Course Title: Children’s Services Policy

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Office Hours – Mondays from 12-2 or as scheduled

Description: This course addresses federal, state, and local children’s policies and programs. Students learn to analyze child welfare, mental health, and allied policies, regulations and programs influencing children’s services.

The net effect should be to provide students with a basis for making decisions about policies and programs and advocating for the continuance of current legislation, or the development of new policies and programs. Guest lecturers, class discussions, readings, and projects will offer students the opportunities to achieve the course competencies.

Objectives: Students will develop knowledge in the following areas:

Through attendance, active participation, and completion of course assignments, students will:

1. Know the structures of current programs and policies affecting families and children without families in need of supportive, supplemental and substitute care.

2. Know the evolution of current policies and programs for children and families.


4. Know the relationship between child welfare and child mental health policies and practices.

5. Sharpen skills for analyzing current policies for children and families.

6. Value the principles of permanency planning and the negative effects that inconsistent and impermanent living arrangements have on children.

7. Value a wide range of parenting practices which, while varying as a result of ethnic, cultural, community, and familial differences, can all provide adequate care for children.

Readings and Resources: All course lectures, syllabus, and external links to useful websites will be available online or on Blackboard at http://blackboard.unc.edu

Course Format: This weekly course will use a variety of teaching methods and activities to achieve course objectives. Students will have the opportunity to meet current practitioners and consumers, and discuss their perspectives about practice and management in public child welfare. Readings, role-plays, assignments, and lectures will enhance the information presented. Except when speakers are lecturing, the class will follow a seminar format.

Course Expectations and Grading Criteria:

All written assignments are to be typed and finished in a fashion befitting professionals in the field unless otherwise specified in the directions. In compliance with the policy approved by the Administrative Board of the General College and the College of Arts and Sciences, “students should expect to be graded on spelling, punctuation, grammar, and style, as well as the content and organization of their work.” Any citations must follow the APA rules of punctuation. All work is to be handed in during class unless the student has received prior approval from the professor for an extenuating circumstance. Late work loses two points per day for each day late, including weekends and holidays.

Attendance & Participation:

Since the class will generally follow a seminar format, group discussion is critical in this class. Full class participation is possible only when the student attends class regularly, arrives promptly with readings completed, ready to respond to the subject matter under discussion, and is prepared to ask questions when visiting speakers are present. Participation is defined as the willingness and ability to add to the discussion, using content from the readings, ask questions of each other, speakers or the instructor, clarify issues that are salient for the student, and the willingness to bring personal and field experiences into the room that add richness and reality to the discussion. Unexcused or habitual absences from the class will affect the attendance and participation grade.

Grading Policy:

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<td>94 and above</td>
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Incompletes are only given in extraordinary circumstances after a discussion between the student and professor.
Policy on Academic Dishonesty:
The Honor Code is in effect in this class and all others at the University. I am committed to treating Honor Code violations seriously and urge all students to become familiar with its terms set out at http://instrument.unc.edu. If you have questions it is your responsibility to ask me about the Code’s application. All written work and other projects must be submitted with a statement that “I have complied with the requirements of the Honor Code in all aspects of this submitted work.” Please refer to the APA Style Guide, the SSW Manual, and the SSW Writing Guide for information on attribution of quotes, plagiarism and appropriate use of assistance in preparing. In keeping with the UNC Honor Code, if reason exists to believe that academic dishonesty has occurred, a referral will be made to the Office of the Student Attorney General for investigation and further action as required.

Policy on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:
Students with disabilities that affect their participation in the course are encouraged to notify the instructor if they wish to have special accommodations in instructional format, examination format, etc., considered. The instructor will work with the student and Disability Services and Learning Disability Services to make necessary accommodations.

Assignments:
Assignment 1, Policy Analysis Frameworks:
There are many frameworks that assist in understanding social welfare policy. In a short paper, no more than 3 pages please identify three policy frameworks that you use when analyzing policy. Please explain why you find these frameworks helpful and what types of policies they are best suited for. Feel free use any of the readings from your Foundation Policy class or this class to complete this assignment.
Due January 26, 2009

Assignment 2, Policy Advocacy Exploration:
This paper should address a current legislative proposal (bill or amendment) in the North Carolina General Assembly. The paper should include:
- Historical background of the problem
- Current description of the problem that necessitated the proposed bill or amendment
- Description of relevant policy for consideration
- Policy goals and underlying values and ideologies
- Political, Administrative, and Economic feasibility of the policy
- Your position and rationale for this position
Due March 2, 2009
Attend and reflect on a Policy Event: (Social Work Advocacy Day)
By the end of the semester, students must attend a policy making event. Social Work Advocacy Day is the preferred event for completion of this assignment and occurs on March 18, 2009 in collaboration with NASW-NC. At this event, students join other professional social workers from across the state and learn and participate in advocacy with the NC General Assembly. Participants have an opportunity to attend legislative committee meetings and to talk with legislators about critical issues facing our most vulnerable residents. Students are encouraged to ask permission from their field instructors to attend and receive field hour credit. Upon attending the event students will seek opportunities to discuss their position on the current legislative proposal. Following the event, students will be expected to document their experience in a two page reflective paper detailing your experience.
A reflective paper will capture the following:
- Include the event and the groups or committees that you encountered.
- What were your impressions of the experience?
- What did you learn?
- What was the strength’s of your preparation for the event?
- What do you wish you had done to prepare?
- What recommendations would you have for another person who was attending the event as an advocate?
Note: While attending Social Work Advocacy Day is strongly encouraged, students who can not meet this requirement will meet with the instructor to determine a comparable event.
Reflective Paper due March 30, 2009

Assignment 4, Social Policy Analysis:
Purpose: This assignment requires the student to complete a comprehensive analysis of a policy relevant to children’s services that is of interest to them. It requires research into the development of a policy, implementation issues: planned outcomes and unintended effects of a policy, as well as evaluation of a policy.

Product: A formal paper of 10-15 pages, double spaced, using APA format that addresses the following areas:
- History of the creation of the policy, what programs does the policy support?
- Outcomes of the policy since it’s inception
- Who is served? Does the policy support the population for whom it was intended?
- How is the program funded? What effects on the program and policy has the funder had?
- How are vulnerable populations affected by the policy?
- How are front-line staff trained to carry out policy? Where is the oversight?
- Your position on the policy
- Recommendations for policy shifts and rationale for your position
Due April 20, 2009
Assignment 5, Social Policy Analysis Class Presentation:

From the information obtained in the formal paper, the student is to develop a class presentation designed to inform peers in the classroom with a practitioner’s understanding of their selected policy. Presentations should be between 15-25 minutes and contain a handout as well as a visual aide to supplement the oral presentation. Due date will be negotiated with instructor based how selected topic is best integrated into remaining class sessions. Some presentations will be made the last day of class.

Grades:
Attendance and Participation 10%
Policy Analysis Frameworks 10%
Social Policy Analysis 25%
Social Policy Analysis Class Presentation 10%
Policy Advocacy Exploration 25%
Policy Advocacy Event & Reflection 20%
January 12  Introductions
              Review of Syllabus

January 19  Martin Luther King Holiday – No Class

January 26  A Framework for Policy Analysis
              A Risk and Resilience Perspective and Ecological Theory
              Applied to Social Policy: An Overview

Required Readings:


Assignment 1: Policy Frameworks Due

February 2  Child Well-Being: Poverty and the Safety Net

Required Readings:


February 9  Child Well-Being: Welfare Reform

Required Readings:


February 16  Child Well-Being: Education
Guest speaker: McKinney Veto Act for Homeless Youth

**Required Readings and Preparation for Discussion:**
*J&F*, pp 67-92
Conduct a web search and read two different articles, one “pro” and one “con” on the No Child Left Behind Act

**Or**
Visit the Children’s Bureau Express website and read all links to familiarize yourself with the McKinney-Veto Act
http://cbexpress.acf.hhs.gov/index.cfm?event=website.viewArticles&issueid=96&articleid=2130

**Topic Identification for Policy Analysis Assignment**

February 23  
**Child Well-Being: Health Programs**

**Required Readings:**
*J&F*, pp. 93-130, 167-193

March 2  
**Child Well-Being: Mental Health and Disability Programs**

**Required Readings:**
*J&F*, pp. 131-165

**Assignment 2: Policy Advocacy Exploration Due**

March 9  
**Spring Break**

March 16  
**No Class**

March 18  
**WEDNESDAY**
**The Role of Advocates in Public Policy**
Social Work Advocacy Day
NC General Assembly

March 23  
**Child Protection**

**Required Readings and Preparation for Discussion:**
*J&F*, pp. 16-66
http://www.childandfamilypolicy.duke.edu/publications/reports/Final%20Report-06MRS.pdf

Locate two articles on Confidentiality in Child Protective Services
At least one must address confidentiality from a national perspective. What is NC policy on confidentiality in CPS?
March 30  

**Permanency Planning**

**Required Readings and preparation for discussion:**

**Assignment 3: Policy Advocacy Reflection**

April 6  

**Services to Older Adolescents**
Research and read the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999.


April 13  

**Adoptions and Safe Surrender**

Research Adoption Assistance and Safe Surrender in the North Carolina Division of Social Services Policy Manual

April 20  

**Outcomes in Child Required Readings:**

**Assignment 4: Social Policy Analysis Due**

April 27  

**Juvenile Justice and Children’s Policy**
Guest Speaker: NC Department of Juvenile Justice

**Required Readings:**
J&F, pp.231-264