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SW 422.01: Serving Changing Families

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Course Syllabus

Social Work 422
Serving Changing Families
Fall 2002
Tuesday 3:10 – 6:00pm
LA 244
3 credits

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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

Schorr, L. B. (1997). Common purpose: strengthening families and neighborhoods to rebuild America. New York: Anchor.

Wallerstein, J., Lewis, J., & Blakeslee, S. (2000). The unexpected legacy of divorce. New York: Hyperion.

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

Format for Evaluation and Grading

Class participation	15%	75 points
Paper #1	20%	100 points
Paper #2	20%	100 points
Paper #3	25%	125 points
Paper #4	20%	100 points

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

- Bartholet, E. (1999). Nobody's children: abuse, neglect, foster drift, and the adoption alternative. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Belkin, L. (1999). Parents blaming parents. New York Times Magazine. October 31. pp. 59-68.
- Butterfield, F. (1995). All of God's children: the Bosket family and the American history of violence. New York: Avon Books.
- Carter, B. and McGoldrick, M. (1998). The changing family life cycle. New York: Gardner.
- Fishman, K. (1992). Problem adoptions. Atlantic Magazine. September. pp. 37-86.
- Gelles, R.J. The book of David: How preserving families can cost children's lives. New York: Basic Books.
- Gladwell, M. Baby steps. The New Yorker. January 10, 2000. pp. 8-10, 83-89.
- Goldstein, J., Freud, A., Solnit., and Goldstein, S. (1986). In the best interest of the child. New York: Free Press.
- Gordon, L. (1999). The great Arizona orphan abduction. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hetherington, E.M. (2002). For better or worse: divorce reconsidered. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Hewlet, S. A. & West, C. (1998). The war against parents: what we can do for America's beleaguered moms and dads. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Hutson, L. (1999). Little-known regulation gives priority to Indian parents-to-be. Missoula. October 18. pp.1-5.
- Karen, R. (1990). Becoming attached. Atlantic Magazine. February. pp. 39-54.
- Kahkonen, P. (1997). From the child welfare trap to the foster care trap. Child Welfare, 76. 429-445.
- Keck, G. and Kupecky, R. (1997). Adopting the hurting child. New York: Tapestry.
- Laird, J. and Hartman, A. (1985). A handbook of child welfare. New York: Free Press.
- Maas, H., & Engler, R. (1959). Children in need of parents. New York: Columbia.
- Males, M. (1996). The scapegoat generation: America's was on adolescents. Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press.

- McPhatter, A. (1997). Cultural competence in child welfare: What is it? How do we achieve it? What happens without it? Child Welfare, 76: 255-278.
- Roberts, D. (2002). Shattered bonds: the color of child welfare. New York: Pegasus.
- Rosenthal, J., and Groze, V. (1994). A longitudinal study of special-needs adoptive families. Child Welfare, 73, 689-707.
- Schorr, L. (1997). Common purpose: strengthening families and neighborhoods to rebuild America. New York: Anchor.
- Schorr, L. (1988). Within our reach: breaking the cycle of the disadvantaged. New York: Anchor.
- Shapiro, M. (1999). Solomon's sword: two families and the children the state took away. New York: Random House.
- Trieschman, A., Whittaker, J., & Brendtro, L. (1969). The other 23 hours of the day: child care work with emotionally disturbed children in a therapeutic milieu. Chicago: Aldine.
- Weisman, M. (1994). When parents are not in the best interest of the child. Atlantic Magazine. July. pp. 44-63.
- Wissbourd, R. (1996). The vulnerable child: what really hurts America's children and what we can do about it. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.