STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
MSW PROGRAM

Class days and times
Class Location: Online

SOCW 5318.501
Child Welfare Services
Fall 2021
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Office Hours: In Person only Monday 3:00pm-4:00pm; 5:30pm-6:30pm
In Person and virtual Tuesday 10:00am-11:00am; 4:00pm-5:00pm
Virtual only Friday 12:00pm-1:00pm

Prerequisite: None
Corequisite: None

SFASU values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFA provides a variety of resources to support students' mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

On-campus Resources:
SFASU Counseling Services
www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices
3rd Floor Rusk Building
936-468-2401

SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic
www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

SWK 518 Child Welfare Services introduces students to the field of child welfare through a trauma responsive lens. While designed specifically to enhance and support the MSW curriculum, it is open to other graduate students. The course provides an overview of the field of child welfare, including practice and policy issues that impact the welfare of children and families. It provides many students with an introduction to online learning, generally increasing expertise and understanding of the wealth of information pertaining to child welfare available through governmental sources and national resource centers.

Students will be introduced to models of trauma-informed practice and trauma-focused therapy, especially as it related to the services of the child welfare system. They will be aware of how trauma can elicit a wide range of reactions, and how to appropriate respond. Students will understand how responding to children’s and the parents’ trauma appropriately can greatly improve the outcomes for the family. They will acquire skills in engaging, assessing, and
intervening with individuals and families through trauma-informed care. They will understand the impacts of using research-based practice to improve clients’ lives. Finally, students will be able to use their acquired understanding and skills in promoting trauma-informed care on the organizational level and prepare for leadership in such agencies.

Within this context, the course addresses a broad array of child welfare issues as they relate to individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities, with a special emphasis on policy, practice and research.

This course is an elective designed to support the concentration.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**


**RECOMMENDED TEXTS:**


**II. CURRICULUM DESCRIPTION**

The MSW program of SFASU features the generalist practice and a single specialization: Advanced Generalist Practice in a Rural Context. Both are defined below.

It is important to note here that the BSW program and the MSW program have developed a shared definition of generalist practice, given below.

Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice.
Briefly, generalist social work practice:
- Is multi-level to include individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.
- Is multi-theory, allowing for the free selection of theories as appropriate.
- Utilizes problem identification and solving focus that follows a problem-solving framework.
- Addresses the complexity of individual, family, group, organizational and community system interactions.
- Requires and integration of awareness, competence, and professional response to issues of values, ethics, diversity, culture, social justice and populations-at-risk.

Advanced Generalist practice builds on the generalist practice, incorporating the elements listed above, but characterized by a greater depth, breadth, and autonomy as demonstrated through specialized knowledge across problem areas, populations-at-risk and practice settings, with a greater selection of diverse interactions across practice levels.

Briefly, advanced generalist practice requires:
- The ability to engage and differentially assess complex problems with systems of all sizes, with a variety of advanced assessment skills.
- Specialized evidence-based interventions with systems of all sizes.
- Differential evaluation techniques with systems of all sizes.
- Strategies to advocate for clients and constituencies influenced by rural lifestyles.
- Readiness for leadership in a variety of areas including: program development, coordination and administration; clinical and organizational supervision; policy creation, reform and implementation; leadership in research development and utilization, particularly in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary practice settings; professional development.

The specialized practice for the MSW program is advanced generalist practice for rural contexts. Theories that describe and predict rural ecological systems and rural strengths, including the incredibly rich interactions, simple and complex, formal and informal, wholesome and debilitating are emphasized. On this basis, the curriculum of the MSW Program emphasizes the ecological systems approach, the strengths perspective, and the social capital and social exchange theories.

Rural context refers to social work practice with people with rural lifestyles and systems of all sizes within and outside of rural communities. There is no single accepted definition of rural. In fact, just as generalist practice in social work draws on multiple theories, generalist practice in rural contexts recognizes the many definitions currently in use and their advantages and disadvantages for research, practice, and advocacy. The School of Social Work at SFA utilizes several of these definitions within the United States and globally including:

*The United States Census Bureau* (urbanized areas, urban clusters, and rural populations); *Office of Management and Budget* (metropolitan, micropolitan, and non-core), *Economic Research Service* (rural urban continuum codes); and *the United Nations* that defines urban and rural according to the census definition for each nation, but suggests a definition of rural areas as having a population of less than 2,000 for international comparisons.
III. PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES (CSWE Competencies)

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior.
2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice.
5. Engage in Policy Practice.
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.
7. Assess, Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.

*Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS, 2015) from the Council on Social Work Education

IV. CSWE COMPONENT BEHAVIORS: (Student Learning Outcomes: SLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify, comprehend and describe the services available for families and children in the United States and globally.
2. Identify, comprehend and describe the circumstances and behaviors that require formal support and intervention with families and children at the state and local level.
3. Identify and discuss the formal protections that are available at the local, state and federal levels to combat abuse and neglect of children.
4. Identify and discuss the linkages between legislation and regulations and the interventions used in the support and protection of children and families in Texas as well as at the national level.

6. Define, discuss and demonstrate the application of principles of social and economic justice in the provision of services to children and their families consistent with the generalist perspective.
7. Identify, describe and discuss barriers to services encountered by families with children from diverse groups, which keep them in poverty, and at risk for abuse and neglect.
8. Identify, describe and discuss a piece of legislation that affects the provision of services to families with children and resulting in the reduction of oppression and discrimination.
9. Identify, describe and discuss a piece of legislation that affected the protection of children and provided social and economic justice for them and their families.
10. Identify, define and discuss ways in which societal and social work values and ethics shape the provision of services to meet basic social, emotional, nutritional, health, mental health, and educational needs of families with children.
V. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

The course is taught entirely online. It will incorporate the following instructional strategies: lecture, extensive discussion, exercises, online activities, assigned readings, and individual projects. You are encouraged to actively participate in activities, ask questions, and contribute comments for discussions. You are also encouraged to offer input regarding instructional strategies and assignments. Most importantly, you are expected to be an active learner and to ask for clarification when you have questions. To be successful it is important that you sign in regularly to D2L, read the assigned material, and be prepared to discuss what you have read. You will be expected to not only know the material presented, but to be able to apply it in experiential activities. Lectures will not duplicate the reading material except to clarify or to expand upon it and to review material covered in prerequisite courses. The goal of this approach is to develop a safe learning environment that addresses a variety of learning styles, promotes critical thinking, and fosters creativity.

VI. COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS (per SFA Center for Teaching and Learning)

This course will utilize D2L Brightspace to support the delivery of course content. For help with D2L go to http://www.sfaonline.info/supportandtutorials- or the Center for Teaching and Learning. The student will need basic skills regarding the use of a word processor and web browser. The student must have access to a computer that meets the minimum requirements (for specific details go to http://www.sfaonline.info/gettingstarted). Computers are available to current students through a number of labs across campus (see www.sfasu.edu or the instructor for details).

SOFTWARE:

Internet Access: Any Internet Service Provider (ISP)

Browser: Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, or Apple Safari

Programs: Microsoft WORD, PowerPoint

E-Mail Client: SFA E-Mail Account (jacks account) and myCourses Mail

Streaming Audio & Video: RealPlayer G2, RealPlayer (latest version), Microsoft Windows Media Player

Plug-Ins Adobe Reader, Adobe Flash Player, PowerPoint Viewer, http://www.sfaonline.sfasu.edu
VII. COURSE SCHEDULE:

Week 1  

*Getting Started*

Discussion

**Module I: Setting the Stage**

*Introduction*

Reading: Strand & Sprang text Ch; Trauma-exposed Infants and Toddlers

Discussion

Week 2  

*Applying Trauma Theory*

Readings: Strand & Sprang text Ch 2-3; Parental Childhood Adversity

Discussion

Activity 1: ACEs

Week 3  

*The Role of Cultural Competence*

Readings: Strand & Sprang text Ch 4; Racial Disparities in Service Referrals; Are Sexual Minority Youth Overrepresented in Foster Care, Child Welfare, and Out-of-Home Placement? Findings from Nationally Representative Data

Discussion

**Exam 1**: Exam 1 will cover all content from Module I

Week 4  

**Module II: Creating Trauma-Informed Agency Practice**

*Trauma-Informed Engagement*

Readings: Strand & Sprang text Ch 5; Crosson- Tower text Ch 3-4

Discussion
Week 5  
*Safety and Stabilization*

Readings: Strand & Sprang text Ch 6; Crosson- Tower text Ch 7

Discussion

Week 6  
*Trauma-Informed Assessment*

Readings: Strand & Sprang text Ch 7-8

Discussion

Activity 2: Assessment

Week 7  
*Preventive Services*

Readings: Strand & Sprang text Ch 9; Crosson- Tower text Ch 8

Discussion

Week 8  
*Foster Care*

Readings: Strand & Sprang text Ch 10-11; Crosson- Tower text Ch 11; The Relationship Between Foster Care Families and Birth Families in a Child Welfare Context: The Determining Factors

Discussion

Week 9  
*Adoption*

Readings: Strand & Sprang text Ch 12; Crosson- Tower text Ch 12; Promoting Trauma-Informed Parenting of Children in Out-of-Home Care: An Effectiveness Study of the Resource Parent Curriculum

Discussion

Exam 2- Exam 2 will cover all content from Module II
Week 10  Module III: Creating Trauma-Informed Agency Culture
Implementing Trauma-Informed Culture

Readings: Strand & Sprang text Ch 13-14

Discussion

Assignment 1-Paper

Week 11  Trauma-Informed Culture Assessments

Readings: Strand & Sprang text Ch 15-16; Statewide Implementation of Child Trauma-Focused Practices Using the Community Based Learning Collaborative Model article

Discussion

Activity 3: Secondary Traumatic Stress

Week 12  Trauma-Informed Staff

Readings: Strand & Sprang text Ch 17-18; Psychological Well-Being and Workability in Child Abuse Investigators

Discussion

Week 13  Trauma-Informed Supervision and Development

Readings: Strand & Sprang text Ch 19-20; Organizational Trauma-Informed Care: Associations With Individual and Agency Factors article

Discussion

***THANKSGIVING BREAK ***

Week 14  Vision for the Future

Readings: Strand & Sprang text Ch 21
Exam 3- Exam 3 will cover all content from Module III

Finals Week Assignment 2-Presentation and Peer Review

VIII. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

A. Class Participation: It is essential for students to read assigned material weekly, log into D2L course regularly, and to participate in online discussions and other activities. Students are responsible for all material covered in class and assigned in the syllabus.

B. Written Communication: Students are expected to write in complete sentences, use correct grammar and spelling when presenting findings or comments in group discussion activities, exams (essay questions) and PowerPoint Presentations. When required, references must be in APA format per the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.). Failure to meet these guidelines will result in loss of points.

C. Readings: The course schedule provides a list of required readings for each week. Since lectures and class/group discussions are designed to answer questions about the material and expand upon the basic concepts, students are expected to complete the assigned readings prior to class.

D. Exercises and Discussions: There will be exercises and discussion forums. Students are required to participate in the exercises and the discussions at the scheduled time. Makeup exercises will be scheduled according to university policy with a university-approved excuse.

E. Exams: Three online exams will be given during the semester. The exams may be a combination of essay, brief answer, true/false, multiple choice, and other assessment formats. All material, including assigned readings, discussions, lectures, quizzes, online
activities, video/audio, and guest presentations are subject to examination. The exams will evaluate students' understanding, comprehension, and ability to think critically about children’s services and trauma-informed care.

Students are expected to take all exams at the scheduled time. Permission to miss any exam will be based on the policy for excused absences as stated in the SFASU General Bulletin (available online at www.sfasu.edu/bulletin). Missing an exam without either prior permission or an excused absence will result in a grade of "0" on that exam. The instructor will schedule make-up exams.

F. **Assignments:** The student is responsible for completing assignments in accordance with the specific guidelines identified in the assignment description in the syllabus. The assigned research paper about a social issue topic must be typed using a word processor in 12 pt. font with double spacing and standard margins. All assignments are to be in APA format per the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Failure to meet these guidelines will result in loss of points.

G. Late assignments will result in 10% of the total possible points being deducted from the total points earned for each day the assignment is late, with 10% deducted immediately following the class period during which the assignment is due. The only exception is an excused absence as defined by the SFASU General Bulletin.

**GRADING:**

**COURSE GRADES** will be based on the following:

**Exams:**

Exam 1 = 45  
Exam 2 = 60  
Exam 3 = 45

**Discussions**  15 @ 2 pts. each = 30

**Activities**  3 @ 10 pts. each = 30

**Assignments:**
Part A – Written Paper = 100
Part B – Presentation and Peer Review = 75
Class Participation = 15
Total = 400

GRADING SCALE:
A 400 – 360
B 359 – 320
C 319 – 280
D 279 – 240
F 239 – 0

IX. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Abiding by university policy on academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members must promote the components of academic integrity in their instruction, and course syllabi are required to provide information about penalties for cheating and plagiarism, as well as the appeal process. Definition of Academic Dishonesty Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

▪ using or attempting to use unauthorized materials on any class assignment or exam;
▪ falsifying or inventing of any information, including citations, on an assignment;
▪ helping or attempting to help other student(s) in an act of cheating or plagiarism.

Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were one’s own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

▪ submitting an assignment as one's own work when it is at least partly the work of another person;
▪ submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from the Internet or another source;
▪ Incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper or presentation without giving the author credit.
Penalties for Academic Dishonesty Penalties may include, but are not limited to, reprimand, no credit for the assignment or exam, resubmission of the work, make-up exam, failure of the course, or expulsion from the university. Procedure for Addressing Student Academic Dishonesty a faculty member who has evidence and/or suspects that academic dishonesty has occurred will gather all pertinent information and initiate the following procedure:

1. The faculty member will discuss all evidence of cheating or plagiarism directly with the student(s) involved.
2. After consideration of the explanation provided by the student(s), the faculty member will determine whether academic dishonesty has occurred. The faculty member may consult with the academic unit head and/or dean in making a decision.
3. After a determination of academic dishonesty, the faculty member will inform the academic unit head and submit a Report of Academic Dishonesty with supporting documentation to the office of the dean of the student’s major. This report will become part of the student's record and will remain on file with the dean's office for at least four years even if the student withdraws prior to receiving a grade.
4. For a serious first offense or subsequent offenses, the dean of the student’s major will determine a course of action, which may include dismissal from the university. The dean may refer the case to the college council for review and recommendations before making this determination.

A student's record of academic dishonesty will not be available to faculty members. The purpose of the record is for the dean to track a pattern of academic dishonesty during a student's academic career at Stephen F. Austin State University. Student Appeals A student who wishes to appeal decisions related to academic dishonesty should follow procedures outlined in Academic Appeals by Students (6.3). [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/4.1-student-academic-dishonesty.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/4.1-student-academic-dishonesty.pdf)

Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (SFA Policy 5.5)
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average. Please read the complete policy on grades: [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/5.5_course-grades.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/5.5_course-grades.pdf)

Acceptable Student Behavior

The MSW Student Handbook and Academic and MSW Professional Integrity Code outline acceptable student behavior. Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct of Conduct (SFA Policy 10.4). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional
forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, visits to agencies, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate or inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed. Please see the following link for the complete policy: http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/student-code-of-conduct_10.4.pdf

X. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic-accomodation-for-students-with-disabilities.pdf
Assignment 1:
Written Paper (100 pts)

This assignment will examine trauma-informed practice with families involved in the child welfare system. The assignment should be in APA format and use a minimum of 5 references. Student will use the assigned case scenario to address the following criteria:

1. Engagement
   a. Describe how you will have successful engagement with each family member.

2. Assessment
   a. List and describe which assessment tools will be utilized with each family member.
   b. Describe the types of trauma each family member has experienced.

3. Safety
   a. Describe how you will ensure the safety of the child(ren) while the family is receiving services

4. Interventions
   a. Describe the interventions you will utilize with this family. Will you do the intervention yourself or make a referral? Will the intervention(s) be for 1 family member or multiple family members.
   b. Describe the interventions or trainings that will be utilized for others in the system of care (other professionals, foster/kinship/adoptive parents, etc)

5. Permanence
   a. What will be the permanency goal for the child(ren)? How will you know when this is achieved?

6. Trauma-Informed Care
   a. Describe how you see utilizing trauma-informed care as helping the child(ren) and family in the case.
Assignment 2:
Presentation and Peer Review (75 pts)

Create a PowerPoint presentation on your case scenario. Include a brief family history and summary of the case. Then describe the engagement process, the assessments used, the safety of the child(ren), the interventions utilized, and the permanency plan. Explain how the use of trauma-informed care was helpful to the child(ren) and family.

You will record yourself giving this presentation on Zoom and upload it into a discussion post. You will then review and rate the presentations of other students.