



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Course No:	SOWO 832
Course Title:	CHILD WELFARE POLICY
Semester:	Spring 2021
Time/Location:	Mondays 9:00AM – 11:50AM
Instructor:	Emily Putnam-Hornstein, PhD, MSW School of Social Work Tate Turner Kuralt Building Cell Phone: 917-282-7861 eph@unc.edu
Office Hours:	By Zoom appointment
Zoom Room:	https://unc.zoom.us/my/eputnamhornstein
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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course engages students in the process of child welfare policy practice and advocacy to formulate, analyze, implement, evaluate and disseminate evidence-informed policies and interventions at all system levels.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of this class students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate current knowledge of organizational, local, state, and federal policies and proposed legislation that affect child welfare systems at all levels.
2. Recognize the importance of historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences on policy formulation.
3. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment to analyze child welfare policies that impact client systems, organizations, and communities.
4. Engage in research-informed policy practice to assess the strength of evidence in support of a specific policy intervention or opposed to an existing policy practice.
5. Use ethical principles to decide if existing child welfare policy policies and practices are meritorious or are in need of change.
6. Engage in policy practice to effect changes that decrease discrimination and oppression and in advocacy efforts to promote fairness and inclusion.
7. Demonstrate the analytical, theoretical, and value assessment skills to evaluate the effects of contextual history on policy formulation and implementation and choose the current context that is favorable for policy advocacy.
8. Decide whether to focus policy advocacy at the local, state, federal, or international level and whether to seek change in public policy or in the rules and guidelines of a non-governmental or international organization.

9. Differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate uses of electronic communications and technology in policy advocacy.
10. Develop leadership strategies for collaborating within and across systems and empowering individuals or populations excluded from or limited by aspects of a child welfare policy to advocate for the safety, family permanence, and social and emotional well-being of children and families.

READINGS and RESOURCES:

REQUIRED TEXT

Berrick, J.D. (2018). *The Impossible Imperative*. New York: Oxford University Press.

OTHER RESOURCES

Other required readings and associated media will be posted on Sakai.

The following edited book will be posted online: C. Henry Kempe: A 50 Year Legacy to the Field of Child Abuse and Neglect, Richard D. Krugman and Jill E. Korbin, eds., New York: Springer.

OTHER GOOD BOOKS TO THINK ABOUT READING OVER THE SUMMER...

- Marc Parent. (1998). *Turning Stones, My Days and Nights with Children at Risk*. NY: Fawcett Columbine.
- Dorothy Roberts. (2002). *Shattered Bonds: The Color of Child Welfare*. Basic Books.
- David Gelles. (1996). *The Book of David: How Preserving Families Can Cost Children's Lives*
- Chris Beam. (2013). *To the end of June, The Intimate Life of American Foster Care*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Nina Bernstein. (2001). *The Lost Children of Wilder, The Epic Struggle to Change Foster Care*. NY: Vintage Books.
- Elizabeth Bartholet. (2000). *Nobody's Children: Abuse and Neglect, Foster Drift, and the Adoption Alternative*

CONTENT MANAGEMENT

Course materials, including the syllabus, assignment information, slide decks, the calendar, and links to useful web sites will be posted throughout the semester on Sakai, at <https://sakai.unc.edu>.

*Supplemental readings are available on Sakai or through UNC libraries databases. Additional supplementary readings may be recommended or assigned at the discretion of the instructor. Slides will be posted after class.

CLASS ATTENDANCE:

Because this is a short course and will consist of small group discussion, attendance is especially important! Students are expected to attend every class.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Student performance will be evaluated based on the assignments described below (**detailed instructions for each assignment will be available on Sakai in the “Assignments” folder**).

GRADING SYSTEM:

Components	Possible Points
Historical Article Discussion	15
Point / Counterpoint	30
Policy Critique	45
Discussion / Engagement	10
Total	100

The School of Social Work operates on an evaluation system of Honors (H), Pass (P), Low Pass (L), and Fail (F). The numerical values of these grades are:

H	High Pass	100 – 94	Clearly Excellent
P	Pass	93 – 74	Entirely Satisfactory
L	Low Pass	73 – 70	Inadequate
F	Fail	69 or below	Unacceptable

A grade of P is considered entirely satisfactory. The grade of Honors (“H”) — which only a limited number of students attain — signifies that the work is clearly excellent in all respects.

EXPECTATIONS FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Written assignments should be typed and follow one of the 3 major citation styles used in academic writing: MLA, APA, Chicago, or CSE/CBE. Although students have the flexibility to choose the citation style, consistent adherence is required.

The university library offers useful information on citing information in a variety of styles:

<https://guides.lib.unc.edu/citing-information>

Additional school resources are also available:

<https://ssw.unc.edu/academics/resources/apa-style-and-writing-resources/>

POLICY ON INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS:

A paper is considered late if handed in any later than the start of class on the day it is due. Students must notify the instructor at least 24 hours before an assignment is due if an assignment is going to be turned in late. Extensions may be given at the instructor’s discretion. Students will lose five points for each day beyond the due date/time (including weekends) for unexcused late assignments. Assignments more than 7 days late will not be accepted.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

“The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has had a student-led honor system for over 100 years. Academic integrity is at the heart of Carolina and we all are responsible for upholding the ideals of honor and integrity. The student-led Honor System is responsible for adjudicating any suspected violations of the Honor Code and all suspected instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the honor system. Information, including your responsibilities as a student is outlined in the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance.” (From <http://studentconduct.unc.edu/faculty/honor-syllabus.>) Your full participation and observance of

the Honor Code is expected. The Honor Code can be found at
<http://studentconduct.unc.edu/sites/studentconduct.unc.edu/files/documents/Instrument.pdf>

Academic dishonesty is contrary to the ethics of the social work profession, unfair to other students, and will not be tolerated in any form. **All written assignments should include the following signed pledge:** "*I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in preparing this written work.*" 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. Please refer to the APA Style Guide for information on attribution of quotes, plagiarism, and appropriate citation. [The UNC Writing Center](#) provides clear guidelines regarding what does and does not constitute plagiarism.

Accessibility and Resources Services:

The University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities. All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service Office. In the first instance please visit their website <http://accessibility.unc.edu>, or 919-962-8300 or Email; - accessibility@unc.edu. A student is welcome to initiate the registration process at any time, however, the process can take time. ARS is particularly busy in the run-up to Finals and during Finals. Students submitting Self-ID forms at that time are unlikely to have accommodations set until the following semester. Please contact ARS as early in the semester as possible.

Writing Support

Clear, concise, and cogent writing is an essential skill for social work professionals. Writing support is available to all students through the School's Writing Support Team; they can help you strengthen your writing skills by sharing strategies for organizing information, presenting a cohesive argument, ensuring clear communication, and mastering APA style. Writing Support offers a learning opportunity for students but does not merely copy edit student papers. Writing support is available in-person, by e-mail, or by phone. E-mail a requested appointment day and time to SOSWwritingsupport@gmail.com . In addition, see the Writing Resources and References page on the School's website (<https://ssw.unc.edu/academics/resources/apa-style-and-writing-resources/>).

CLASS PREPARATION, ATTENDANCE, AND PARTICIPATION

In order to fully participate in and benefit from each class session, **students should complete required readings and assignments before class and come to class prepared.** Attendance is critical to your learning, as well as to the atmosphere of inclusiveness and trust in the class. I ask that you contact me, **in advance**, if you need to miss a class session. It is your responsibility to obtain handouts, information about class content, and information about announcements, etc., from your classmates if you are unable to attend a class.

SPRING 2021 ASYNCHRONOUS CONTENT

For Spring 2021, enhanced readings related to "Special Topics" will be used to minimize Zoom-based lectures.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Assignment #1: An Historical Perspective

Although we are often taught to look for the most recent literature and research, this can lead us to forget lessons from past child welfare policy debates and lose important context for understanding how we arrived at the system we have today.

For this first assignment, you will choose an article about the child welfare system written (a) by one of the individuals listed below (or another author, upon my approval) and (b) published BEFORE 2000.

This article should be sent to me before the assigned due date so I can post it on Sakai.

You will then be asked to provide a short oral overview of the article during class and any insights / lessons it may have for policy discussions of today.

- Douglas Besharov (an online inventory of articles can be found [here](#))
- Mark Courtney
- Trudy Festinger
- David Finkelhor
- Richard Gelles
- Martin Guggenheim
- Richard Krugman
- Marcia Lowry (e.g., commentary with others on this list can be found in this [special issue from 1998](#))
- Dorothy Roberts
- Michael Wald
- Jane Waldfogel
- Fred Wulczyn

2. Assignment #2: Point / Counter-Point Policy Response

Understanding how child welfare policies and interventions translate into outcomes is essential if policymakers and researchers are to intervene effectively. Engaging with the merits of arguments of the benefits and potential unintended consequences is critical.

For the second assignment, you will be asked to review a “point” and “counterpoint” exchange concerning the role that neighborhood and location should play in foster care placements.

(The articles below will be posted on Sakai.)

- Berrick, J. D. (2006). Neighborhood-based foster care: A critical examination of location-based placement criteria. *Social Services Review*, 80(4), 569-583.
- Crampton, D. (2007). Debate with authors: In response to Jill Duerr Berrick's "Neighborhood-based foster care: A critical examination of location-based placement criteria." *Social Service Review*, 81(2), 343-345.

- Berrick, J. D. (2007). A Response to David Crampton. *Social Service Review*, 81(2), 347-349.

You will then write a 500-word “Response”. This response can amount to an endorsement of the arguments made by one of the authors (with additional commentary as to why you agree), a critique of the arguments made by one of the authors (again, with additional thoughts as to why their logic may be flawed), or an entirely new critique (or argument for) location-based placement criteria.

3. **Assignment #3: Argument Critique**

Effective policy development and related advocacy are strengthened by an ability to thoughtfully engage with, and meaningfully critique, arguments and ideas you disagree with.

For your second assignment, you will be asked to identify a very specific, contemporaneous policy-related “topic” that you will argue AGAINST. This should NOT be a general response to something you disagree with (e.g., “I don’t agree with the recently passed Family First Prevention Services Act because...”).

Rather, you should identify a policy or reform idea that is under discussion (e.g., [offering universal basic income to all former foster youth](#)), a bill that has been proposed (e.g., [African American Family Preservation Act](#)), an argument made by an advocate through an editorial or blog post (e.g., [“The Clueless CASA of Florida”](#) or [“Therapeutic Foster Care a Necessary Option for Foster Youth”](#)), or a partisan (either liberal or conservative) commentary (e.g., [“5 Myths of Child Welfare”](#)).

You must then construct a well-reasoned argument written in the style of an 800-1200 word editorial or commentary intended for lay audiences and in direct response to the policy or reform.

COURSE OUTLINE AND SPECIAL TOPICS

Week	Date	Primary Content	Special Discussion Topic	Assignment
1	3/15	Introduction, Course Overview, and Child Welfare 101 (by the numbers)	N/A	N/A
2	3/22	Defining Maltreatment & Mandatory Reporting Laws	Eliminating Neglect as a Form of Maltreatment	N/A
3	3/29	Approaches to Risk and Safety Assessment	Predictive Risk Modeling	Assignment #1
[week 4]		Monday April 5, 2021 – UNC Wellness Day – No Class		
5	4/12	The US Foster Care System	Hidden Foster Care	Assignment #2
6	4/19	Policies and Practices to Address Racial Disparities	Race Blind Removals	N/A
7	4/26	A Twenty-First Century Child [?] System	TBD	Assignment #3
5/11 Grades Due				
5/15 SSW Saturday Graduation!				

Class 1**INTRODUCTION, COURSE OVERVIEW, & CHILD WELFARE 101****March 15, 2021****In-Class Discussion**

- Introductions
- Overview of the course (readings, structure, objectives)
- Assignments and Expectations
- Understanding the System by the ##'s
- Child Welfare in the News:
<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USACFCWIG/subscriber/new>
- Berger LM & Slack KS. (2021). [The contemporary US child welfare system\(s\): Overview and key challenges](#). *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science.* <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716220969362>

Class 2**DEFINING MALTREATMENT & MANDATORY REPORTING LAWS****March 22, 2021****In-Class Discussion**

- Child Welfare Policy Framework
- CAPTA and State definitions of Abuse and Neglect
- Child Welfare in the News

Required Readings

- J. Duerr Berrick, Chapters 1 & 2
- Courtney ME. (2013). [Child Welfare: History and Policy Framework](#). University of Chicago.
- Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2019). [About CAPTA: A legislative history](#). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau.

Special Discussion Topic Preparation

- Krugman & Korbin: Chapter 12 (Taking the Wrong Message: The Legacy of the Identification of the Battered Child Syndrome)
- Krugman & Korbin: Chapter 13 (Mandated Reporting Laws and Child Maltreatment: The Evolution of a Flawed Policy)

Class 3**APPROACHES TO SAFETY AND RISK ASSESSMENT****March 29, 2021**

In-Class Content

- Child Protection Hotlines and the Front-End of the System
- Substantiation, Differential Response, State Registries
- Safety vs. Risk

Required Readings

- J. Duerr Berrick, Chapters 3 & 4
- Drake B. (1996). Unraveling “unsubstantiated”. *Child Maltreatment*, 3(1).
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1077559596001003008>

Special Topic Preparation

- [Can an Algorithm Tell when Kids are in Danger?](#) NY Times Magazine, 2018.
- [A Child Abuse Prediction Model Fails Poor Families](#). Wired, 2018.
- Drake B, Jonson-Reid M, Gendarilla Ocampo M, Morrison M, Dvalishvili D. (2021). [A Practical Framework for Considering the Use of Predictive Risk Modeling in Child Welfare](#). *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 692(1), 162-181
- [Podcast, 20 minutes] [Can an Algorithm Keep Kids Safe?](#) Innovation Hub

Class 4

UNC WELLNESS DAY – NO CLASS

April 5, 2021

Class 5

THE U.S. FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

April 12, 2021

In-Class Discussion

- Informal versus Formal Foster Care
- Trends in Forms of Foster Care and Time in Care
- ASFA, Terminations of Parental Rights, and the Legal Framework

Required Readings

- J. Duerr Berrick, Chapters 5 & 6
- Font SA & Gershoff ET. (2020). Foster Care: How We Can, and Should, Do More for Maltreated Children. *Social Policy Report*, 33(3).

Special Topic Preparation

- Gupta-Kagan J. (2020). [America's Hidden Foster Care System](#). 72 *Stanford Law Review*, 841.
- Fitzgerald M. (2020). “Faith-Based Movement to ‘Host’ Children of Struggling Families Hits Opposition in New York” *The Chronicle of Social Change*
- “Low-Cost Randomized Controlled Trial of Safe Families for Children”: Final Report to the Laura and John Arnold Foundation. [Executive Summary of Appendix A]

- United Family Advocates Letter to Commissioner Poole: May 19, 2020.

Class 6

POLICIES AND PRACTICES TO ADDRESS RACIAL DISPARITIES

April 19, 2021

In-Class Content

- Racial disparities at various system decision points

Required Readings

- J. Duerr Berrick, Chapters 7 & 8
- "[Do We Need to Abolish Child Protective Services?](#)", December 10, 2020, Mother Jones
- Drake B, Jonson-Reid (2011). NIS Interpretations: Race and the National Incidence Studies of Child Abuse and Neglect. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33(1), 16-20.
- Drake B, Jolley JM, Lanier P, Fluke J, Barth RP, Jonson-Reid M (2011). Racial Bias in Child Protection? A Comparison of Competing Explanations Using National Data. *Pediatrics*, 127 (3) 471-478.

Special Topic Preparation

- M. Fitzgerald: [The Case for Color Blindness, Washington Monthly](#)
- Pryce J, Lee W, Crowe E, Park J, McCarthy M, & Owens G (2019). [A case study in public child welfare: county-level practices that address racial disparity in foster care placement](#), *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, 13:1, 35-59, DOI: 10.1080/15548732.2018.1467354
- [Video: 7 minutes] J. Pryce: [To transform child welfare, take race out of the equation, TED Residency](#)

Class 7

A TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY CHILD [?] SYSTEM

April 26, 2021

In-Class Content

- Do we want a child well-being system? A child protection system? Both? Neither?
- Alternatives to the current system – what would those look like?

Required Readings

- J. Duerr Berrick, Chapters 9 & 10
- TBD

Special Topic Preparation

- TBD