

**The University of Tennessee  
College of Social Work**

**SW 551 - Child and Family Policy and Advocacy**

**Class:**           **Tuesdays 6:00 -8:30,**  
**Office Hrs.:**   **Tuesday, 5:00-6:00,**  
                          **Thursday, 2:30-3:30**

**Instructor:**   **Cynthia Rocha, Ph.D**  
**Phone:**       **974-7513 (office)**  
                          **470-9174 (home)**

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**Code of Conduct**

It is the student's responsibility to have read the College of Social Work Ethical Academic and Professional Conduct code that is in the College of Social Work MSSW Handbook ([www.csw.utk.edu](http://www.csw.utk.edu)).

**Honor Statement:**

An essential feature of the University of Tennessee is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the University, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity (Hilltopics. 2001).

**Disability Services**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability or if you have emergency information to share, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 191 Hoskins Library, (865) 974-6087. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

**Course Description**

This course focuses on major legislation impacting children, youth and families, examined in the context of social work policy practice. It builds upon the foundation course in social welfare policy, and enables students to use an action-based advocacy approach to provide policy-informed services and to participate in policy development, implementation, and change. The course allows students the opportunity to view problems and issues in the context of the community. Prerequisite: completion of the foundation courses or consent of the instructor.

**Course Rationale**

Social work community practitioners must be able to understand the historical context of family policy development and current child and family policy in the U.S. In order to effectively work in the policy change arena, social workers must also possess skills in analyzing, developing, and implementing policy at the local, state, and federal level. This course focuses on examining the development of current child and family legislation. Students acquire policy practice skills in

legislative tracking, policy development and change using experiential teaching methods, with service learning projects at the legislative level as a major component of the course.

### **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course students will demonstrate, through course requirements, the following knowledge and skills:

1. Knowledge of key trends and issues in child and family policies.
2. Knowledge of the history of major federal legislation affecting children and families, especially those who are poor, people of color, and individuals and groups with special needs.
3. Knowledge of the ethical and political factors involved in policy analysis and development.
4. Skills in performing selected policy practice advocacy tasks in a community context.
5. Skills in implementing a purposeful change campaign in response to an analysis of current policy needs at the agency, community, or state level.
6. Knowledge and self awareness of role and functioning in small groups and of group processes.
7. Knowledge and self awareness of the role that the social work code of ethics play in child and family policy development and change strategies.
8. Skills in effective oral and written communication.

### **Course Requirements:**

#### A. Readings

Basic texts have been selected and readings are listed in the bibliography. In addition to assigned articles, students are encouraged to read from the recommended selections and independently from the professional journals.

#### B. Assignments and Evaluation

The course grade will be based on a combination of papers and projects conducted both in class and in the community.

### **Required Texts**

Jacobs, F. & Davies, M. (1994). More Than Kissing Babies: Current Child and Family Policy in the United States. Westport, CT: Auburn House.

McInnis-Dittrich, K. (1994). Integrating Social Welfare Policy and Social Work Practice. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Pub

Other required readings are on reserve at the Library.

### **Course Format**

This course combines presentations, classroom discussions, community service work and lecture. Students will participate in a workgroup dealing with a specific family or child advocacy issue on either the agency or community level. Students are expected to research the issue, create an intervention based on research and community need, and make recommendations for change.

**Writing:** Writing is a crucial component of effective social work, and you will be expected in this course to produce professionally written products. Papers should evidence systematic thinking, apply theory and policy research from course readings, be well-organized and respect rules of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and nonsexist language. Use APA citation and bibliographic form. Always type.

**Readings:** Required reading should be finished before class on the date specified in the course outline. Students will be responsible for discussing readings in class.

### **Grading:**

Final grades will be calculated based on the following percentages: (page numbers given are guidelines)

1. Problem Identification, Selection and Planning Paper. 5-7 pages. 30%
2. Take home exam. 4-8 pages. 30%
3. Written Communiqué. Either an OP-ED, Congressional Testimony, or News Release. 15%.
4. Project - Final Report, Presentations and Evaluation of Project. 10-14 pgs., including attached first paper, due 5:00 p.m., 25%.

### **Grading Scale**

A =	90-100
B+=	87-89
B=	80-86
C+=	77-79
C=	70-76
D+=	67-69
D=	60-66
F=	<60

### **Assignment Criteria**

The community service learning project is the main component of the course. It is a semester long project, involving several hours per week for the duration of the semester. The project is intended to involve students actively in an advocacy effort aimed at changing social policy and impacting children and/or families. Students will engage in advocacy activities, and reflect on and critically evaluate their advocacy effort and their own effectiveness.

Throughout the project, students will meet and plan their activities as a group. Some time during class may be allocated, but it will be necessary to meet in groups outside of class. Small groups will form within the first two weeks based on the problems which interest individual class members. Identify a problem which interests your group as a potential target for an advocacy effort at the agency or community level. The problem should directly affect children and families. The first task will be to define and assess the problem being addressed.

Once the problem has been defined, use the McInnis-Dittrich chapters and the following criteria to plan a change effort employing the stages of the problem-solving process. The most efficient way to do this is to work with an existing organization, either the organization where you work or a local advocacy organization. Although this is not mandatory, most advocacy organizations will welcome the chance to educate you on their cause and have your help and ideas. Advocacy organizations will allow you to view the problem first-hand and from the community=s perspective.

The range of possible change strategies is unlimited, except by the time limit of the semester. Consider employing a range of tactics so that group members are exposed to different mechanisms. Examples could range from public awareness about an issue to actual policy change and implementation. I will give examples in class.

Write a testimony to an imaginary (or actual) committee of the Tennessee legislature, United States legislature, city council, county commission, or another governmental body. Or you may choose to write an Op-Ed piece, letter to the editor or News Release to go along with your project. Guidelines for these are in the readings.

Implement your group's planned change effort. Meet regularly and keep a record of the group process, activities and outcomes. Monitor your efforts both for the success in attaining your original goals and for possible unintended side effects, positive or negative. Revise your strategy as needed.

Class presentations will be 15-30 minutes in length. Groups may present their topic in any way they choose. The only requirement is that the policy topic is covered in a thorough, professional, and change-oriented manner. Use handouts, transparencies, role-playing, etc. All group members must participate.

### Specific Criteria for

### **Problem Identification, Selection and Planning Paper**

I. Problem Identification and Selection

- A. Describe Problem (10pts)
  - Who is affected
  - How are they affected
- B. Analyze problem/policy with appropriate cites to literature, documents, reports, research (10 pts)
  - What is the problem with current policy?
  - What knowledge is available regarding need?
  - What are the barriers to meeting need?
  - What other efforts have been attempted to deal with the problem?
- C. Identify needed advocacy effort (10 pts.)
  - What change in policy is needed?
  - What is the organization level of your target (agency, county, state, federal)?
  - Who has the authority to change the policy?
  - Identify any other people, groups who are working on the change effort.

II. Advocacy Intervention Plan

- A. What is the broad goal of the advocacy effort? (5 pts.)
- B. What measurable objectives have you chosen? (10)
  - Outcome objectives (very important)
- C. Possible intervention strategies/tactics/activities (10).
  - for each objective, list several interventions with:
    - advantages (resources available)
    - disadvantages (obstacles anticipated)for each.
- D. Interventions chosen (10)
  - What do you plan to do?
  - Who do you plan to do it with?
  - Who or what is your target?
  - Who is responsible for doing it?
  - What are your time frames for doing it?
- E. Rationale (10)
  - Why did you choose the interventions you are going to use?
  - Why did you choose not to use the alternative interventions?
- F. Evaluation (10)
  - How will you measure success or failure of the effort?
  - What measures will you use?
  - How will you collect your data?
- G. Status Report (10)
  - What have you done to date?
  - Have you cleared with your agency, or others involved?
  - List key activities ( meetings, phone calls, interviews, requests for information,).
- H. Style of Paper (10)
  - American Psychological Association style.
  - Include headings, page numbers
  - Watch grammar, typos, etc.

**Testimony, Op-Ed, Letter to the editor, or News Release**

- A. Is the information clear, and judiciously chosen (15 pts)
- B. Is the argument made for the proposal based in a reasonable and appropriate strategy? Did the student follow the guidelines given in the readings? (30 pts)
- C. Is the Communique written in a professional manner? (15)
- D. Is the argument convincing and based on yours or other literature information, research, etc.? (20 pts)
- E. How correct are the grammar, spelling and punctuation?(20)

**Report and Evaluation**

- I. Report on Project Activities  
Submit TWO copies of your final Report and Evaluation to the instructor, with a revised first paper attached. (20 pts.)
  - A. Interventions to date (10 pts.)
    - What have you accomplished?
    - Who or what was your target?
    - Who did what?
    - What were your time frames?
  - B. Outcomes of interventions (10)
    - What have been the intended outcomes?
    - What have been the unintended outcomes?
  - C. Unfinished business (10)
    - What remains to be done?
    - Are you planning to continue the effort?
- II. Evaluation of the Advocacy effort
  - A. Analyze your effort in relationship to your objectives. (10)
    - Did you meet your outcome objectives?
    - Did you complete your strategy?
    - Did you use the tactics/techniques as planned?
    - If not, why?
  - B. Provide informed critique of advocacy effort (what did or did not work). (20)
    - In relation to target organization
    - In relation to other advocate/organizations involved
    - In relation to benefits to client(s)
    - What would you do differently next time?
  - C. Assess project as a "policy-practice" effort (10)
    - Did it feel "natural" to your?
    - Should all social workers be expected to be policy- practitioners?

- Has this been a useful exercise?
- D. Style of Paper (10)
  - American Psychological Association style.
  - Include headings, page numbers
  - Watch grammar, typos, etc.

### **Project Presentations**

- A. All members participate (10)
- B. Statement of problem (10)
- C. Appropriate substantiation (research, etc.) (10)
- D. Make it clear what the goals and objectives are that you are trying to accomplish.
  - Public Awareness? Change in policy implementation? etc. (10)
- E. What were your intervention strategies chosen to accomplish your goal? (20)
- F. Give a synopsis of what you have learned about the problem within the presentation approach you have chosen.(20)
- G. Let the audience know where the effort stands at present. What still needs to be done?(10)
- H. Use appropriate visual aids to make your presentation strong and interesting.(10)

### **Course Outline**

This course will consider the topics listed here on the dates specified; revisions to the schedule will be announced in class. Readings are to be completed before the scheduled class session.

#### ***Week 1: Jan. 14***

Course Introduction.

#### ***Week 2: Jan.21***

Rationale for policy and advocacy practice.

Readings:

- Rocha, C. & Johnson, A. (1997). Teaching family policy through a policy practice framework. *Journal of Social Work Education*. 33 (3),
- McInnis-Dittrich, Chapter one, *The Social Work Practitioner and Social Welfare Policy*.
- Rocha, C. (2000) Evaluating Experiential Teaching Methods in a Policy Practice Course: The Case for Service Learning to Increase Political Participation. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 36 (1), 53-64.

#### ***Week 3: Jan. 28***

Introduction to family policy: Definitions, trends, and issues.

Readings:

- Jacobs, F. Framing the issues. in F.Jacobs and M. Davies (eds.) More than Kissing Babies. chapter

one.

Wisensale, S.K. (1992). Toward the 21st century: Family change and public policy. Family Relations 41:417-422.

Seccombe, K. (2002). Beating the odds versus changing the odds. Journal of Marriage and Family, 64(2), 384-394.

*Handout Examples of Previous Projects!*

**Week 4: Feb. 4**

Policy practice and Advocacy for Families

Readings:

Hardcastle, D.A., Wenocur, S. & Powers, P.R. (1997). Community Practice. Chapter 12: Using the Advocacy Spectrum.

Figueira-McDonough, Josefina (1993). Policy practice: neglected side of social work intervention. Social Work. 38(2):179-188.

Ezell, M. (2001). Understanding Advocacy. Chapter 2, in Advocacy in the Human Services.

McInnis-Dittrich, Ch. 5, Developing social Welfare Policy: A political process.

**Week 5: Feb. 11**

Family Policy Assessment and Planning

Reading:

Mayer, R. (1985). Policy and Program Planning. Englewood Cliffs, N.J. Read Chapter 5 carefully.

McInnis-Dittrich, Kathleen. Integrating Social Welfare Policy and Social Work Practice. Chapters 6, 8, and 9.

**Week 6: Feb. 18**

Family Policy Intervention strategies and tactics

Communication

Testimony

Organization

\*Examples from previous Social Work groups

Reading:

Sharwell, G. (1982). How to testify before a legislative committee. (Chapter 6, pp 85-98.) In Mahaffey, M. and Hanks, J. (eds.) Practical Politics: social work and Political responsibility. Silver Spring, MD:NASW.

Richan, Willard (1996). Testifying in a Hearing, Chapter 10, In Lobbying for Social Change. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.

Campbell, M. (1984). Action ideas. In L.Staples, Roots to Power: A Manual for Grassroots Organizing. (pp. 152-154). New York: Praeger.

**Week 7. Out of Town**

**Week 8: Mar. 4**

Intervention strategies and tactics, cont.

Communicating through the Media

Readings:

Stoesz, D. (1993). Communicating with the public. Social Work,38(4):367-368.

Brody, R. et al. (1985). Using the Media (Chapter 7, pp. 83-89). In the Legislative Process: An Action handbook for Ohio's Citizen's Groups.. Cleveland, OH: The Federation for Community Planning.

Richan, Willard (1996). Using the Mass Media, Chapter 11. In Lobbying for Social Change. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.

**Week 9: March 11-DUE: PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION, SELECTION AND PLANNING PAPER**

Computer use in Family Policy Practice

Intervention Skills

Computers in the problem solving method

Using technology as intervention strategy

Desk Top Publishing

Internet: information highway

The use of internet for information gathering and resource development

**\*\*\* Lab time**

Readings:

Richan, Willard (1996). Lobbying in the information Age, Chapter 2. In Lobbying for Social Change. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.

Schwartz, E. (2002). Netactivism-Chapter 7, begin p. 83 in Advocacy, Activism and the Internet.

**Week 10: Spring Break**

**Week 11: March 25**

Coalition Building and Citizen Advocacy in Family Policy

Task Force Participation and Creation

**HANDOUT MIDTERM EXAM**

Readings:

- Roberts-DeGennaro, M. (1986). Building coalitions for political advocacy. Social Work.31(4):308-311.
- Black, T.R. (1983). Coalition building: Some suggestions. Child Welfare 62:(3):263-268.
- Mizrahi, T. (1999). Strategies for effective collaboration in the human services. Social Policy, Summer. [Available on-line at: [http://www.socialpolicy.org/recent\\_issues/SU99/mizrahi.html](http://www.socialpolicy.org/recent_issues/SU99/mizrahi.html)]

### **Week 10 Spring Break!**

#### ***Week 12: April 1***

Policies for Poor Families

The Family Support Act of 1988, Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act

Readings:

- Lens, V. (2002). TANF: What went wrong and what to do next. Social Work, 4 (3), 279-290.
- Elwood, D.T. (1996). Welfare reform as I knew it. American Prospect. May/June 1996.

#### ***Week 13: April 8 - Written Communiqué Due***

Policies for Working Families

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993

Earned Income Tax Credit

Reading: (Welfare Reform Handouts)

- Kaitin, K. Ch. 4 . Congressional responses to families in the workplace: The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1987-88. in F.Jacobs and M. Davies (eds.) More than Kissing Babies.
- Rocha, C. (1997) The Working Poor. In Richard Edwards (Editor) Encyclopedia of Social Work, 19th Edition, 1997 Supplement.
- Gorman, A. (2002). Playing by the rules and still losing ground. American, 187 (3), 12-15.

#### ***Week 14: April 15***

Policies for children and youth

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1974

Adoptions Assistance and Child Welfare act of 1980

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act Amendments of 1996

Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997

Readings:

- Davidson, C. Chapter 3. Dependent children and their families: A historical survey of the United States Policies. in F.Jacobs and M. Davies (eds.) More than Kissing Babies.
- Hutchison, E.d. (1993). Mandatory reporting laws: Child protective case finding gone awry? Social Work.38(1):56-63.

- Jimenez, M.A. (1990). Permanency planning and the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act: The paradox of child welfare policy. Journal of Sociology and social Welfare. XVII(3):55-71.
- Stein, T. (2000). The Adoption and Safe Families Act. Families in Society, 81 (6), 586-592.

***Week 15: April 22***

## Domestic Policy

Family Violence Prevention and Services Act  
Divorce and child Custody

## Reading:

- Davis, L.V., Hagen, J.L., & Early, T. (1994). Social Services for Battered Women: Are they Adequate, Accessible and Appropriate?
- Renzetti, C. (2001). One strike and you're out: Implications of a federal crime control policy for battered women. Violence Against Women, 7 (6), 685-698.
- Weitzman, L.J. (1985). The divorce law revolution: No fault in America (chp.2, pp. 15-51).
- Weitzman, L.J. (1985). Child custody: From maternal preference to joint custody? (Chapter 8, pp. 215-261).

***Week 16: Apr. 29 - Take Home Exams Due***

## Community oriented family policy.

Considering the Future of Family Policy  
Community based practice

## Readings:

- Gornick, J. & Meyers, M. (2001). Support for working families. The American Prospect, 12 (1), A3-A7.
- Specht & Courtney (1994). A proposal for a community-based system of social care. In Unfaithful Angels, pp 152-175. New York: Free Press

***Project Presentations*****Final Papers Due Wednesday, April 30.**

## Supplemental Bibliography

- Abramovitz, M. (1988). Regulating the lives of Women. Boston: South End Press.
- Cherlin, A.J. (Ed.). (1990). The Changing American Family and Public Policy. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute Press.
- Danziger, S. (1990). Antipoverty policies and child poverty. Social Work Research and Abstracts, 26(4), 17-24.
- Chilman, C.S. (1993). Parental employment and child care trends: some critical issues and suggested policies. Social work, 38(4):451-460.
- Fein, E. & Maluccio, A. (1992). Permanency planning: Another remedy or jeopardy?. Social Service Review, 66(3), 335-348.
- Garfinkel, I., Oellerich, D., & Robins, P. (1991). Child support guidelines: Will They make a difference? Journal of Family Issues, 12(4), 404-429.
- Gustavsson, N.S., & Segal, E. A. (1994). Critical Issues in Child Welfare. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.
- Gutierrez, L.M. & Lewis, E.A. (1992). A feminist perspective on organizing with women of color. (Ch. 6, pp. 113-132). In F.G. Rivera & J.L. Erlich (eds.) Community Organizing in a Diverse Society. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Hagen, J. & Davis, L. (1992). Working with women: Building a policy and practice agenda. Social Work, 37(6), 495-502.
- Mauldin, T.A. (1990). women who remain above the poverty level in divorce: Implications for family policy. Family Relations, 39, 141-146.
- McCullagh, J.G. (1988). Challenging the proposed deregulation of P.L. 94-142: A case study of citizen advocacy. Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare. XV(3):65-81.
- Melton, G. B. (1987). Legal regulation in adolescent abortion: Unintended effects. American Psychologist, 42, 79-83.
- Miller, D.C. (1987). Children's policy and women's policy: Congruence or conflict? Social Work, 32(4), 289-292.
- Nelson, B.J. (1984). Making an Issue of Child Abuse. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pierce, D. (1984). Policy for the Social Work Practitioner. New York: Longman.

Seaberg, J.R. (1990). Family Policy revisited: Are we there yet? Social Work, 35(6), 548-554.

Sherraden, M. (1991). Assets and the Poor: a New American Welfare Policy. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc.

Wilson, W.J. (1986). The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.