Course Description

This course considers the relationship of the law to issues, policies, services and practices with and in behalf of children and youth and their families in the United States. Through case law, case studies and current research, it examines the impact of criminal and civil law on multilevel social work practice with children and families.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to promote knowledge, conceptual and practice integration. Therefore, the primary objectives are as follows:

- To obtain knowledge of current laws regarding policies and services for children, youth and families
- To analyze the relationship of child-focused law to issues, policies, services and practices impacting children and their families.
- To consider the practice implications of current issues, research, policies and services through case application.
- To understand the application of multilevel practice within the context of current laws.

Required Texts:


Required Readings:

Found on LOCUS.

Recommended Texts:


COURSE FORMAT

This course is conducted on a discussion-laboratory basis. Students are expected to have read all assigned readings prior to class sessions. Readings are not rehearsed in class. Student preparation and participation are integral parts of this learning process. Students will lead and participate in exercises and group discussions on relevant issues. The instructor may use a variety of teaching methods including, lecture, video, case study, discussion, small and large group activities, in and out of class assignments, tests and quizzes. The instructor may make changes to the syllabus and will provide oral and/or written explanation previous to doing so.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the use of distinctive ideas or works belonging to another person without providing adequate acknowledgement of that person's contribution. Regardless of the means of appropriation, incorporating another’s work into one's own requires adequate identification and acknowledgement. Plagiarism is doubly unethical because it deprives the author of rightful credit and gives credit to someone who has not earned it. Acknowledgement is not necessary when the material used is common knowledge. In this course a grade of {F} can be expected by students who plagiarize. For more information go to the University website at (http://www.csus.edu/admbus/umanual/UMP14150.htm).

STUDENT WRITING GUIDELINES

Written work must be mechanically and stylistically acceptable. Serious deficiencies in areas such as spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and coherent organization will result in lower grades. Where appropriate, the following criteria are used to evaluate assignments:

• Effective use of knowledge: the integration of concepts, theories, models, and information from readings, lectures, and class discussions is used in a way that demonstrates that students understand the concepts used.
• The inclusion of personal points of view along with rationale, logic, and examples: generalization of ideas, observations, concepts, and experiences are carefully supported with empirical data, conceptual work generated by authors, practitioners, or researchers, and/or original thoughts. Use refereed journal articles.
• Organization: thesis in introduction, smooth relationship between ideas and between paragraphs, clear overall structure, including an integrative concluding section. Careful planning is evident in the organization.
• Clarity: syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Sentences and paragraphs are clear, unified, and coherent.
• References in appropriate format (use of APA format).
• If students need help or have questions, they are encouraged to contact the instructor in a timely manner. Incompletes are not given automatically. A grade of “Incomplete” may be assigned only in cases clearly beyond the student’s control. It is the student’s responsibility to fulfill the University’s and/or Division’s policies and procedures for obtaining an “incomplete” for a course grade. Students who fail this policy will automatically be assigned a grade of FAIL for this course. (Students are reminded to retain a duplicate copy of all written assignments prior to submitting them for grading in the event of accidental loss or destruction.).
+= Thoroughly Covered = The points made in the essay answer are all relevant to the thesis and support it. The paper makes all the points essential to the thesis. Essay elements demonstrate a correct understanding of the material covered, or, where room for disagreement exists, present thoughtful and plausible interpretations of difficult material. Essay elements use terms, examples, comparisons, criticisms, and the like, as needed, to unambiguously convey a coherent view or explanation of the ideas or arguments being explained.

√ = Well Covered = The points made in the essay answer are all generally relevant to the thesis and tend to give it solid support. The essay answer makes most of the points essential to the thesis. Essay elements evince a mostly correct and a competent understanding of the material covered, or, where room for disagreement exists, present, overall, thoughtful and plausible interpretations of difficult material, even if one or two key elements are not covered or are given questionable treatment.

∗ = Partially Covered = The essay makes one or more of the points essential to development of the thesis, although a number of points essential to the thesis may be overlooked or glossed-over, and the argument advanced may include more than a few elements that lend little if any support to the thesis. Some important and obvious points may be misunderstood or missing. Some points may be undeveloped or unrelated to each other. Connections may have to be supplied by the reader.

∅ = Not Covered = The essay answer has a thesis and appears to argue for it, but the essay is a series of scattered or unrelated points. The content of the essay evinces misunderstanding of several key concepts (relative to the purposes of the assignment) or understanding of them is not conveyed, yet some key concepts are covered and are not entirely misunderstood.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

If you would like to request academic accommodation due to a disability, please contact Services to Students with Disabilities- Lassen Hall room 1008, phone: 916-278-6955 (voice only) or 916-278-7239 (TDD only) or http://www.csus.edu/sswd. Office hours are Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (except holidays). If you have a letter from Services to Students with disabilities please present the letter to me so we can discuss the accommodations you may need for this class.

ATTENDANCE

Because this class uses group exercises and in class case and other discussions, students’ interest, time, commitment to the course, as well as personal/professional development, is highly valued. Attending all scheduled class sessions and being prepared for class discussion and activities are required. Students missing class should make arrangements with classmates to get any notes, homework, assignments etc. The following criteria will be used to assist in assessing students’ attendance. There is no substitute or make-up for attendance.

- As a matter of fairness and equity anyone missing three (3) excused or unexcused scheduled class sessions loses a letter grade on the final course grade.
• Missing five (5) or more scheduled class sessions will result in a grade of **Fail** from the course and will require the student to make arrangements to complete the course in a fashion acceptable to the Program Director and Division of Social Work.
• Repetitive lateness will affect the final grade. Being 15 minutes or more late (or leaving class early) to class more than three (3) times will affect the final grade.

**GRADED CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS AND CONTRIBUTION**

**Participation (25 points)**

**Guidelines for class participation/contribution:**
1) Arrive for class on time.
2) Turn off cell phones.
3) Be an active participant by participating in class discussions, small group discussions, role plays, group exercises, and **homework assignments**.
4) Read and think about the readings prior to each class so that you may contribute to the class in an intelligent manner.
5) Challenge yourself to be an active learner by asking questions, discussing the course content with your classmates, and by addressing your concerns and criticisms to the professor.
6) Challenge yourself to be open to hearing the ideas and thoughts of people with whom you disagree.
7) If you have concerns about your understanding of the course content or assignments, I expect that you will let me know so we can discuss your concerns.
8) **Thoughts on ethical practice.** As developing social work professionals, it is expected that students will become familiar with and adhere to the **NASW Code of Ethics**. This code for professional behavior should guide your actions in class and in the field agency setting. Disrespect for student colleagues will not be tolerated as classroom dynamics must be safe, appropriate, on topic, open and respectful of diverse opinions and experiences.
9) Students take ownership of expression of bigotry. In other words, rather than attribute negative characteristics to a social group or to a member of that group, students begin with, “This is how I have been taught to believe,” or “I don’t like to admit it, but I do have the belief that…”

As a guideline for organizing your workload, note that it is standard educational expectation that students spend 2-3 hours outside of class time “studying” for every hour spent in class. **Homework is an expected part of class and is counted as part of your classroom participation.** Homework may include in-class informal writing, take-home assignments, readings, preparing for tests, watching movies and other assignments given by the professor.

**Criteria for Evaluating Participation**

**Outstanding Contributor:** Contributions in class reflect exceptional preparation. Ideas offered are always substantive, provide one or more major insights as well as direction for the
class. Challenges are well substantiated and persuasively presented. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished markedly.

**Good Contributor:** Contributions in class reflect thorough preparation. Ideas offered are usually substantive, provide good insights and sometimes direction for the class. Challenges are well substantiated and often persuasive. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished.

**Adequate Contributor:** Contributions in class reflect satisfactory preparation. Ideas offered are sometimes substantive, provide generally useful insights but seldom offer a new direction for the discussion. Challenges are sometimes presented, fairly well substantiated, and are sometimes persuasive. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished somewhat.

**Non-Participant:** This person says little or nothing in class. Hence, there is not an adequate basis for evaluation. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would not be changed.

**Unsatisfactory Contributor:** Contributions in class reflect inadequate preparation. Ideas offered are seldom substantive, provide few if any insights and never a constructive direction for the class. Integrative comments and effective challenges are absent. If this person were not a member of the class, valuable air-time would be saved.

**Reaction Paper (25 points)**

Write a 3-5 page reaction paper on the topic given to you in class. A reaction paper is a concise and critical evaluation of the weekly readings. A good reaction paper manages, in a few pages, to synthesize the kernel of the readings. By "synthesize" I don't mean "to summarize" but rather to re-present the material as you have understood it, through your own interpretive lens. This isn't easy to do, but is a valuable writing skill to acquire or perfect. It requires that you have thoroughly read and understood the article(s) or chapters assigned for the week, and have seen the "big picture" behind the words. You have to be an active reader. In addition, you have to carefully and innovatively think about the readings. Did you agree with them? Or disagree? Why, where, and how? Critically analyze the message of the reading to the statement given to you. How does this issue affect individuals or society at large. Why is it even important to consider? As a professional why do I need to be thinking about this issue? etc…

**Quizzes 5 (10 points each)**

There are five quizzes in this course. The quiz material will come from class lectures, the text, videos and any handouts given in class. Therefore it is strongly suggested that students take notes during each class session. Quizzes and/or exams may be in the form of essay questions, true or false or multiple choice and any combination of these.

**Mid-Term (In class open-book) 50 points**

This exam is designed to test your understanding of concepts and application studied up this point in the term. Each student is expected to complete his/her own work. All texts and notes are allowed during this exam.

**Final Exam Paper – 100 points**
Choose an area concerning Children and the Law that you are interested in. Once you have chosen this area apply a multilevel perspective (micro-meso-macro) explicating how laws and policies on the macro level filter down to individual client systems (i.e. laws – families - children). Discuss the importance of understanding this multilevel perspective to professional practice for your area of major study. In order to support your thesis use your findings which may include current research related to area you have chosen, supporting materials (texts, readings, outside readings – refereed sources only). Use the following outline as a guideline to write this paper.

I. Introduction – Problem Statement – What is the concern or issue? Why is it important?
II. Introduction of Law – What is the law? How does it affect policies and service delivery?
III. Macro System – How this law impacts communities and society
IV. Meso System – How this law impacts families
V. Micro System – How this law impacts children
VI. Implications for Professional Practice
VII. Conclusion

This is an 8 – 12 paper. This paper should be typed double-spaced using a font of 12. Include a reference page (not included in 8-12 pages). Please use APA format.

Course Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reaction Paper</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes (5@10pts each)</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
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**Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Points Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100% - 95%</td>
<td>250 - 237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>94% - 90%</td>
<td>236 - 225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89% - 87%</td>
<td>224 - 217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86% - 84%</td>
<td>216 - 210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>83% - 80%</td>
<td>209 - 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79% - 77%</td>
<td>199 - 192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>76% - 74%</td>
<td>191 - 185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>73% - 70%</td>
<td>184 - 175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>69% - 67%</td>
<td>174 - 167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>66% - 64%</td>
<td>166 - 160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>63% - 60%</td>
<td>159 - 150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% &lt;</td>
<td>149 or less</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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At the beginning of each class a case study will be discussed. It is the student’s responsibility to have read the case before class. The instructor will make cases available on LOCUS. Some cases may take longer than one class period to process, therefore, cases will be posted as we are ready to begin studying them. In an effort to be fair to students’ studying practices the instructor will place cases on LOCUS no later that one week prior to class period they are due.