions employed in the child welfare system and the evidence or lack thereof to support them, and 7) evidence-based treatment strategies used with traumatized children. This course will focus on practice issues, especially poverty and parental problems in families in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe.

Students will be sensitized to their personal reactions to child maltreatment. They will be apprised of professional expectations, such as mandatory reporting of child maltreatment, and will learn about the general structure of service delivery to child welfare clients, which constitutes the context within which they will provide services to clients.

Sensitization to the roles of power and privilege of professionals as they relate to both children and their parents is an integral part of the course. In addition, the course will address the sometimes-conflicting needs of children and families and the legal system impact on child welfare practice, as assessment and the various methods of treatment are taught.

The diversity of child welfare populations, in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, class, and sexual orientation will be covered. Of particular focus is the over-representation of children of color and the differential response of the child welfare system based upon class. Students will be made aware of how differences between themselves and clients of child welfare services affect service delivery. These differences will include race, developmental status, economic status, education, gender, and physical well-being.

2. **Pathway Associations**

Interpersonal practice in Integrated Health, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse, Welfare of Children and Families (Host)

2. **Class Requirements**

a. **Text and class materials**

There is no required textbook for this class. Readings, videos, and podcasts will be posted on Canvas at least one week prior to the class session in which they will be discussed. Each session’s reading assignments are in a separate folder on Canvas under Files, which is marked by session number and included in the Module identified by the class week and topic. Reading may be changed due to guest lecturers or emerging current events that warrant our attention and class discussion. Videos and Podcasts are posted under the Media tab, in Modules, and are included in the Announcements section pertaining to what is due at the next class session.

To fully engage in the course, it is expected that students will complete the required readings and/or video viewing prior to the class in which they will be discussed. In weeks where there is
not a set of assigned readings, you may select three articles to read from the extensive resource list provided. These are the readings that you will provide a written reflection on, as described in the assignments section. Reading materials are meant to supplement lecture content. Discussion of readings will be student-led, with prompts and questions from me, therefore it is critically important that you complete the required readings prior to the class session. A small group of students will be assigned to introduce the key takeaways and ask questions of the class from the assigned readings for each class session OR, they may provide an overview of supplemental readings for the class and engage in discussion about the readings. Students should anticipate being asked to respond to questions and elaborate on the readings as part of their class participation. The quality of the class depends – in large part – on the quality of our collective efforts to engage in discourse on the subject matter and assigned materials.

b. Class schedule

We will follow the schedule outlined below as closely as possible. Sometimes, the topic or schedule may change due to guest speakers, unavoidable incidents, or discussions with students regarding what topics they would like to focus on. Whenever possible, schedule changes will be sent to you via email and posted on Canvas in Announcements at least a week in advance. **Readings may change! Please be certain to check the Files and Modules on Canvas for the specific week of class. PLEASE only choose three readings to read and reflect on.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Session: June 5 – Course Introduction and Overview of Child Protection</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topics:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Course requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Course progression</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Wicked Problems in Child Welfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Brief history and overview of the child welfare system</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Child welfare in the social context</td>
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<tr>
<td>- What is child maltreatment?</td>
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<td>- Why the focus on child abuse?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Prevalence and incidence rates of child maltreatment</td>
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<td>- Brief overview of disproportionality in child welfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Child Protective Services</td>
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<td>- Helper, advocate, friend, enforcer?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Discussion of course topics and changes as needed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Reading:** Students are not expected to have read and reviewed these materials prior to the first class. Choose three articles to read

• Kim, H. and Maguire-Jack, K. Longitudinal Changes in Child Maltreatment
• Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities 2019
• Understanding and Addressing Racial Disproportionality in the Front End of the Child Welfare System
• Mary Ellen Wilson
• Disparities and Disproportionality in Child Welfare

Assignments due by June 10:
• Reaction paper
• Answers to discussion questions

Due in class on June 12: Group 1 Discussion Leaders Presentation

Second Session: June 12 Child Maltreatment and Child Protection

Topics:
• Children’s Protective Services
• Evidence from NCANS on the size of the problem
• The child safety/family preservation pendulum swing in child welfare
• Poverty and child welfare
• Systemic racism and the child welfare system
• Overrepresentation of children of color
• ICWA
• Children with disabilities
• LGBT Children and maltreatment: An under-studied group
• Global perspectives on child maltreatment

Readings (all readings are on canvas by title, select three):
• Time for the Child Welfare System to Stop Confusing Poverty with Child Neglect
• ICWA Laws
• Understanding the Impact of Historical Trauma When Responding to an Event in Indian Country, SAMHSA
• Hom-Hyvonen, K. Child Maltreatment among Asian Americans: A Content Analysis of Existing Literature,
• Nadan, Y , Culture and context in understanding child maltreatment: Contributions of intersectionality and neighborhood-based research, Journal of Child Abuse and Neglect
• Font, S., Berger, L., Slack, K. (2012) Examining racial disproportionality in child protective services case decisions, Children and Youth Services Review 34, 2188 - 2200
of Child and Adolescent Well-being (NSCAW II), Children and Youth Services Review 34 2229 – 2239

**Video:**
To transform the child welfare system, take race out of the equation – on canvas in the media gallery

**Family Poverty is Not Neglect** [https://soundcloud.com/offkiltershow/family-poverty-is-not-child-neglect](https://soundcloud.com/offkiltershow/family-poverty-is-not-child-neglect)

**Assignments due by June 17:**
- Reaction paper
- Answers to discussion questions

**Due in class on June 19**
  - Group 2 Discussion Leaders Presentation

**Third Session: June 19 – Juneteenth! Child Maltreatment Determination and Types of Maltreatment**

**Topics:**
- Defining child neglect
- Mandated Reporter Training
- Child Protection Investigation and response
  - Physical abuse
  - Sexual abuse
  - Fatal abuse
- Past history of parental abuse
- IPV and child maltreatment
- Substance abuse and child maltreatment
- COVID 19 Impacts on Child Maltreatment
- Decision-making in CPS
- Differential/Alternative Response

**Readings:**
- Making and Screening Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect
- Five-factor determination of maltreatment, MDHHS Policy Manual (On Canvas)
- The Effects of Substance Abuse on Behavior and Parenting
- Wolfe, D. and McIsaac, C. (2011) *Distinguishing between Poor/dysfunctional parenting and child emotional maltreatment*
- Child Injury and Death Coordinated and Comprehensive Investigation Resource Protocol
- MDHHS Child Death Review Annual Report
- Mandated Reporter Guidelines for Social Workers
- CPS Field Guide
- MDHHS Model Child Abuse and Neglect Protocol
- Recognizing the Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse and Neglect, Child Welfare Information Gateway Fact Sheet

**Video:**
- A Life-changing Visitor: When Children’s Services Knocks
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2iY1QorPZFw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2iY1QorPZFw) (link on canvas)

**Audio:**
- This American Life: Unconditional Love at
  [https://www.thisamericanlife.org/317/unconditional-love](https://www.thisamericanlife.org/317/unconditional-love)
  - Prologue
  - Act One: Love is a battlefield.
  - Act Two: Hit me with your best shot

**Assignments due by June 17:**
1. Reaction paper
2. Answers to discussion questions

**Due in class on June 19 – Group 3 Discussion Leaders**

**Fourth Session: June 26 - Child Maltreatment Assessments**

**Topics**
- CANS and FANS
- Forensic Interviewing Protocol
- Structured Decision-making
- Psychosocial and medical assessment
- Measures of Child Exposure
- Effects of professional experience

**Readings (select three):**
• Nicol, A., Evidence-based and Developmentally Appropriate Forensic Interviewing of Children
• Kwaadsteniet, L., Bartelink, C., et al., (2013) Improved decision-making about suspected child maltreatment: Results of structuring the decision process. Children and Youth Services Review
• MDHHS Forensic Interviewing Protocol
• Medical Child Abuse Protocol
• Ho, G., Bettencourt, A., Gross, D., (2017) Reporting and identifying child physical abuse: How well are we doing? Wiley Research in Nursing and Health
• Henry, Black-Pond & Richardson (2010) Screening Checklist: Identifying Children at Risk Ages 0 – 5. Southwest Michigan Children’s Trauma Assessment Center

Assignments due by June 24:
1. Reaction paper
2. Answers to discussion questions

Fifth Session: Last Session: July 3 - Child Maltreatment Interventions

Topics:
• Using assessments to develop the plan of care
• How long should the system keep families under surveillance?
• A public health approach to child maltreatment
• Sustaining progress in preventing child maltreatment
• Effective interventions with abused children and families

Readings:
• Required - Bartholet, E. “Differential Response: A Dangerous Experiment in Child Welfare” (on Canvas)
| **Differential Response and the Safety of Children Reported to Child Protective Services: A Tale of Six States** |
| **Differential Response: A Primer for Child Welfare Professionals** |

### Assignment:
1. Reflection paper
2. Answers to discussion questions

**Due in class on July 3 – Group 3 Discussion Leaders**

c. Grading and Assignments

**Coursework and Assignments**
This course uses Canvas as a resource for all course readings as well as for detailed explanations of assignments and instructions for the submission of assignments. Assignment descriptions and readings for each class, as well as grading and class announcements, can be found on Canvas. Required reading will be posted to Canvas at least one week prior to the
class for which they are required. Please review the site carefully and visit it frequently for updates.

All assignments will be posted on Canvas with a more in-depth explanation and the grading rubric. If you have any questions about an assignment, please feel free to reach out to me with your questions prior to the due date of the assignment. Announcements in Canvas will often correspond to a specific assignment, so please make certain that you have set Canvas up to notify you when announcements are posted, and please be certain to read announcements at least weekly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Percent of overall grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reaction Paper on at least three readings/video/audio Answers to discussion questions</td>
<td>June 10 Paper uploaded to canvas. Discussion questions answered in the discussion channel</td>
<td>Reaction Paper = 6% Discussion Questions/Answers =6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction Paper Answers to discussion questions</td>
<td>June 17 Paper uploaded to Canvas. Discussion questions answered in the discussion channel</td>
<td>Reaction Paper = 6% Discussion Questions/Answers =5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 1 Discussion Leaders</td>
<td>June 12 in class Topic to be determined with the instructor</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction Paper Answers discussion questions</td>
<td>June 24 Paper uploaded to canvas. Discussion questions answered in the discussion channel</td>
<td>Reaction Paper = 6% Discussion Questions/Answers =6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2 Discussion Leaders</td>
<td>June 19 in class</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction Paper Answers discussion questions</td>
<td>June 24 Paper uploaded to canvas. Discussion questions answered in the discussion channel</td>
<td>Reaction Paper = 6% Discussion Questions/Answers =6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Due date</td>
<td>Percent of overall grade</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Group 3 Discussion Leaders</strong></td>
<td><strong>July 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>40%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction Paper Answers discussion questions</td>
<td>Paper uploaded to canvas. Discussion questions answered in the discussion channel</td>
<td>Reaction Paper = 6% Discussion Questions/Answers = 6%</td>
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</tbody>
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**Discussion Leader**: Each meeting, a group of students will lead discussion of an assigned topic. A topic leader may develop asynchronous content if that is the student’s preference. Details will be posted on canvas. The discussion leader(s) is expected to master one or two of the required readings or related materials and to convey the key points to the class. The discussion leader is also expected to prepare a short PowerPoint presentation to guide the discussion. I will evaluate discussion leaders based on their organization and management of the discussion, comprehension of the topic, clarity and balance in their explanation of the topic, and ability to facilitate intellectually stimulating idea exchange among the other students through questions they will ask the class. I will assign discussion leaders to a topic and the related reading after the first class session.

**Discussion Leader is worth 40 points**

**Thought/Reaction papers**: Write a thought or reaction paper covering at least three readings/videos/podcasts posted in Canvas and corresponding to the upcoming topics.

Thought papers will be conceptual essays synthesizing main theoretical ideas described in the assigned readings. This is not a summary of the readings, but rather what you developed in terms of thoughts, ideas, new information, connections or applicability to other readings, other coursework, current events and your own experiences in the field. You will upload these as Word documents in the Canvas course under Assignments. The Reaction paper must list which readings and/or media are being reviewed by your paper. **Thought/Reaction papers** will be due on the **Saturday** of the week before the next class meeting.

**Reaction papers are worth a total of 30 points, or 6 points each.**

**Discussion questions**. These are intended to stimulate critical and productive thinking. Replies to discussion questions should be thoughtful extensions that expand group thinking. These are intended to prime longer conversations during course meetings. Discussion replies will be
posted to the discussion thread for that week in the Canvas course. **Discussion answers** will be due on the Saturday of the week before the course meeting.

**Discussion question answers are worth 30 points, 6 points for each session.**

d. **Attendance and class participation**

**Attendance** is expected at each class and any asynchronous activities that you may be assigned, and is extremely important because the discussions that occur in class cannot easily be replicated outside of the classroom by simply reading the assigned materials. Participation in class discussions, in-class exercises, and small group discussions is expected and will contribute to your final grade. Participation means grounding your comments and analysis in the readings and other class materials – not simply offering your general opinion on a topic. If you experience difficulties in participating in discussions for technological, linguistic, cultural, or other reasons, please meet with me to explore ways in which you can become an active participant in the class. If you need to miss a class, please email me at terrigil@umich.edu to let me know you will be missing a class. Each class session is worth one point, unless you have a pre-approved absence or contact me the day of the class in the event of an emergency to let me know of your absence. We can discuss what needs to be done to make up for the missed class. Please refer to the [Policy on Class Attendance](#) found in the MSW Student Guide.

**Attendance is worth 5 points.**

e. **Grading**

I publish a detailed rubric for each assignment at the bottom of the assignment description. Please make certain to check both the rubric and the assignment description as you are completing your assignment to ensure that you have covered all of the requirements. I will give feedback to you about your assignment and in some instances, I will allow you to opt to do the assignment over, incorporating the feedback you have received.

Please consult the MSW Student Guide policies on [Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction](#) as well as [Student Grievance procedures](#) and the [policy for grading in special circumstances](#). Here are some resources around [testing and grading from CRLT](#).

Final grades are based on 100 percentage points. Letter grades are assigned to point totals according to the following scale:
Due Dates
Due dates will be posted on Canvas. All assignments must be submitted to the appropriate folder or discussion section on Canvas by the posted deadline. Exceptions to the due dates will require prior permission. Because the weekly reaction papers are tied to the upcoming lecture and the corresponding discussion questions and answers, it is highly advised that you not fall behind on the weekly assignments. I understand that it can be challenging to complete coursework in the summer months while working and attending classes, therefore, I have spread the required assignments throughout the semester in order to avoid a large final assignment. Because each assignment really does have an impact on your grade, please do let me know if you foresee a problem with a due date.

Incompletes
Incomplete will not be granted unless extraordinary circumstances prevent you from completing the coursework. You must formally request an incomplete from me prior to the end of the semester.
Grade Dispute Process
If you believe that you have been graded unfairly on an assignment, I will review your concerns upon submission of a specific written request for re-evaluation. Because this is a graduate program, you are expected to produce graduate-level work products. Your future employer will expect the same.

Social work students can receive individual writing assistance from Betsy Williams, Writing Skills and Study Skills Coordinator, through the UM SSW Career Services office. Students may schedule an appointment and bring a draft of their paper (at any stage) along with the text of the assignment and any questions or concerns they may have. Email ssw-cso@umich.edu or call 734-763-6259.

I may re-evaluate the submitted work, and/or I may ask you to complete additional work in order to bring the work up to standard in order to adjust your grade.

Please consult the MSW Student Guide policies on Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction as well as Student Grievance procedures and the policy for grading in special circumstances can be referenced using these links.

Class Recording and Course Materials
Audio and video recording of in-class lectures and discussions is prohibited without my advance written permission. Students with an approved accommodation from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities permitting the recording of class meetings must present documentation to me in advance of any recording being done. If permission is granted, the audio and/or video recording is to be used only for the student’s personal instructional use. Such recordings are not intended for a wider public audience, such as postings to the internet, social media or sharing with others.

Even when permission to record has been given, I reserve the right to disallow recording for a portion of any class time where privacy is a special concern. Due to the sensitive nature of the topics we will be discussing, there will be several times when a recording in process will be stopped and where I will require any students who are recording to cease recording so that we may have an open and honest discussion.

When I choose to record a class, I will decide which classes, if any, are recorded, what portion of each class is recorded, and whether a recording is made available on Canvas. On days when classes are recorded, students will be notified a recording is occurring. Class recordings and course materials may not be reproduced, sold, published or distributed to others, in whole or in part, without the written consent of the instructor. Additional information on class recordings can be found the Recording and Privacy Concerns FAQ.

Class Discourse
Discussion of child welfare, child abuse and neglect can be an emotional topic and could serve to trigger painful memories or create anxiety in students due to any number of factors. Discussion of child maltreatment necessarily involves risk, divergent points of view and conflict. It is imperative to respect differences in perspective and seek to understand those differences.
While my goal is to ensure that the classroom is a safe learning space, discussion, and the growth and learning that arises from it, can sometimes be uncomfortable or invoke an emotional reaction to the topic being discussed. I hope that all students work with me to create and foster a learning environment that promotes social justice, inclusion, equity, and thoughtful coverage of the subject matter.

This is an opportunity for all of us to engage in professional discourse and to broaden our mutual development of cultural humility. We will examine how the structure of current programs and policies designed to prevent or to address child maltreatment have evolved from and still reflect biases and negative beliefs about various populations or social identity groups. Disagreements are expected and are welcomed as long as we respect diverse opinions and one another and refrain from attacking or insulting others. For some topics, I will structure a formal debate format in order that multiple sides of an issue are clearly heard and rebutted. I may also ask you to take the opposite side of an issue from what you might normally prefer. This is to help you expand your thinking about the topic, solidify your point of view and help you understand what the opposition to a position you may wish to take may be thinking, thus the better prepared you are to address that opposition.

I believe that all of us are learning together, and as such, I will ask many questions of you in class. Through dialog and careful consideration of issues, you will learn how to create, evaluate and analyze the child welfare system in simple and complex forms, and to think carefully about the issues at hand. I ask questions to prompt thinking, to provoke reaction, and to help you hone your point of view. Remain open to the evidence presented, which may conflict with your own personal viewpoints and perspectives. I expect you to be engaged in the course material and contribute questions and comments in class discussions. Your class participation is not solely dependent upon how frequently you speak in class, but rather on the quality of your participation, your attention to the subject matter, and your willingness to engage with the subject matter.

**Protect confidentiality.**

One of the fundamental ethical values of social work is protecting client confidentiality. In this seminar, you may be exposed to conversations or environments that involve real individuals and real families. You will be expected to keep class materials/activities confidential.

g. **COVID-19 Statement**

For the safety of all students, faculty, and staff on campus, it is important for each of us to be mindful of safety measures that have been put in place for our protection. Your participation in this course is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University, including properly wearing a face covering in class and compliance with the University COVID-19 Vaccination Policy. Other applicable and additional safety measures may be described in the Campus Maize & Blueprint. Your ability to participate in this course may be impacted by failure to comply with campus safety measures. Individuals seeking to request an accommodation related to the face covering requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the Office for Institutional Equity and those seeking an exemption related to the
vaccination requirement should submit an exemption request through WolverineAccess. I also encourage you to review the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities and the COVID-related Addendum to the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

h. Health-Related Class Absences

Please evaluate your own health status regularly and refrain from attending class and coming to campus if you are ill. You are encouraged to seek appropriate medical attention for treatment. School of Social Work students who miss class due to illness of any kind will be given opportunities to access course materials online or provided with alternative learning opportunities. Please notify me by email about your absence as soon as practical, so that I can make accommodations. Please note that documentation (a doctor’s note) for medical excuses is not required.

Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources. They include:

- Safety and emergency preparedness
- Mental health and well-being
- Teaching evaluations
- Proper use of names and pronouns
- Accommodations for students with disabilities
- Religious/spiritual observances
- Military deployment
- Writing skills and expectations
- Academic integrity and plagiarism