Course Overview and Purpose:

This course will focus on the development of social policy as it affects families and children from different cultural and economic backgrounds and as it is given form in the public child welfare system, including related laws, systems, and institutions. The interrelationship of values, social norms, culture, and social and family policy will be discussed. There will be examination of the development of infrastructure to support the needs of children and families over the history of the child welfare system in the United States. The goal of the course is to provide the student with a solid understanding of key events that have shaped child welfare policy over time, analysis of social welfare policies in a historical and cultural context, an understanding of how policy is formulated, and implications for current and future policy and practice in the field of child welfare. There will be an emphasis on critical thinking and analysis of policy processes, policy implementation, and impacts on diverse populations, within the framework of social and economic justice and the advancement of human rights.

Course Objectives: At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe historical child welfare events and how they shaped policy and affected diverse and vulnerable populations in the history of the United States, including major events, leaders, and legislation.

2. Describe the interrelationship of values, social norms, culture, social and family policy, and how they impact policy formulation.

3. Describe how policy is made, policy models, drivers, and how to analyze policy impacts.

4. Understand how the US child welfare system functions and under what authority as well as major provisions that guide and fund it.

5. Understand the role of the professional social work practice in relation to public child welfare policy.

6. Recount important data in the child welfare system, including the number of children in foster care, the number adopted annually, important data trends in child welfare, how to access that data, and the relationship between data and policy.

Social Work Practice Competencies:

The purpose of this policy related course is to ensure that our future professionals acquire the intellectual and analytical abilities to be leaders and social change agents for their communities and society. These courses are designed to ensure students become proficient, effective and knowledgeable advocates and leaders in all sectors of society and to influence public policy and political arenas.

Successful completion of this course implies that the student has achieved competency in the following practice behaviors:
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| 2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice. | ● Assess and analyze the impact of social policies and demographic changes on the programs and services for vulnerable and diverse populations.  
● Evaluate the social, political, and economic environments that advance policies affecting human rights. | Class participation and discussion, exercises  
Five written papers involving policy analysis  
Classroom presentation on historical child welfare policy, law, program, and/or event  
Group presentation on current child welfare policy |
**Class Structure and Guidelines:**

Classes will consist of lecture with power points, discussion, activities/exercises, readings, video segments, and presentations by students. Assigned readings form the foundation for classroom discussion and should be done prior to the first class of each week; please come prepared to discuss, analyze, and participate! The focus will be on an understanding of child welfare policy through a cultural and historical lens, with an emphasis on analysis and thoughtful insight as well as implications for the current and future state of the field of child welfare. There will be five assigned papers throughout the class, with an additional final paper accompanying a group presentation (one paper per group is acceptable). There will be a required brief presentation to accompany the first paper as well, on historical policy events/laws/persons. The other four papers will be discussed in class with examples as a group. Classroom participation in discussion and activities as well as evidence of reading completion is a part of the grade for the class as is the demonstrated ability to analyze and understand the relationship between policy and practice.

The class will meet for ten weeks with two 1-1/4 half hour sessions per week. Please be punctual. Cell phones should be turned off or on vibrate so as not to disturb the class. Please do not bring a laptop and no texting is allowed during class. Beverages are allowed but please do not eat during class. Readings are due by Tuesdays as well as assignments unless otherwise directed in class.

**Texts and Materials:**


Additional reading materials will consist of articles and information either distributed by the instructor or available online.

**Course Outline:**

**Week One** – Overview of child welfare policy course; pre-matching activity completion; definitions and discussion of the interrelationship of values, social norms, culture, social and family policy, policy making models; group activity on definitions related to policy; policy frameworks/models; introduction to child welfare policy history timeline activity; Match Up Pre Activity; Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire reading and activity; **Reading assigned for Week 2**: Textbook chapter 1, pages 2-3,12-15,17-18; chapter 6, pages 194-195; chapter 8, pages 278-281; **Assignment 1**: paper/presentation assigned for week 2 to summarize one important child welfare event, law, or program in child welfare history as assigned in class, with questions asked through a policy lens.

**Week Two** – Important child welfare policy history events, programs, policies, and laws, through part two of timeline activity and active participation and presentations by class members from Assignment One; class discussion on changes in American society, culture, and families over time through policy lens; differential responses by race, class, ethnicity, religion; policy frameworks/models; effects of poverty, social problems today. **Reading for Week 3**: Textbook, Preface p. viii-x; chapter 1, pages 3-12, 16-32; Chapter 6, pages 202-207; Chapter 2, pages 37 – 64.

**Week Four** – Continuation of important child welfare policy history events, programs, policies, and laws through timeline activity and active participation and presentations by class members from Assignment One; class discussion on changes in American society, culture, and families over time through policy lens; differential responses by race, class, ethnicity, religion; effects of poverty; levels of prevention. – How policy and law is made; roles of different groups; Children’s Bureau, CFSRs, federal and state roles; advocacy groups; policy models; policy analysis; role of data in policy; AFCARS; sign up for Group Projects; **Reading for Week 5:** go to [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov) and obtain and read article entitled: **How Federal Legislation Impacts Child Welfare Service Delivery.** Textbook:  Chapter 8, page 274 – 278, 291-303. **Assignment # 3:** AFCARS Assignment.

**Week Five** – How policy and law is made; roles of different groups; Children’s Bureau, CFSRs, federal and state roles; advocacy groups; policy models; policy analysis; role of data in policy; AFCARS; federal T/TA resources; AFSA; current issues in child welfare field; review of Assignment 2 and discussion; **Reading for Week Six:** Textbook, Chapter 6, p. 220-222, p. 228-232; Chapter 5, p. 150-158, p. 161-174. **Assignment # 4:** Policy in the Movies Assignment.

**Week Six** – Foster care policy, issues, analysis. AFCARS, data discussion, review of AFCARS assignment; current issues in child welfare; CAPTA, Chaffee, ILS, educational and well being issues, siblings. **Reading for Week Seven:** Textbook, Chapter 10, p. 387-432. **Assignment # 5** – Waiting Children in CA and the US.

**Week Seven** – Adoption policy, history, legislation, issues, analysis. Current issues in child welfare. Review of assignments 4 and 5. MEPA, AFSA, adoption subsidy, adoption triad, open adoptions, types of adoption, recruitment, interjurisdictional and transracial adoption, international adoption, Hague Adoption Treaty, adoption issues; interjurisdictional issues; Prepare for group presentations; go to AdoptUSKids.org and locate and watch “Beyond Borders: Achieving Child Permanence.”

**Week Eight** – Group Project Presentations, lecture; **Reading for Week Nine:** Textbook, Chapter 12, pages 488-505, pages 510-512.

**Week Nine** – Group Project Presentations, lecture; **READ ANY READINGS THAT YOU MISSED DURING THE COURSE!**
**Week Ten** – **Group Project Presentations**, lecture, Match Up Post Activity (required).

**Course Assignments, Grading, and Evaluation:**

Class preparation and participation will count heavily in this course. Class participation involves attendance, attention, class presentation and thoughtful discussion, participation in classroom activities and exercises, participation and improvement on the pre/post matching activity, and evidence of critical thinking and analysis. As policy involves working with others, there will be a group project as well as in-class discussion groups and activities, in addition to individual papers and assignments. Papers may be turned in online or in class.

Grades will be based on the following criteria:

- Classroom participation/Activities/Evidence of Readings Completion/Pre-Post Matching Activity: 25%
- Group Project/Presentation on Child Welfare Policy Topic: 25%
- Papers and Assignments: 50%, five weighted at 10% each. Papers may be approximately one to two pages typed; no more than five pages maximum. There is no mid-term or final examination.

The last three weeks of classes will consist primarily of group project presentations.

Dates for papers as well as reading assignments will be given in class and/or online (CCLE).

Instructions and sign ups, when required, for papers and projects will be individually written and distributed.

Late papers will be penalized for tardiness. Please be ready to present information in class on topics relevant to papers/assignments that you have researched.

Welcome to Child Welfare Policy class! I look forward to getting to know you and learning with you!

**Office Hours:** by appointment

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