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SW 450.01: Children and Youth at Risk

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Children and Youth at Risk
Social Work 450
Fall 2003
3 credits
Tuesdays 6:10-9
LA 205

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Course Description

This course focuses on the aspects of society that pose a threat to today's youth and the ramifications of those threats on youth development and behavior. The course also covers aspects of resilience and protective factors for youth at risk, and strategies to work with those youth. Special attention is given to the related systems and services in Missoula and Montana including juvenile justice, mental health, child protection, substance abuse, and education.

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the definition, history, and etiology of at risk youth.
2. Identify resilience and protective factors for at risk youth.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the strengths perspective when working with at-risk youth.
4. Examine the effects of past and current public policies on youth.
5. Understand the social context of at risk youth including the influences of family, culture, peers as well as the educational, legal and mental health systems.
6. Identify and incorporate community resources in Missoula that are available for at-risk youth.
7. Understand a systematic approach to working with at-risk youth.

Required Readings

Butterfield, F. (1995). *All of God's children*. New York: Avon.
Childress, H. (2000). *Landscapes of betrayal, landscapes of joy*. Albany, NY: State University Press.
Humes, E. (1996). *No matter how loud I shout*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
Toth, J. (1998). *Orphans of the living*. New York: Touchstone.

Course handouts.

The readings will be discussed during Tuesday's class. Students are expected to have completed the assigned reading and be prepared for discussion. Students will be broken up into groups and discuss the readings then report back to the rest of the class. Also, each group will hand in the highlights or important points of their discussion.

Grading

Paper 1	100
Paper 2	100
Paper 3	100
Paper 4	100
Portfolio Presentation	50
Class Participation	50
Total	500

451-500 points	A	90-100%
401-450 points	B	80-89%
351-400points	C	70-79%
301-350 points	D	60-69%
0-300 points	F	

Students taking this glass for graduate credit need to consult with me on an advanced project.

Assignments

The Youth at Risk Portfolio: Course assignments for the semester will be based around building a portfolio on an aspect of at risk youth that captures your interests (e.g. juvenile justice, mental health treatment, medicating youth, runaways, youth sexuality, group homes, education, special education, cultural biases, etc). You may want to discuss your subject to insure the feasibility of your portfolio. Also, please use references liberally to back up your writing. The assignment will be discussed in detail in class, but here are the required papers and projects that your portfolio should include:

1. A 3-4 critiquing a policy that is specific to your chosen topic. Why is this policy in place? Is this policy effective? Are there changes in the policy that need to be made? Due September 30.
2. A 3-4-page paper that addresses how race, gender, ethnicity, and class play a role in history and policy of your topic. Due October 21.
3. A 3-4 page paper on a treatment method of at-risk youth. You should interview at least one professional in the field. What is the evidence that it is effective? What theories guide the treatment? Due November 18.
4. A 3-4-page paper on you vision of what needs to be addressed and carried out with at-risk youth. If you were assigned to head an agency that works with at-risk youth, what would your agency look like? Due December 9.

Your portfolio will be presented during the last three weeks of class. This will include a 2-page outline highlighting your portfolio and three to five references that are pertinent to your topic. The outline and references are due on the day you present your portfolio.

Each assignment will be graded separately when they are due. The grade you will receive will be your grade for completing this section of work.

All assignments should be typed, double-spaced and use APA style format. Late assignments will be accepted, but there will be a reduction in grading equivalent to one-half grade per day late.

Classroom Participation

Course sessions include general discussion, case analysis, and practical exercise. Effective work in this course depends on your readiness to share experiences, receive feedback and provide support to others. Active and continuing participation in discussions and exercises is critical. It is essential that you attend and prepare for all class meetings and participate in all course exercises.

Disability Accommodations

Accommodations should be made with disability services. Students are also welcome to discuss accommodations with me.

Weekly Course Topics

- 9/2 Course Introduction
History of Youth at Risk
- 9/9 Risk and resilience
Youth Development Model
Reading: *All of God's Children*, Parts I & II
- 9/16 Strengths Perspective
Parenting and Supervision
Video: The Children of Rockdale County
Reading: *All of God's Children*, Parts III & IV
- 9/23 Parenting
Reading: *No Matter How Loud I Shout*, Parts I & II
- 9/30 Education
Mike Fredrickson, Special Education Specialist
Reading: *No Matter How Loud I Shout*, Parts II & III

- 10/7 Education
Marianne Moon, Missoula County Public Schools
Reading: *No Matter How Loud I Shout*, Part IV
- 10/14 Delinquency and Youth Violence
Video: Inside the Juvenile Justice System
Reading: *Orphans of the Living*, Parts I & II
- 10/21 Delinquency and Youth Violence
Brett Gordon and Tom Pinnsenault, Montana Department of Corrections
Reading: *Orphans of the Living*, Parts II & III
- 10/28 Mental Health
Video: Killer at Thurston High
Reading: *Orphans of the Living*, Part IV
- 11/4 Services to At-Risk Children
Maureen O' Malley, Missoula Public Schools
Reading: *Landscapes of Betrayal*, Parts I & II
- 11/11 Holiday
- 11/18 Services to At-Risk Children
Craig Krueger and Emily McCrea, Attention Home Shelter Care
Reading: *Landscapes of Betrayal*, Part III
- 11/25 Class Presentations
- 12/2 What Really Works with Youth?
Geoffrey Birnbaum, Missoula Youth Homes
Reading: *Landscapes of Betrayal*, Part IV
- 12/9 Class Presentations
- 12/16 Presentations

Selected References

- Balk, D. (1995). *Adolescent development*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Bernstein, N. (2001). *The lost children of Wilder*. New York: Pantheon.
- Butterfield, F. (1995). *All of God's children: the Bosket family and the American history of violence*. New York: Avon Books.
- Bruer, J. (1999). *The myth of the first three years*. New York: Free Press.
- Coles, R. (1996). *The moral life of children*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press.
- Dryfoos, J.G. (1998). *Safe passage: making it through adolescence in a risky*

- society*. New York: Oxford.
- Elkind, D. (1998). *All grown up and no place to go*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Erikson, E. (1968). *Identity: youth and crisis*. New York: Norton.
- Fraser, M. ed. (1997). *Risk and resilience in children*. Washington, D.C.: NASW.
- Garbarino, J. (1999). *Lost boys*. New York: Free Press.
- Gordon, L. (1999). *The great Arizona orphan abduction*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hine, T. (1999). *The rise and fall of the American teenager*. New York: Avon.
- Hubner, J. & Wolfson, J. (1996). *Somebody else's children*. New York: Three Rivers.
- Lanteri, L. & Patti, J. (1996). *Waging peace in our schools*. Boston: Beacon.
- Lindsey, D. (1994). *The welfare of children*. New York: Oxford.
- Mass, H. & Engler, R. (1959). *Children in need of parents*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Males, M. (1999). *Framing youth: ten myths about the next generation*. Monroe, ME: Common Courage.
- Mcwhirter, J., Mcwhirter, B., Mcwhirter, A., & Mcwhirter, E. (1998). *At-risk youth: a comprehensive response*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks & Cole.
- Mennel, R. (1973). *Thorns and thistles*. Hanover, N.H.: The University Press of New England.
- Rauner, D.M. (2000). *They still pick me up when I fall*. New York: Columbia Press.
- Saleebey, D. ed. (1997). *The strengths perspective in social work practice*. New York: Longman.
- Singer, M., Singer, L., & Anglin, T., eds. (1993). *Handbook for screening adolescents at psychosocial risk*. New York: Lexington.
- Sommers-Flannigan, J., & Sommers-Flannigan, R. (1997). *Tough kids, cool counseling*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
- Toth, J. (1997). *Orphans of the living*. New York: Touchstone.
- Trieschman, A., Whittaker, J., & Brendto, L. (1969). *The other 23 hours*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing.
- Weissboud, R. (1996). *The vulnerable child*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.