

## SWK 6684/8684: CHILD AND FAMILY WELFARE

Summer 2019- On-Line Course

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course examines the social welfare policies, programs and services to families and children, historically known as "child welfare services." It explores major issues facing children, youth and families, critically examining the assumptions, values, and philosophical perspectives underlying the social policies, which shape child welfare. A central theme is the impact of social problems, economic inequity and discrimination on family well-being and how these forces have affected the development of services to families and children.

This course builds on the knowledge of social welfare institutions, introduced in the foundation year course, Social Welfare Organization, by examining the organizational context in which services to families and children are provided. It also utilizes the "ecological systems" perspective to explore the environmental context in which the social worker operates. This course integrates policy and practice by examining the problems affecting families and children and our society's response to these problems, including the impact on the social work practice delivery system. The course is divided into three units. The first unit is an overview that explores changing definitions and expectations of the family, and how such changes are shaped by the economy, cultural values, and other forces. The effects of poverty and discrimination on the well being of families - in particular minority and single parent families -are also examined. The second unit examines the primary social service delivery systems designed for children and families, including adoption, foster care, and child protective services. The third unit focuses on specific and contemporary social problems facing children and families today, including juvenile delinquency, teen pregnancy, and sexual violence.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Upon satisfactory completion of this course students will:

1. Understand the diversity of families, their needs, and their experiences in various contexts, including neighborhoods, schools, and communities.
2. Orient students to the consideration of societal values and professional ethics in planning, advocating for, and evaluating social policies, programs, and services to meet the needs of children and families.
3. Understand how services to families and children interact with the larger social and political structures and the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination.
4. Socialize students in their professional commitment to promote the general welfare of children and families, including the promotion of social, economic, political and cultural values, rights, and institutions that are compatible with the realization of social justice.
5. Be familiar with the legislative and judicial policies, practices, and goals of current child and family welfare programs especially as it affects diverse and vulnerable populations.

6. Be able to identify problems requiring family services to identify institutional and service gaps, and have an appreciation for collaborative and integrative service efforts.
7. Be able to identify administrative and management problems within child and family welfare organizations.
8. Equip students with the knowledge and skills of advocacy for policy change to improve social conditions and to promote social justice on behalf of families and children and in particular for people of color, women, and under-represented or disenfranchised populations.

## PLAGIARISM

Students should remember that the School will not condone plagiarism in any form and will sanction acts of plagiarism. A student who presents someone else's work as his or her own work is stealing from the authors or persons who did the original thinking and writing. Plagiarism occurs when a student directly copies another's work without citation; when a student paraphrases major aspects of another's work without citation; and when a student combines the work of different authors into a new statement without reference to those authors. It is also plagiarism to use the ideas and/or work of another student and present them as your own. It is not plagiarism to formulate your own presentation of an idea or concept as a reaction to someone else's work; however, the work to which you are reacting should be discussed and appropriately cited. Any student who can be shown to have plagiarized any part of any assignment in this course will automatically FAIL the course and will be referred to the Associate Dean for disciplinary action that may include expulsion.

## HIPAA ALERT

In line with the new HIPAA regulations concerning protected health information, it is important that you understand that any case information you present from your work, will need to be de-identified. What this means is that any information that would allow another to identify the person needs to be changed or eliminated. This includes obvious things like names and birth dates but may also contain other information that is so unique to the person that it will allow for identification, including diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender. If diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender is directly related to the case presentation it can be included if it will not allow for identification.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Given the nature of classroom discussion and the presentation of case materials and at times personal revelation in class, students are reminded that the same commitment to confidentiality with clients extends to classmates. What is shared in class stays in class.

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who are enrolled in this course and who will be requesting documented disability-related accommodations are asked to make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services, Rochelle Kohn, Beren Campus, 917-326-4828, rkohn1@yu.edu, Abby Kelsen, Wilf Campus, 646-685-0118, akelsen@yu.edu, during the first week of class. After approval for accommodations is granted, please submit your accommodations letter to Disability Services Office immediately.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required reading and videos: There will be no required text book for this course. Required weekly reading will be detailed in the syllabus

B. Class Design and Attendance: The course is an online course; however, each student is expected to actively participate in class discussions, contributing knowledge, experience and ideas. The policy of WSSW is that absences beyond two are cause for failure.

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Participate in weekly class discussions

You are to respond to the posted comments or questions assigned each week. In order to create a good discussion, you are expected to, at minimum:

1. Write a well-thought out response to the posted comments or questions, and
2. Respond to your classmates' posts.

Due Dates: Weekly

Learning Objectives: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8.

**Reflective Journals:** In addition to the academics, learning about yourself and gaining insight into yourself is critical to your knowledge and will help you greatly in the field. Keeping this in mind, I am asking each of you to write four reflective journals during the semester. Due dates are **June 7, 14, 28 and July 12.**

**Mid-Term:** Study of a relevant social problem

Choose a current social problem affecting children and families in your jurisdiction. Please chose from the following topics:

- Increase in child poverty and extreme poverty
- Increase in homelessness
- Food Insecurity
- Youth aging out of care
- Foster care
- Adoption
- Child fatalities in the child welfare system
- Juvenile justice reform
- Teen Pregnancy
- Opioid Crisis
- Disparities in the Child Welfare System

**Address the following:**

1. Describe the specific group or groups of people affected by this problem, with particular attention to vulnerable populations. How widespread is the problem currently?
2. What factors have contributed to the identified problem? Place the problem within a socio-political-economic framework in order to explain these factors.
3. How are society's values reflected in how the problem is defined? How are social work values congruent with or divergent from, society's values with respect to the problem you have identified?
4. What solutions have been attempted to solve the problem? Evaluate their effectiveness. 5. What solutions would you propose and why?

**Due Date: June 25, 2019**

APA style required. Incorporate class readings and scholarly literature. 8 - 10 pages.

Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

**Final:** Policy response to social problem

Using the social problem you discussed in mid-term, write about a current policy or law in your jurisdiction, or National Law that has been designed to address this problem:

1. Briefly describe the history of the policy. What is the jurisdiction of this policy (i.e., is this a national, state, or local law)? Who inspired and/or championed the creation of it? Was there a critical incident that spurred the development of this policy at the time it was introduced?
2. Describe the policy in detail. You may quote the entire policy verbatim, but then go on to describe what it means in your own words. What are the key provisions that address the social problem?
3. How well does this policy or law work at addressing the social problem? Has the problem gotten worse, improved, or stayed the same since this policy or law has been introduced? What criticisms has there been to it? Do you think these criticisms are valid?
4. To what extent does this policy or law concur with social work values? What changes would you suggest to this policy to improve its concurrence with social work values?

**Due Date: July 23, 2019**

APA style required. Incorporate class readings and scholarly literature. 8 - 10 pages.

Learning Objectives: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8.

V. Grading. The university grading system will be applied. The grade will be based on class participation and quality and promptness of written assignments.

Criteria for final grades are as follows:

Class Discussions/Participation- 20%

Reflective journals 15% (3.75 points for each journal submission)

Mid-term- 30%

Final – 35%

## **UNIT ONE: OVERVIEW**

### **Session 1 June 4: Introduction**

Review of course requirements, texts, syllabus, changing definitions of family, and overview of the child welfare system

#### **Required Reading:**

Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2018). 2018 Kids Count Data Book

Courtney, Mark E. (2013). Child Welfare: History and Policy Framework. Encyclopedia of Social Work.

Dong, M., Anda, R.F., Felitti, V.J., Dube, S.R., Williamson, D.F., Thomposon, T.J., et al. (2004). The interrelatedness of multiple forms of childhood abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 28, 771-784.

### **Session 2 June 6: Programs to support children and families**

- Understanding child well-being  
Understanding the need for services that promote well-being
- US Government programs that assist children and families

#### **Required Reading:**

Citizens' Committee for Children of New York. *Keeping track of New York City's children*. Citizens Committee for Children of New York. <http://www.ccn newYorkkeepingtrack.org/>.

Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2018). *America's Children: Key National indicators of well-being, 2018*. Washington D.C.: US Government Printing Office

### **Session 3 June 11: “Best interest” in child welfare**

Defining “best interest”

Theoretical perspectives in child welfare

Racial and ethnic trends in child welfare involvement

#### **Required Reading:**

Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2017). *Race for results: Building a path to opportunity for all children*.

Anyon, Y. (2010). Reducing racial disparities and disproportionalities in the child welfare system: Policy perspectives about how to serve the best interests of African American youth. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33, 242-253. Read pages 242-246.

US Department of Health and Human Services. (2016). Determining the best interests of the child: Summary of state laws. Washington, DC: Children's Bureau/ACYF. Read pages 1-5.

#### **Session 4 June 13: Disproportionality and disparity in child welfare**

- The relationship between poverty and child welfare involvement
- Current thoughts on what to do about disproportionalities and disparities

#### **Required Reading:**

Drake, B., Jolley, J.M., Lanier, P., Fluke, J., Barth, R.P. & Jonson-Reid, M. (2011). Racial bias in child protection? A comparison of competing explanations using national data. *Pediatrics*, 127(3), 471-478

### **UNIT TWO: CHILD WELFARE SERVICES**

#### **Session 5 June 18: Clinical practice with child welfare involved children and families – the casework process**

Evidence-based practices in child welfare

Challenges to implementing evidence-based practices in child welfare and other practice settings

#### **Required Reading:**

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2017) Forensic Interviewing: A primer for child welfare professionals

Jackson, K.F. (2009). Building cultural competence: A systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of culturally sensitive interventions with ethnic minority youth. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 31(11), 1192- 1198.

#### **Session 6 June 20: Child Protective Services**

- Defining abuse and neglect
- The delivery of family preservation and child protection services

#### **Required Reading**

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2013). *How the child welfare system works*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau.

Font, Maguire-Jack. (2015) Decision making in child protective services: Influence at multiple levels of the

Social Ecology.

Myers, John E.B., (2008) A Short History of Child Protection in America. Family Law Quarterly 42(3) 449-463.

### **Session Seven June 25: Foster Care**

- Characteristics of foster care
- Permanency planning

### **Required Reading**

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2018). Foster care statistics 2016. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau.

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2018). Placement of children with relatives. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau.

### **Session 8 June 27: Adoption**

- The adoption process
- Open adoption
- Special needs and minority children adoption

### **Required Reading**

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2006). The Basics of Adoption Practice: A Bulletin for Professionals. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2017). Concurrent planning: What the evidence shows. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2012). Foster Parent Adoption: A Bulletin for Professionals. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

### **Session 9 July 2: Challenges in coordinating services**

- How the services in child welfare are coordinated
- Difficulties experienced in service delivery

### **Required Reading**

The New York Times (2016). Grandmother's killing lays bare a dilemma in child welfare work.

The New York Times (2016). State orders monitors for New York City Child Welfare Agency

## **Session 10 July 9: Youth aging out of care**

- Trends for youth aging out
- Programs to assist youth aging out

### **Required Reading**

Altschuler, D., Stangler, G., Berkley, K. & Burton, L. (2009). Supporting youth in transition to adulthood: Lesson learned from child welfare and juvenile justice. Washington, DC: Center for Juvenile Justice Reform.

Weisberg, R. & Roth, V. (2005). Aging out [Motion Picture]. United States: Educational Broadcasting corporation.

## **UNIT THREE: SOCIAL PROBLEMS**

### **Session 11: Juvenile Justice**

- Structure of court system
- Rights of juveniles
- Current trends

### **Required Reading:**

Gonnerman, Jennifer. Before the Law: A boy was accused of taking a back pack. The courts took the next three years of his life. The New Yorker.

Gonnerman, Jennifer. Kalief Browder, 1993-2015. The New Yorker.

Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare. (2005). Double jeopardy: Youth involved in dual systems of child welfare and juvenile justice: Practice notes #17. University of Minnesota, School of Social Work.

Sudol, T. (2009). Information packet: Juvenile justice and child welfare. New York: National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning.

### **Session 12 July 16: Teen Pregnancy**

- Trends in teenage childbearing
- Pregnancy prevention programs

### **Required Reading**

Dworsky, A. & Courtney, M. (2010). The risk of teenage pregnancy among transitioning foster youth: Implications for extending state care beyond age 18. Children and Youth Services Review, 32(10), 1351-1356.

Pryce, J.M. & Samuels, G.M. (2010). Renewal and Risk: The Dual Experience of Young Motherhood and Aging Out of the Child Welfare System. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 25(2). 205-230.

### **Session 13 July 18: Public scandal and policy – Child Fatalities/ The Hart Family**

#### **Required Reading:**

- Hart Family, Before Driving Off Cliff, Hid Dark Home Life From View, New York Times Link: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/27/us/hart-family-crash.html>
- Inside the Hart family home, police search reveals debts, contradictions, By The Oregonian | Posted August 31, 2018 <https://expo.oregonlive.com/news/errry-2018/09/457f99a9ef7947/inside-the-hart-family-home-po.html>
- Who were the Harts really? Mystery surrounds family that plunged off California cliff, Tacoma News, April 10, 2018 Link: <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/mystery-surrounds-hart-family-that-plunged-off-california-cliff/html>

### **Session 14: Course Review**

No required reading

See Canvas for the discussion questions for the week

