



Course Syllabus: Child Welfare Policy and Practice
College of Health Sciences and Human Services
SOWK 3453 x40
Spring 2021

Contact Information

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Course Description

This course is designed to provide students with an overview of child welfare services from a historical, theoretical and practice perspective. Services to children and their families are divided into support services or those which enhance family life, supplemental services that help the struggling family to maintain or regain balance, and substitute services or those that provide for the child when the family cannot on either a temporary or permanent basis. Each service is considered from the point of view of etiology, rationale for the services, the provision of the services, how the consumer views the service, and trends that may affect future provision of the service. Services are also discussed in the light of their provision for a variety of diverse populations.

Course Objectives

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

- Define key features of the child welfare system (emphases on Texas)
- Examine the historical development of services
- Identify unique needs and issues (human diversity)
- Examine the impact of social and economic forces
- Identify key concepts in child advocacy services
- Identify key children's services
- Analyze policy impact on children's services
- Analyze bio-psycho-social variables
- Discuss how services to children and families are provided along a continuum from the least intrusive (support services), to somewhat more comprehensive (supplemental services), to services that

substitute, either temporarily or permanently, for their natural family (substitute services)

- Discuss trauma-informed care and explain the importance of a trauma-informed approach
- Discuss the history of the provision of services for children and their families in the United States
- Explain the role of the family in the lives of children, how these roles can break down, and how they differ according to the influence of diversity
- Demonstrate an understanding of how social issues, such as poverty, violence, drug abuse, and homelessness impact children and their families
- Recognize the concepts of family preservation, family support, and permanency planning and explain what each means to children and families
- Give a brief overview of services such as daycare, services in schools, counseling, court services, protective services, services to teen parents, foster care, adoption, and residential services
- Discuss the impact of children's services on those they serve
- Speculate knowledgeably on the trends in the future of services to children and families given the current societal attitudes and political climate

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Required:

Crosson-Tower, C. (2018). *Exploring Child Welfare: A Practice Perspective* (7th ed.). Pearson.

Recommended:

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000>

Writing Assistance

Begin drafting assignments as early as possible and take advantage of the [MSU Writing Center](#). The MSU Writing Center is committed to serving the university's academic mission. It provides trained writing tutors and facilitates writing workshops. Students are invited to bring any kind of writing to the Writing Center. They do not provide an editing service; instead, they offer feedback and support to help writers develop into more effective communicators.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty includes cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make an application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

MSU Counseling Resources

The MSU Counseling Center recognizes that during this time of change, many may feel uncertainty and fear along with a host of other emotions. We are committed to helping our campus community through this difficult time.

The Counseling Center has counselors working remotely to help students. Therapy sessions are conducted through the Therapy Assist Online (TAO) video conferencing platform. Students at home or on-campus can have a telephone or video conference session using this platform. Appointments are available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Call to schedule 940-397-4618. We are not scheduling in-person sessions in the center in order to keep everyone safe and healthy. [Click here to access additional counseling resources](#).

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

Midwestern State University seeks to provide a safe, healthy, and pleasant environment for its faculty, staff, and students. To this end, the use of tobacco

products, including smoke and smokeless tobacco, and the advertising, sale, free distribution, and discarding of tobacco products shall be prohibited in all indoor and outdoor facilities and in all university vehicles. The policy extends to faculty, staff, students, vendors, guests, and visitors.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State University are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Professional Expectations of Student Behavior

Midwestern State University Department of Social Work is mandated by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) to foster and evaluate professional behavioral development for all students in social work courses. The Department of Social Work also bears a responsibility to the community at large to produce fully trained professional social workers who consciously exhibit the knowledge, values, and skills of the profession of social work. The values of the profession are codified in the [NASW Code of Ethics](#). Given this context, all students taking classes in the social work program will be expected to exhibit the following ethical standards of behavior.

1. **Accountability:** Complete reading assignments, participate in class discussions, and submit assignments on time.
 - a. *Participate in group activities and assignments at a comparable level to peers.*
 - b. *Complete work in a timely fashion and according to directions provided.*
2. **Respect:** Treat all your peers, your instructors and all those you come in contact with, with dignity and respect at all times.
 - a. *Give feedback to peers in a constructive manner.*
 - b. *Approach conflict with peers or instructors in a cooperative manner.*
 - c. *Use positive and nonjudgmental language.*
3. **Confidentiality:** Treat any personal information that you hear about a peer or an instructor as strictly confidential.
 - a. *Maintain any information shared in class, dyads, or smaller groups within that unit.*
 - b. *Use judgment in self-disclosing information of a very personal nature in the class. (Class time should not be used as therapy or treatment. If students feel the need to talk about issues they are struggling with, they may consult with their instructor to receive a referral for counseling.)*
 - c. *Never use names of clients or disclose other identifying information in the classroom.*

4. **Competence:** Apply yourself to all your academic pursuits with seriousness and conscientiousness, meeting all deadlines as given by your instructors. Constantly strive to improve your abilities.
 - a. *Seek out appropriate support when having difficulties to ensure success in completing course requirements.*
 - b. *Take responsibility for the quality of completed tests and assignments.*
 - c. *Strive to work toward greater awareness of personal issues that may impede your effectiveness with clients.*
5. **Integrity:** Practice honesty with yourself, your peers, and your instructors. Constantly strive to improve your abilities.
 - a. *Academic: Commit yourself to learning the rules of citing others work properly.*
 - b. *Do your own work and take credit only for your own work.*
 - c. *Acknowledge areas where improvement is needed.*
 - d. *Accept and benefit from constructive feedback*

Submission of Papers: Students will submit their written assignments on paper and electronically. Electronic copies will be subject to plagiarism analysis and will be kept in an electronic file for future reference. A student may not submit the same paper, or essentially the same, paper, project, assignment, or finished project to an instructor, which has been submitted to another instructor, unless specifically authorized by both instructors to do so.

6. **Diversity:** Strive to become more open to people, ideas, and creeds that you are not familiar with. Embrace diversity.
 - a. *Maintain speech free of racism, sexism, ableism, heterosexism, or stereotyping.*
 - b. *Exhibit a willingness to serve diverse groups of persons.*
 - c. *Demonstrate an understanding of how values and culture interact.*
7. **Communication:** Strive to improve both verbal and written communication skills as these skills are used heavily in interactions with clients and peers and also with creating client records.
 - a. *Demonstrate assertive communication with peers and instructors.*
 - b. *Practice positive, constructive, respectful, and professional communication skills with peers and instructor: (body language, empathy, listening)*
8. **Social Justice:** Strive to deepen your commitment to social justice for all populations at risk.
 - a. *Demonstrate an understanding of how institutional and personal oppression impede the experience of social justice for individuals and groups.*
 - b. *Strive to learn about methods of empowering populations and enhancing social justice at micro, mezzo, and macro levels.*

Consequences of Unacceptable Behavior

The Department of Social Work may terminate a student's participation in the program on the basis of professional non-suitability if the Department's faculty members determine that a student's behavior has constituted a significant violation or pattern of violations of the NASW Code of Ethics, the MSU School of Social Work Student Manual, or the MSU Academic Policies and Regulations. Examples of violations that may lead to termination include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. Failure to meet or maintain academic grade point requirements as established by the University and the Social Work program.
2. Academic cheating, lying, or plagiarism (turnitin.com will be used to check the originality of the text).
3. Behavior judged to be in violation of the NASW Code of Ethics.
4. Failure to meet generally accepted standards of professional conduct, personal integrity, or emotional stability requisite for professional practice.
5. Inappropriate or disruptive behavior toward colleagues, faculty, or staff (at the department or in the field placement).
6. Consistent failure to demonstrate effective interpersonal skills necessary for forming professional relationships (for example, unable to demonstrate nonjudgmental attitude or unable to allow client self-determination).
7. Documented evidence of criminal activity occurring during the course of study.

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Attendance

Students are responsible for checking emails and logging onto D2L regularly to ensure that messages from the instructor and fellow students are received in a timely manner. Students who wish to meet with me face to face should schedule an appointment in advance via email courtney.cooner@msutexas.edu.

Grading

Table 1: Student achievement will be evaluated on the basis of written assignments, class exams, class participation, and class presentation.

Assignments	Due	Percentage
Discussion Boards (6 averaged for total)	Weekly-Fridays @ 10 pm	35%
Exams (4 averaged for total)		35%
Group Presentation		30%

Table 2: Weighted average will be used to calculate final grade.

Grade	Percentages
A	90-100
B	80 to 89
C	70 to 79
D	60 to 69
F	Less than 60

Please note: A grade less than C in this course is considered failing according to the Social Work Program Grade Policy and the course will have to be repeated to count towards Social Work Major Requirements.

Discussion Board Participation:

Each week, the instructor will post questions on D2L for the class to respond. Unless specified otherwise, everyone should post an **initial** response to the question and should also respond to at least **two** peer's posts. The discussion assignments and peer postings are due by **10:00pm on Fridays**. You may respond to as many peers' posts as you want. The discussion board is a **mandatory** component and counts towards 35% of your final grade. Students are expected to participate actively throughout the semester. Students are expected to write formally (no shorthand or text messaging abbreviations) and use APA format and referencing where appropriate. There will be general questions relating to the chapter(s), case vignettes, current events, and/or watching a video and posting your response. Thoughtful responses, constructive critique of fellow students, and meaningful participation are expected. Please keep in mind the discussion board is a formal assignment and part of your grade.

I will review your posts and responses and give individual feedback when grading posts. I may respond in the discussion thread to a select few posts and/or responses or respond collectively to the class. This does not mean only the posts and/or responses of those to whom I respond are good and other posts and/or responses are not good.

Exams

Students will complete 4 exams by **10:00pm on Fridays** based on the required book chapters as indicated in the class schedule. The quizzes are open book and notes, but there will be only 60 minutes to complete them. **Quizzes cannot be made up if missed, and a grade of zero (0) will be recorded.** No requests for late access will be considered unless the student has submitted documentation through the Dean of Students office proving incapacitation for the entire week that the quiz was available.

Final Project Description

During the first two weeks of classes, students will be asked to organize into groups of 2 to 4 members for the purpose of creating group presentations for the course final project. You will post the names of your group members on the Group Presentation Selection Discussion Board for instructor approval by **January 22nd**.

Each group will be responsible for submitting a PowerPoint/Google slides, etc. presentation, including speaker notes to clarify slide content. You should prepare your presentation just as you would if you were going to be presenting to a live classroom. They should include speaker notes to clarify slide content. In lieu of including speaker notes, groups who wish may choose to submit a video of all members presenting the slides.

APA style formatting is required for all written work in this course. Be sure to use appropriate APA style citations and references for any information you take from the textbook, handouts, reference materials, websites, or other outside sources while completing written assignment

Background Information:

The future of child welfare depends largely on the policies and programs that are designed to protect and serve children. Responsibility for the formulation and implementation of policies that work falls on the shoulders of those about to enter the field as well as veteran advocates and policymakers. Therefore, it is important for new child welfare workers to know the issues and begin to search proactively for solutions.

Several resources have been added to the Week 15: Final Presentation Section of the course. You can read and/or watch these resources and access them to help with your understanding and the development of your presentation. You are expected to utilize additional reference material in your final presentation.

The purpose of the presentation is to identify strengths, challenges, issues, and opportunities in child welfare, or in your selected area of child welfare if you wish to specialize (i.e. foster care, juvenile justice, adoption, children in military families, etc.), and to present an accurate analysis, including AT LEAST ONE OPPORTUNITY FOR IMPROVEMENT that your group will investigate in its presentation.

Each group will create a Presentation and will submit it to the assignment drop box and also post it on the final discussion board.

Presentations must include names of group members, summary of issues to be covered, strengths, challenges, issues, opportunities (including at least one opportunity for improvement), conclusion and next steps, at least **two** questions for class discussion, and list of sources (references) that have been consulted (**minimum of 5 sources**).

Grading will be based on the following criteria: accurate identification of current topics and issues in the child welfare field, connections to established best

practices, issues are presented in a logical order, inclusion of verifiable background facts, examples, and sources that help the reader locate additional information, critical analysis, reflectiveness, engagement of class, selection of relevant professional and scholarly references, creativity, and effective method of presentation.

All members of a group will receive the same grade. If a group agrees to an alternative arrangement for grading, the group must submit this agreement in writing and signed by all the members prior to their presentation, subject to the approval of the professor.

Equal Division of Responsibilities: Please ensure that everyone contributes equally to the presentation, including organizing/planning, brainstorming ideas, researching, critically thinking through the case, preparing PowerPoint or other audiovisual aids, and, if you elect to submit a video, participating in the presentation recording (you may divide responsibilities among group members, but ensure that there is equal participation over the entire list of responsibilities). ***If a member of the group is not participating equally, then the group is responsible for letting the instructor know at least 5 days prior to the presentation.*** Please do not wait until just before the presentation is to be made. The instructor may ask that member to do a separate, individual assignment.

Late Work

Students who fail to post required assignments on time will receive a lower grade, and those who do not complete the assignments will receive a grade of zero (please review the **time** submission criteria on the rubrics for each assignment).

Make Up Work/Tests

Make up work will only be considered in cases of university excused absences or verifiable emergencies.

Online Computer Requirements

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. ***Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered a reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.*** Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings, as well as the Academic Success Center. **Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!** There are many places to access your class. Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world which is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a [student help desk](#) available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however they are able to help you get connected to our online services.

Instructor Class Policies

All students registered for courses in the Social Work Department are expected to adhere to the responsibilities, and behavior as articulated in both the [Student Handbook](#) and the NASW (National Association of Social Workers) [Code of Ethics](#). An essential feature of these codes is a commitment to maintaining intellectual integrity and academic honesty. Students are expected to display professional decorum at all times. This includes, but is not limited to, respecting classmates and the instructor.

Child Welfare Policy and Practice Course Schedule

(The instructor reserves the right to adjust the syllabus schedule as needed.)

Week and Dates	Chapters/Readings	Exams and Discussions Due: Fridays @ 10:00pm
Week 1 due Jan. 15	-Chapter 1 Children: Our Most Important Resource -Fast Facts about ACES	-Introduction/ ACES quiz post -Chapter 1 Discussion
Week 2 due Jan. 22	Chapter 2: The Changing Family	-Chapter 2 Discussion -Groups due - post in D2L
Week 3 due Jan. 29	Chapter 3: Children and Families in Poverty	-Chapter 3 Discussion -Poverty Simulation and discussion
Week 4 due Feb. 5	Chapter 4: The Impact of Violence and Addiction on Children	-Chapter 4 Discussion -Exam 1: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4
Week 5 due Feb. 12	Chapter 5: Children Against the Backdrop of War: Assessing the Needs of Military Families	Chapter 5 Discussion
Week 6 due Feb. 19	Chapter 6: Trauma-Sensitive Educational Settings	Chapter 6 Discussion
Week 7 due Feb. 26	Chapter 7: Child Abuse and Neglect: Protecting Children When Families Cannot	Chapter 7 Discussion
Week 8 due March 5	Chapter 8: Family Preservation or Child Placement? Serving the Child's Best Interests	-Chapter 8 Discussion -Exam 2: Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8
Week 9 due March 12	Chapter 9: Juvenile Court Justice: Promoting the Rights and Welfare of Children and Families	Chapter 9 Discussion
Week 10 due March 19	Chapter 10: Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting	Chapter 10 Discussion
Week 11 due March 26	Chapter 11: Children in Family Foster Care	-Chapter 11 Discussion -Exam 3: Chapters 9, 10, 11
Week 12 due April 2	Chapter 12: The Adoption of Children	Chapter 12 Discussion

Week 13 due April 9	Chapter 13: Children in Residential Settings	Chapter 13 Discussion
Week 14 due April 16	Chapter 14: Our Children's Future	-Chapter 14 Discussion -Exam 4: Chapters 12, 13, 14
Week 15 due April 23	-Group Presentations must be posted to discussion board and submitted in dropbox by- 4/20 -Presentation Discussion - must reply to at least 2	-Post Presentations by 4/20 -Post Discussion replies by 4/23