



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY COMMERCE

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

SWK 362: Child Welfare Fall 2012 Online

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Elizabeth LaMont, MSW, Ph.D.

OFFICE: Henderson 306

OFFICE HOURS: Mondays 12 noon- 5p.m.; Tuesdays 8:30 a.m. –
2 p.m.; All other times by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce the student to the many facets of a career in child welfare and agencies related to working with child welfare. The course will include information on the laws involved in working with children and families and the enforcement procedures and how they impact the clients. Problems that families face will be reviewed to help the student develop an understanding of family functioning and how policies, referrals and services influence the multiple outcomes a client/family may be faced with during an interaction with a child welfare agency, judicial system or law enforcement agency.

Prerequisites: None

GOALS AND COMPETENCIES:

1. Prepare BSW graduates for entry-level professional social work practice that reflects generalist social work knowledge and skills. Graduates will be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

1.1 Apply critical thinking and effective communication (2.1.3)

1.5 Apply change strategies with all levels of systems (2.1.10)

2. Enable BSW graduates to practice ethically and apply social work values to promote equality and justice. Graduates will be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

- 2.1 Apply social work ethics & principles (2.1.2)
- 2.2 Engage diversity in practice (2.1.4)
- 2.3 Promote human rights and social and economic justice (2.1.5)

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The demand for knowledgeable human service practitioners is growing as the diverse needs of children expand. This course draws from the historical functions of child based service providers and explores the needs of agencies working as a team within communities. Upon completion of the course, students will have attained the following objectives:

1. Utilize personal knowledge of local social mores, customs, traditions and community cultures to influence local needs in child/families.
2. Evaluate professional performance and impact of non-professional performance.
3. Be able to understand, interact and communicate with administration in both local governments and agency hierarchy.
4. An understanding of community-oriented/based practice.
5. Adhere to the values and ethics of the Human Service professions
6. The class will focus on the following concepts of the Child Welfare System in the State of Texas and its National scope
 - Placement of the child
 - Development of the case plan
 - Case management and supervision (of the child)
 - Referral to services (example: accessing community-based resources)
 - Preparation for and participation in judicial determinations (examples: coordination with courts, preparation of reports for permanency hearings)
 - Case reviews
 - Recruitment and licensing of foster homes and institutions
 - Other topics directly related to improving outcomes for children in out-of-home care

REQUIRED TEXT:

Crosson-Tower, Cynthia, (2005) Understanding child abuse and neglect. 8th ed. Pearson: Boston.

GRADING:

Grading and evaluation - Grades will be determined according to the following percentage points earned against possible points.

Evaluation for the course grade will be computed according to the following formula:

Possible Points	Grade
400 to 360	A
359 to 319	B
318 to 278	C
277 to 237	D

OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS:

(1) **Topic Papers (100 points)**: Throughout the course you will be asked to watch a video (three altogether worth 34, 33, and 33 points respectively) and you will be provided a list of three to four topics to discuss, based on the video. **Choose one** of the topics provided and you will write a paper in APA style discussing the video based on the topic you chose. For each of these papers you will find a grading rubric. Be sure to include all the elements in the rubric in your paper. Anything on the rubric but not in your paper will receive a zero for that section.

(2) **Integrative Paper (100 points)**: For your final grade, you will write an integrative paper on a chosen child welfare topic that is relevant to you and either your experience, the area where you live, the area or place where you work, or an experience of a friend or relative of which you have knowledge. The expectation is that you will take a child welfare topic of concern to you and analyze it based on what you have learned through this course. This paper represents $\frac{1}{4}$ of your course grade and is due by the end of finals week.

(3) **Class participation (100 points)**: is an integral part of this learning experience. Each week there will be a discussion topic which you must engage in and respond to others comments. Miss **any** part and you will lose the points for that week. If you are asked to post a comment and respond to two comments and you post and only respond to one, then you will not receive the points for that week. Topics open Monday at 12 midnight and close Sunday at 12 midnight with the initial discussion (not your responses) required by midnight on Wednesday, so that all can respond and interact to comments. I encourage you to be proactive for your own learning and do more than the minimum required.

(4) **Quizzes (100 points)**: There will be four scheduled quizzes based on your readings and topics covered in class throughout the semester, each worth 25 points (one point per question). Quizzes are noted on the syllabus schedule and will cover all material covered from the last quiz to the next one (or the first of the semester to the first quiz). I will provide a study guide a week before each week to help you focus on what is important to study and know.

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

Just as students are required to attend face-to-face classes at Texas A&M University-Commerce, students' logging in and participating in online components is required. Final evaluation and grades depend on both your presence and participation. Students' grades will be significantly impacted by inadequate participation or lack of required time commitment each week.

Students are expected to spend a comparable amount of time in the online learning environment as they would in class (3 hours a week in the classroom). In addition, just as in traditional classrooms, students are expected to spend time reading and studying class materials.

Group interaction is an important component of graduate level courses and for this class, albeit electronic communication. NOTE: PROBLEMS WITH YOUR INTERNET CONNECTION AND/OR COMPUTER ARE NOT CONSIDERED AS REASONS FOR LACK OF PARTICIPATION. You have access to the university's computer labs (in the social work department AND other campus facilities, including the library) as well as local libraries and other access to computers and ISPs.

If you believe that you are unable to fulfill the requirements for the course you should talk with your academic advisor about the possibility of early withdrawal. I will maintain weekly office hours for online and phone contact to discuss any issues or needs you may have. My office hours are posted in this syllabus and if you alert me by email, I can interact with you online. Otherwise, you are encouraged to call me or to come to my office on campus.

Class participation has three components: (1) appropriate interactions with classmates, (2) attentiveness, and (3) active involvement in class activities. Evaluation of class participation is based on instructor observation. Students will be given feedback if problems are evident.

POLICY ON DUE DATES:

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the dates indicated in the course schedule. Late assignments will not be accepted. Students are encouraged to plan ahead and duplicate all work onto an alternative electronic device to avoid technological problems or loss of information. Electronic copies enable students to access their assignments on one of the campus computers should their personal computer become inoperable.

GRADING:

Grading in this course is based upon the following activities and assignments. Since all graded assignments are related directly to course objectives, failure to complete any assignment will result in an unsatisfactory course grade. All written assignments are presented in APA format and must be typed and carefully proofread. Grammar, punctuation, and, spelling will be taken into account in grading. This is college class and my expectations are for graduate level work. If you are not familiar with APA refer to sources on the Internet and to the information in this course under "Course Resources." Students can access a grading rubric on myLeo for all papers. I strongly recommend you do so, as these are *the exact forms* I use in grading your assignments. Information missing from your assignment but listed for grading in the rubric will receive a zero. Grading rubrics are found under the menu heading "Grading Rubrics." Exams will have an outline of information available as a study guide, so you will know what I am looking for. These are also accessed under Grading Rubrics. All assignments are due by midnight on the date they are noted in your syllabus (always a Sunday). This means your email with your paper attached must be time stamped no later than this time. For the exams, they will open one week before they are due and will close at the due date and time. Grades for assignments are posted to your account on myLeo. It is up to you to keep track

of the individual grades. Please check them often, as I do make mistakes. They are easier to correct earlier on. Remember, only you and I can view your grade.

Any student receiving a C or lower for any *written* assignment will be given an opportunity for a rewrite for a percentage of a grade improvement to equal up to a B. Rewrites are only available immediately after your receipt of your assignment up to one week from that date. In other words, you have a time limit to get your rewrite to me. Check your email often because the time begins from the day I return your assignment.

POLICY ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Every student is expected to do his/her own work. Law, ethical standards, university policy, and departmental policy demand that students refrain from plagiarism and any form of cheating. Plagiarism is the "Act of appropriating the literary composition of another, or parts of passages from of his [or her] writings, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as the products of one's own mind." (Black's Law Dictionary, Abridged Fifth Edition, 1983). When using others' words, phrases, or ideas in writing, the original author should be given proper credit.

Cheating may take different forms. These include, but are not limited to, copying others' answers during an exam, using notes or other forms of help during an examination or quiz, except when explicitly permitted by the instructor, giving or receiving help on exams or assignments, or submitting work for one class which has already been submitted for another class for credit. Use of citations from the Internet without paraphrasing content AND proper referencing is regarded as plagiarism. Professors have the right to use electronic review programs (such as Turn It In") to identify plagiarism.

The department does not tolerate plagiarism or cheating. A student found to be engaging in such illegal and unethical conduct may receive a failing grade in the course and may be subjected to further disciplinary proceedings. Any assignment or exam that lacks honesty will be given a grade of "0".

ACCEPTABLE CLASS BEHAVIOR:

“Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to obey all federal, state, and local laws, in addition to the regulations of the University. The standards of Student Conduct including disciplinary rules and procedures are designed to provide and conform to the basic tenets of due process, as developed by institutions of higher education. As such, the University distinguishes these procedures and regulations as an educational and growth process which is not intended to conform to adversary proceedings as in a court of law. (Student’s Guide Book, 2011, p. 35).

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

The Department of Social Work expects all social work students to conduct themselves in an ethical, professional manner. Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The

profession articulates its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards as set forth in the *NASW Code of Ethics* to guide social workers' conduct. The *Code* is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve. Accordingly, we expect social work students to demonstrate courtesy, respect and support for fellow students, instructors, clients, and all other persons.

All students enrolled in BSW or MSW classes are expected to observe the tenets of the NASW Code of Ethics and the Social Work Student Code of Conduct. Our Code of Conduct is reflective of professional and academic expectations – a student who cannot demonstrate appropriate behaviors will not be appropriate for practice in the social work profession. Students who violate these Codes may be asked to meet with appropriate Social Work faculty (instructors or Program Directors). In addition, the department's Academic and Professional Issues (API) Committee is responsible for dealing with student issues when requested by faculty.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

It is the policy of Texas A&M University-Commerce and the Social Work Department to do everything we can to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law, and the University's commitment to providing equal opportunities. Any student with a disability who needs accommodation, for example, in accessibility, seating placement or in arrangements for examinations should not hesitate to inform the instructor. If required, large type, Braille or cassette recordings of syllabus or assignments can be provided.

Students with conditions that require special attention or accommodation should contact the Director of Disability Resources & Services at 903-468-5150 (located in the Library, Room 132).

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Course Week	Reading	Assignment Due	Due date*
Introduction	Introduction (online)	Review all course materials	
Week 2	Chapter: 1	Posting for Discussion board**	9/2
Week 3	Chapter: 2	Quiz #1	9/9
Week 4	Chapter: 3, 4 & 9	Video #1 paper	9/16

Week 5	Chapter: 5 & 6	Posting for Discussion board**	9/23
Week 6	Chapter: 7 & 8	Quiz #2	9/30
Week 7	Chapter: 10	Posting for Discussion board**	10/7
Week 8	Chapter: 11 & 12	Video#2 paper	10/14
Week 9	Chapter: 13 & 14	Posting for Discussion board**	10/21
Week 10	Chapter : 15	Quiz #3	10/28
Week 11	Chapter : 16	Posting for Discussion board**	11/4
Week 12	Chapter: 17	Posting for Discussion board**	11/11
Week 13	Chapter: 18	Quiz #4	11/18
Week 14	Holiday	No assignments ☺	11/25
Week 15	Chapter: 19	Video #3 paper	12/2
Finals week		Integrative paper	12/12

* Time is no later than 11:59 p.m. on this date.

** **Reminder:** Your post is always due by Wednesday at 11:59 p.m. (see each discussion topic); responses (assignment completion) are due by the due date

Bibliography

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Vosler, N.R. (1996). New approaches to Family Practice: Confronting Economic Stress.

Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

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Agency. Child Abuse and Neglect, 19 (8), 897-905.

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Department of Social Work Code of Conduct for Social Work Students

The Department of Social Work expects all social work students to conduct themselves in an ethical, professional manner, consistent with our profession's Code of Ethics.

Preamble of the NASW Code of Ethics: The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human wellbeing and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. The mission of the social work profession is rooted in a set of core values. These core values, embraced by social workers throughout the profession's history, are the foundation of social work's unique purpose and perspective:

- service
- social justice
- dignity and worth of the person
- importance of human relationships
- integrity
- competence

Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession has an obligation to articulate its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. The *NASW Code of Ethics* sets forth these values, principles, and standards to guide social workers' conduct. The *Code* is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve.

Accordingly, we expect social work students to demonstrate courtesy, respect and support for fellow students, instructors, clients, and all other persons. While the values of the profession are codified in the NASW Code of Ethics, we feel that the following additional standards of behavior are to be exhibited as well by all students enrolled in our program:

- 1. Accountability** – Attend class, arrive on time, return from breaks in a timely manner • Participate in activities and assignments in a level comparable to peers • Complete work in a timely fashion according to directions • Be prepared and engaged in the learning process.
- 2. Respect** – Treat your peers, instructors, and all other persons with dignity and respect at all times Listen while others are speaking • Give constructive feedback when appropriate Approach conflict in a cooperative manner • Use positive and nonjudgmental language

3. Confidentiality and Boundaries – Treat any personal information that you hear (or read) about a peer or an instructor as strictly confidential • Maintain information shared in class as confidential • Use judgment in self-disclosing information of a personal nature in the classroom (Class time is not therapy or treatment – seek a referral if you need it) • Never use names of clients or disclose other identifying information • Exercise clear and appropriate boundaries between yourself, other students, your instructors, and in other professional relationships.

4. Competence – Apply yourself to all your academic pursuits with seriousness and conscientiousness • Meet deadlines given by your instructors • Constantly strive to learn and improve your abilities • Come to class prepared • Seek appropriate support when having difficulties • Take responsibility for the quality of completed tests and assignments • Strive to achieve greater awareness of personal issues that may impede your effectiveness with clients.

5. Diversity – Strive to become more open to people, ideas, and creeds that you are not familiar with Embrace diversity • Maintain speech free of racism, sexism, ageism, heterosexism, stereotyping, etc. • Exhibit a willingness to serve diverse groups of persons • Demonstrate an understanding of how values and culture interact.

6. Integrity – Practice honesty with yourself, your peers, and your instructors • Constantly strive to improve your abilities • Commit yourself to the academic discipline of citing other people’s work properly • Acknowledge areas where improvement is needed • Accept and benefit from constructive feedback.

7. Communication – Strive to improve both verbal and written communication skills as those skills are the benchmark for effective professional practice and helping relationships • Demonstrate appropriately assertive communication with peers and instructors • Practice positive, constructive, respectful and professional communication skills (both verbal and non-verbal) with peers, instructors and all other persons.

Adapted from Florida Atlantic University School of Social Work

All students enrolled in BSW or MSW classes are expected to observe the tenets of the NASW Code of Ethics and the Social Work Student Code of Conduct. Students who violate these may be asked to meet with appropriate Social Work faculty (instructors or Program Directors). In addition, the department’s Academic and Professional Issues (API) Committee is responsible for dealing with academic and non-academic student issues when requested by faculty. The API is comprised of the various program directors and is chaired by the Department Head. The decisions or actions of the API are considered the final say of the department. Students may be disciplined or dismissed from the program for violation of this Code of Conduct. Students have the right to appeal any decision to the Dean of the College of Education and Human Services, as specified by university policy.

By signing below, I verify that I agree to abide by the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics and the Code of Conduct stated above.

Printed Name

Date

Signature