9-2002

SW 422.01: Serving Changing Families

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Recommended Citation

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Course Syllabus

Social Work 422  Charlie Wellenstein
Serving Changing Families  Rankin Hall 12
Fall 2002  243-6153
Tuesday 3:10 – 6:00pm  chwell@selway.umt.edu
LA 244
3 credits

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to provide the student with an overview of working with children and families. The course prepares students to understand the dynamics within the family, and external forces of policy, culture, and community, which affect the family. Also, attention is given to social work practice implications for each topic to prepare social work students for the field of child welfare.

Course Objectives

1. Understand family dynamics, systems and strengths, and practice implications based on these areas.
2. Understand historical and cultural factors that have an impact on the family.
3. Examine how current social policy affects children and families.
4. Identify how the community affects children and families.
5. Understand the concepts and the practice implications of out of home care.
6. Identify limits and ethics for social workers intervening with families.
7. Synthesize the factors affecting families and write a social work case plan and policy based on the synthesis.

Content Areas

1. Family assessment and strengths perspective.
2. Historical perspectives of social work and the family.
3. The effect of the current child welfare system on the family.
4. Political and cultural forces which influence the family.
5. Out of home placement, foster care, permanency, and adoption.
6. Practice implications for social workers in the field.

Required Texts


Reserve readings will be available at Mansfield Library and on ERES.

**Format for Evaluation and Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>75 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper #1</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #2</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #3</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>125 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #4</td>
<td>20%</td>
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**Grading**

- A = 450-500 points  90%
- B = 400-449 points  80%
- C = 350-359 points  70%
- D = 300-349 points  60%
- F = 0-299          points

**Information Regarding Assignments**

1. **Class participation**
   Class attendance and discussion are an important part of your learning experience. Class attendance is mandatory. It is important to share your perspective not only for grading but also for the enhancement of others’ knowledge.

   Each student will be paired up and be responsible for leading the class in the discussion of one reserve readings. The discussion should be 15-20 minutes long. Specific direction will be given the first week of class.

2. **Writing Assignments**
   There will be writing assignments. Presentations and discussions of your papers will also be required. The first paper will respond to a case presentation. The second paper will ask for an assessment from a video shown in class. The third paper will be a report on a community service or agency that works with families. The fourth paper will be based on foster care and adoption. Specific information and directions will be given in class.

   Late assignments will be accepted but points will be deducted of the equivalent of one-half grade per day late.
Weekly Schedule

September 3  Course Introduction

Sept. 10  Historical perspectives on the family
Readings:  Common Purpose chapter 1
Reserve Reading:  The Dilemma in Saving from Child Labor

Sept. 17  Family assessment and strengths perspective
Readings:  Common Purpose chapter 2
Reserve Reading:  Parents Blaming Parents

Sept. 24  Community effects on the family
Readings:  Common Purpose chapter 2
Reserve Reading:  A Mighty Fortress

Oct. 1  Current policies
Video “Surviving the Good Times”
Readings:  Common Purpose chapter 4
Reserve Reading:  After Welfare

Oct. 8  Family Group Conferencing
Readings:  Common Purpose chapter 5
Reserve Reading:  Family Group Conferencing

Oct. 15  Schools and education
Discussion of Laura’s case
Readings:  Common Purpose chapter 8
Reserve Reading:  Watching Her Weight

Oct. 22  Culture
Readings:  Common Purpose chapter 7
Reserve Reading:  Indian Adoption Runs Afoul of the Law
Orphan Ranger

Oct. 29  Youth and Family Violence
Readings:  Common Purpose chapter 9
Reserve Reading:  Two Mothers

Nov. 5  No Class

Nov. 12  Effects of Substance Abuse on the Family
Reserve Reading:  Helping Substance Abusing Mothers

Nov. 19  Families and Mental Health
Video: Refrigerator Mothers
Reserve Reading: To Be Young and Homeless

Nov. 26  Divorce
Reserve Reading: Can This Divorce Be Saved?
Discussion of Papers

Dec. 3  Out of Home Placements
Reserve Reading: When Parents Are Not in the Best Interest of the Child

Dec. 10 Discussion of Community Resource Papers

Finals Week  Wrap up and Summary

Selected Bibliography


