RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
COURSE OUTLINE

Emerging Issues in Child Welfare
19:CM910:549 Sec. W1:98267
Winter 2010

Instructor: 
Office: 
Office Hours: 
Telephone: 
Fax 
Email: 

I. Catalog Course Description

This course will examine the status and care of children and adolescents in society, with particular emphasis on contemporary issues in the United States and New Jersey. It will examine philosophies, governmental initiatives, and other factors affecting and influencing the well being of children and youth, particularly within the context of families. It will use this background to analyze the state of youth and families in our society; their needs; and what could be and is being done to address these needs and by whom. The course will also explore what is happening today, from major problems facing children, adolescents, and families, to the availability of supports and programs.

II. Course Objectives

1. To understand the current social, economic and political context of the child welfare system in the United States. This will begin with an historical view of the development of child welfare services and the emergence of the modern child welfare system in a multicultural society.

2. To understand special areas of concern for social workers and others practicing in the field and to be able to critically examine the public child welfare system in the United States with particular attention to its impact on children from diverse cultural backgrounds.

3. To be able to identify the major value issues child welfare professionals face in their practice and to demonstrate knowledge of the ethical issues involved in child welfare practice.

4. To understand the social work skills and activities which contribute to quality service delivery for the children and families served by the child welfare system.

5. To understand the role of evidence-based practice in child welfare today.

V. Required Texts
VI. Course Requirements

Course Format:
This course is founded upon student participation and will utilize lectures, videos, guest presentations, and group exercises. As professional practitioners and advocates, it is essential for social workers to articulate ideas clearly and persuasively. It is important that everyone feel free to participate in classroom activities, discussion, and assignments. Learning involves dialogue and exchange, taking chances, sharing new ideas with others. Whether you recognize it or not, all of you are experts in some arenas of social work practice. All students are encouraged to participate through discussions in class, both small and large groups, and with the instructor.

This course requires graduate level reading, writing, and analytical skills. Students are to come to each class prepared to actively participate in discussions about reading assignments and previous lecture materials. The papers will be graded both on substance and on the ability of the student to write succinctly and in terms understandable to a wide audience.

Respect for others in the classroom. Social work courses are often messy and ambiguous, with room for multiple and diverse perspectives. We all must attempt to treat each other with respect when opinions are shared. Language should be used which recognizes diversity and is respectful of others. It is also imperative, as we struggle with complex political, personal and social issues, that we not silence others by assuming that there are “politically correct” lines of thought that cannot be challenged.

Attendance and Participation. Due to the intensive nature of this class, attendance is crucial. Students are expected to attend class and be on time, which is essential for learning from lecture and class discussions, and contributing to the class community. Attendance and participation will affect 15% of the course grade. Absences are not permitted except under extreme circumstances (i.e., death in the family). Consistent lateness to class will also result in being marked absent.

Class participation is critical and will comprise part of your final grade. Active participation is encouraged and includes coming to weekend classes prepared, critically analyzing the readings and lectures, voicing your thoughts, and reacting respectfully to others.

The use of cell phones (including text messaging), blackberries, PDAs, or any similar type of electronic device is not permitted in class. Please turn them off prior to class. If there is an emergency and you need to leave your cell phone on, please turn it to vibrate and attend to the call in the hallway so that you will not disturb your colleagues.

eCompanion. eCompanion is a course management program designed to aid in the communication and dissemination of course information and materials. These materials include the syllabus, assignments, on-line discussions, and powerpoint handouts. Additionally, there
are links to websites, an online gradebook, and opportunities to e-mail the instructor and your classmates (without knowing their e-mail address).

All correspondence, including submission of assignments and e-mail communications, will be conducted through eCompanion. Please ensure that the e-mail registered with the University is the e-mail you want to use for your correspondence. Should you have any questions, please email webmaster@ecompanion.rutgers.edu or call 732-932-4702.

To find your course, go to http://rutgersonline.net. The Rutgers NetID is the standard login credential for RutgersOnline, however, your initial password will be unique to RutgersOnline and will not necessarily be the same password that you use for a Rutgers email account (e.g. eden, pegasus, clam).

**Confirmations of login and password are sent via email to your Rutgers default email address (usually your Rutgers email account).** You should have received your RutgersOnline login information by email shortly after you registered and paid for your course.

**Course Assignments**

**Class participation and attendance** (25 points). Students are expected to be active learners and collaborators with the instructor. Active learning includes coming to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings, and to engage in critical thought and respectful discussion with the rest of the class both in person and on-line. In addition, there will be in-class activities and discussions for which participation is expected.

Class attendance is not optional. Because of the intensive nature of the program, full attendance is essential. Students are expected to come to all classes, for the entirety of the class. Exceptional situations, such as death in the family or serious illness, should be presented to the instructor.

**VII. Grading for this MSW course is as follows:**

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<tr>
<td>Class attendance and participation</td>
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<td>Prevention, Preservation, Systems Reform/Logan Marr Take Home Assignment</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Dubowitz Lecture AnalysisResilient Children &amp; Families Take Home Assignment</td>
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<td>In Class Final Assignment &amp; Presentation</td>
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<th>Grade</th>
<th>94-100</th>
<th>80-86</th>
<th>70-74</th>
<th>75-79</th>
<th>Below 70</th>
<th>Failed (F)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>B+</td>
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**A** = Exceptional or outstanding work; student demonstrates full understanding of material, displays unusual analytical and/or creative ability; extremely thorough work; must be well organized and conform to accepted standards of writing including correct grammar, accurate spelling, etc. Work is completed by due date.

**B+** = Above average work in terms of understanding material and ability to apply material from
lectures and readings to own proposed project. Work must be organized and conform to accepted standards of writing. Work is completed by the due date.

**B** = Good work; demonstrates understanding of material; written materials well organized and conforms to accepted standards of grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc. Work is completed by the due date.

**C** = Acceptable work, similar to C+ but reveals greater problems in applying the concepts and techniques to own work, fails to cover some important point(s). Some problems in organizing and presenting written materials.

The quality of the writing as well as the content is important, so students should check spelling and grammar as well as sentence and paragraph construction. It is a very good idea to write a draft of your papers and then make an outline of your draft before preparing final versions. This helps assure that your paper is flowing in a coherent manner and that you are effectively making and supporting your main points.

Written work should meet basic standards of writing proficiency, and should conform to accepted standards of citation. The format found in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) should be used for all papers. If you are unsure of how to cite sources, please see the instructor. *Remember that plagiarism is a serious offense and violates the standards for academic integrity.* Written assignments are graded based on the following criteria:

- thoroughness and completeness of content;
- clarity and logic of presentation;
- evidence of critical thought;
- quality of writing.

**Late Assignments:** All assignments are due on the date assigned. Grades will be reduced by 10 points if the assignment is late or incomplete. (Exceptions will be made only in extreme circumstances and must be approved by the instructor PRIOR to the due date.) If a due date conflicts with a religious observance, please consult with the professor prior to the assignment’s due date.

**Incomplete grades:** Incompletes will only be granted at the discretion of the instructor under special circumstances. It is the student’s responsibility to request an Incomplete from the instructor before the end of the semester. A request signed by the student and the faculty member must be on file when grades are submitted.

**VIII. Course Evaluation**

Rutgers University issues a survey that evaluates both the course and the instructor. This survey is completed by students toward the end of the semester, and all answers are confidential and anonymous. An additional mid semester evaluation may be distributed as well.

**IX. Academic Integrity Policy**
All work submitted in a graduate course must be your own. It is unethical and a violation of the University’s Academic Integrity Policy to present the ideas or words of another without clearly and fully identifying the source. Inadequate citations will be constructed as an attempt to misrepresent the cited materials as your own. Use the citation style preferred by the discipline.

Please Note: Violations of academic integrity by graduate and professional students will normally be penalized more severely than violations by first-year undergraduate students. Since all violations of academic integrity by a graduate or professional student are potentially separable under the Academic Integrity Policy, faculty members should not adjudicate alleged academic integrity violations by graduate and professional students, but should refer such allegations to the appropriate Academic Integrity Facilitator (AIF) or to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. The AIF that you should contact is Antoinette Y. Farmer, 732.932.2621. The student shall be notified in writing, by email or hand delivery, of the alleged violation and of the fact that the matter has been referred to the AIF for adjudication. This notification shall be done within 10 days of identifying the alleged violation. Once the student has been notified of the allegation, the student may not drop the course or withdraw from the school until the adjudication process is complete. A TZ or incomplete grade shall be assigned until the case is resolved.

Definition of Plagiarism
Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgment is required when material from another source is stored in print, electronic, or other medium and is paraphrased or summarized in whole or part in one’s own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: to paraphrase Plato’s comment...and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge, such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc., need not to be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged. In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, only materials that contribute to one’s general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography. Plagiarism can, in some case, be a subtle issue. Any question about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member.

XI. Disability Accommodation

Please Note: Any student who believes that s/he may need an accommodation in this class due to a disability should contact the designated Coordinator for the Concerns of Students with Disabilities at the School of Social Work Arlene Hunter the Associate Dean for Student Services [amhunter@rci.rutgers.edu or 732-932-7126] for a letter of accommodation. Any student who has already received a letter of accommodation should contact the instructor privately to discuss implementation of his/her accommodations immediately. Failure to discuss implementation of accommodations with the instructor promptly may result in denial of your accommodations.

Course Outline

Brief Overview of Course:
The course is divided into two formats: individual study and preparation and the in-person group class meetings on four separate Saturdays. The requirements and details of the assignments are discussed under Course Assignments that follows the detailed course outline.

**Individual Study period I: December 3 – December 17**
- Assigned Readings

**First in-person class meeting: December 18; 9am – 5 pm**

**Individual Study period II: December 20 to January 6**
- First Assignment- Dubowitz Lecture Analysis/Resilient Children and Families
  Due 12/30/10 @ 5pm
- Read assigned readings

**Second in-person class meeting: January 7**
**Third in-person class meeting: January 8**

**Individual Study Period III: January 10 to January 13**
- Second Assignment: Prevention, Preservation and Systems Reform/ Logan Marr Case:
  Due 1/12/11 @ 5pm
- Read assigned readings

**Fourth in-person class meeting: January 14**

**Fifth in-person class meeting: January 15**
- In Class Final Assignment and Child Welfare Presentations
- Course Wrap Up

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**Individual Study Period I: December 3 to December 17**

**Topics:** Evolution of Child Welfare Services in the US; Strategies for Child Welfare Reforms in the US and the New Jersey system

**Required Reading:**
First In-person group class meeting: Saturday, December 18th: 9 am – 5 pm

Topics: Historical Overview of Child Welfare and Child Protective Services; Class Action Litigation as a Child Welfare Reform Strategy; Role of Federal Legislation in System Goals and Programs

Film: “Failure to Protect: The Taking of Logan Marr”

Individual Study Period II: December 20 to January 6

Topics: Neglect vs. Poverty; Foster and Kinship Care; Disparities in Child Welfare; Evidence-based practice; Resilience in Child Development

Required Readings:

Second In-person group class meeting: Friday, January 7th: 9 am – 5 pm

Topics: Neglect vs. Poverty: system challenges; Foster Care and Kinship Care Today; Disparities in Child Welfare; Family Preservation, Evidence-based Practice, NJ Child Welfare Reform

Guest Speaker: Adrienne Jackson, NJ DYFS Casework Supervisor - invited

Video Conference: Howard Dubowitz, MD. Neglect: Concepts, Controversies, and Challenges

Individual Study Period III: January 3 to January 8

Topics: Engaging Fathers in Child Welfare Practice; Incarcerated Parents and Maintaining Family Connections; Migration in Child Welfare Practice

Required Readings:

Third In-person group class meeting: Saturday, January 8th

Topics: Engaging Fathers in Child Welfare Practice; Incarcerated Parents and Maintaining Family Connections; Migration Issues in Child Welfare Practice; Child Welfare in Romania

HBO Documentary “Which Way Home”

Individual Study Session IV: January 9 to January 13

Topics: Victimization of Children; Human Trafficking of Juveniles and System Response; Internet Crimes and Safety Challenges; Community Prevention Strategies

Required Readings:

Fourth In-person class meeting: Friday, January 14th: 9 am – 5 pm

Topics: Victimization of Children; Human Trafficking of Juveniles and System Response; Internet Crimes and Safety Challenges; Community Prevention Strategies; Aging Out of Foster Care;

Guest Speakers: Nationalities Services Center –invited
Maria Paridiso, Transitions for Youth – invited

- “Aging Out” Documentary

Fifth In-person class meeting: Saturday, January 15th: 9 am – 5 pm

Topics: In class final assignment and presentations, Advocacy and Public Awareness Campaigns, Permanent Connections/Positive Outcomes, Course Wrap up

- “Finding Antwon Fisher”