San Diego State University
School of Social Work


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Class Meeting Time: Thursday, 8:00 AM-10:40 AM
Room: SSW 3630
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2:00-3:00PM

I. Course Purpose and Description: The purpose of this advanced research course is to provide students with an opportunity to explore critical research questions, methods, and results that are related to the child welfare service delivery system. Given federal and state laws which require child welfare agencies to monitor and report the outcomes of their services, it is important that social workers working in child welfare agencies are able to understand how scientific methods may be used to improve practice and policy in this field. This course focuses on conducting and evaluating child welfare research related to three aims of child welfare in the U.S.: safety, permanency, and well-being. A goal of this course is to connect research findings to methods that may improve child welfare programs, practice, and policy. Therefore, the course is intended for students who are interested in conducting child welfare research and integrating empirical findings in their practice. Students enrolled in this course must be participants in the MSW Title IV-E Child Welfare Stipend Program.

II. Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, each student will be able to:

a. Utilize the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-being dataset to examine child welfare research questions related to safety and well-being outcomes.

b. Using the Child Welfare Services / Case Management System (CWS/CMS), determine rates of racial disproportionality.

c. Use SPSS to manage and organize data.

d. Identify and critique available evidence for child welfare interventions using the California Evidence-based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBC) website.

e. Understand the type and nature of research questions and data that are suitable for studying permanency and well-being outcomes.

By being able to demonstrate these outcomes, the student will have met the competencies identified below of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and the Foundation Competencies for Public Child Welfare in California issued by the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC)

CSWE EPAS Core Competencies: 2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.

CSWE Practice Behavior: Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.

CalSWEC CA 2.d. Demonstrate knowledge of ethical decision making methods and the capacity to apply these in practice, policy, advocacy, and research.

Last updated: 1-23-15
CSWE EPAS Core Competencies: 2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.

CSWE Practice Behavior: Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation.

CalSWEC CA 3.1. Apply critical thinking skills using logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment to synthesize information, to practice effectively in child welfare and to communicate professional judgments.

CSWE EPAS Core Competencies: 2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice.

CSWE Practice Behavior: Recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power.

CalSWEC CA 4.1. In providing effective child welfare practice, consistently demonstrate and articulate both accurate awareness of self and knowledge of societal variables contributing to power imbalances and interpersonal and intercultural conflict among individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

CSWE EPAS Core Competencies: 2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.

CSWE Practice Behavior: Use research evidence to inform practice.

CalSWEC CF 6.b. Demonstrate knowledge of how to consult and utilize research evidence to inform ongoing practice and policy at all levels.

III. Class Format: This course is structured to include in-class and online lectures (both instructor and invited experts) and discussions, individual and group learning activities, hands-on computer exercises, analysis of existing data, and student-led presentations. Content will be presented each week and students will have opportunities to interact with course materials through completing required reading, asking questions during class, and participating in learning activities designed to apply course concepts to individual or small-group tasks. The online courses will be supported by Google Hangout (or a similar web conferencing program), and these sessions will take place within a classroom setting. A break halfway through the session will be offered each week.

IV. Readings: There is no required textbook or course reader. Required readings are either provided directly by the instructor or available on Blackboard.


Suggested Additional Resources

Guides for APA Style Formatting


Free DOI lookup: http://www.crossref.org/SimpleTextQuery/

APA Tutorial: http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=apa_exposed

Recommended websites with guides to avoiding plagiarism

SDSU plagiarism tutorial: http://library.sdsu.edu/guides/tutorial.php?id=28

SDSU citation resources: http://library.sdsu.edu/reference/news/citation-resources

University of Texas libraries: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/avoid.html

The University of Southern Mississippi Libraries: http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/plag/paraphrasing.php

V. Course Assignments:

Assignment 1: Well-being Review: Using data to make decisions (40% of grade)
This quantitative analysis paper uses the second cohort of the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-being (NSCAW II) dataset in which students select a research question based on the available data and then generate descriptive statistics, chi-square and/or t-tests to answer the research question. The assignment includes a 4 to 6 page paper that presents an analysis of the quantitative data, including the use of tables or graphs to present the data and an interpretation of the results. An additional 1-page summary of the paper is also included as part of the assignment. Through analysis and interpretation of the data, students are asked to use practice experience to inform their research, and through sharing of the 1-page summary, students apply research skills in an effort to improve practice.

Assignment 2: Permanency Review: Comparing foster care rates (30% of grade)
For this paper students will use the CWS/CMS Dynamic Report System website (http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/Ccfsr.aspx) to compare foster care entry and exit rates in San Diego County to those in Los Angeles County and other neighboring counties. Students will also use rates to calculate racial disproportionality indexes. The assignment includes a 4 to 6 page paper that includes the use of tables or graphs to present the data and an interpretation of the results. An additional 1-page summary of the paper is also included as part of the assignment. Through analysis and interpretation of the data, students are asked to use practice experience to inform their research, and through sharing of the 1-page summary, students apply research skills in an effort to improve practice.

Assignment 3: Identifying Interventions and Evaluating Evidence: Group Assignment (30% of grade)
This is a group assignment which requires students to select an intervention with some evidence of promoting safety, permanency, or well-being for children or youth involved in the child welfare system (we will discuss in class how to locate possible interventions/programs that would best fit this assignment). Students will be asked to describe the program, who it serves (target population), and the underlying assumptions that promote its effectiveness. In addition, students should evaluate the research evidence for the effectiveness of this intervention for a child welfare population; and develop a Logic Model that communicates what the program involves and which child welfare outcomes would be impacted. In place of a paper, each group will create a PowerPoint presentation with their findings. Each group will be required to present their findings during the last day of class.

Class grades will be based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. Grades of A or A- are earned by demonstrating excellent mastery of content, AND indications that the student has (a) undertaken complex tasks, (b) applied critical thinking skills to course assignments, and/or (c) demonstrated creativity in her or his approach to course assignments. The degree to which the student demonstrates these skills determines whether he/she receives an A or an A-.

2. A grade of B+ is earned for work that is judged to be very good. This grade denotes that a student has demonstrated a greater-than-satisfactory understanding of topics & concepts covered, and exceeded expectations on course assignments.

3. A grade of B is earned by students whose work meets the basic requirements of course assignments. It indicates that the student has done satisfactory work on assignments and meets the expectations of the course.

4. A grade of B- denotes that a student's performance was less than satisfactory on course assignments, reflecting only a moderate grasp of content. The quality of the work provided is below instructor expectations.

5. A grade of C+ reflects a minimal grasp of course content as reflected in the assignments, poor organization of ideas and/or several significant areas requiring improvement.

6. Grades below a C+ denote course performance that does not meet instructor minimum standards and reflects serious deficiencies in a student's performance on assignments.
VI. **Class Policies**

**Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers:** Approved by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly and revised by the 2008 NASW Delegate Assembly [http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp]

**Preamble**
The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

Social workers promote social justice and social change with and on behalf of clients. “Clients” is used inclusively to refer to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice. These activities may be in the form of direct practice, community organizing, supervision, consultation administration, advocacy, social and political action, policy development and implementation, education, and research and evaluation. Social workers seek to enhance the capacity of people to address their own needs. Social workers also seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities, and other social institutions to individuals’ needs and social problems.

The mission of the social work profession is rooted in a set of core values. These core values, embraced by social workers throughout the profession’s history, are the foundation of social work’s unique purpose and perspective:

- service
- social justice
- dignity and worth of the person
- importance of human relationships
- integrity
- competence.

This constellation of core values reflects what is unique to the social work profession. Core values, and the principles that flow from them, must be balanced within the context and complexity of the human experience.

**Attendance Policy:** Students are expected to attend every class and to remain in the class for the duration of the class. Failure to attend class, arriving late or lack of active participation may impact your ability to achieve course objectives, which could affect your course grade. Students are expected to notify the instructor by email of any anticipated absence or reason for tardiness.
Academic Honesty, Integrity, and Plagiarism: Please adhere to the guideline set forth in the Graduate Bulletin (also see SDSU University policy on cheating and plagiarism http://arweb.sdsu.edu/es/catalog/2012-13/parts/466-480_U_Policies.pdf). Not adhering to these guidelines ends badly for all parties involved.

By taking this course, you agree that all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin for the detection of plagiarism. Some papers submitted for review will be included as source documents in the global Turnitin repository to be used in future reviews. You should remove your name and any other personally identifying information from your papers prior to submission to Turnitin.

Late Assignments: Papers are due on the day and time specified. Extensions will be granted only for extenuating circumstances. Students who do not inform instructor in advance, and skip the class on the date the assignment is due, will not have the opportunity to make the case of unanticipated circumstances. If the paper is late without permission, the grade will be affected. Please note: Six points will be deducted for late assignments (except for approved extensions and accommodations) after grade is assigned based on merit, and one point for every additional day.

Class Etiquette: Students are asked to refrain from knitting, needlework, personal grooming, laptop use (other than note-taking), text messaging, participating in any social networking activities, or other distracting personal behaviors during class. Cell phones should remain off or on vibrate only. Students are asked to arrive at class on time, as latecomers are a distraction.

Written Assignments: All assignments must be in APA format (6th edition). Assignments should be typed, double-spaced with 12 point font and 1” margins. Times New Roman font is suggested. Avoid colloquial expressions, proof-read all documents and employ correct grammar and standard English. Assignments should be electronically submitted to the instructor via Blackboard as an attached Microsoft Word or PowerPoint document, and are due any time before midnight on the day specified.

Students with Disabilities: If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Incomplete Grade: On rare occasions (e.g., documented illness or family emergencies), an “incomplete” may be granted as long as the student does not have to make up more than 30% of the required class work. If the student wishes to request an “incomplete,” he or she must discuss this with the instructor. The condition for removal of the “incomplete” shall be determined by a written plan approved and signed by the student and instructor. It is expected the student will complete work within a one month time period. If the student still fails to complete the course within the extended time frame negotiated with the instructor the student will fail the class assignment.
Changes to the syllabus and/or course requirements: It may be necessary to make some adjustments in the syllabus during the semester in order to respond to unforeseen or extenuating circumstances. Adjustments that are made will be communicated to students both verbally and in writing.

VII. Course Topics and Outlines
Please Note: Dates with an asterisk (*) indicate online courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading due (before class):</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>• Course Overview</td>
<td>Required: Collins-Camargo, Sullivan, &amp; Murphy, 2011; Garfat, 2008; Milner, Mitchell, &amp; Hornsby, 2001</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What makes a competent child welfare worker</td>
<td>Recommend recommended: Carnochan, Samples, Lawson, &amp; Austin, 2013; CFSR Aggregate Report, 2011; Zander-Willis &amp; Jenkins (pp. 24-37), 2011</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Child and Family Services Review Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• Using administrative and survey data to study CW outcomes &amp; limits</td>
<td>Required: Drake &amp; Johnson-Reid, 1999; English, Brandford, &amp; Coghlan, 2000; Fallon, Trocme, Fluke, Maclauein, Tonmyr, &amp; Yuan, 2010; Hill, 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Communicating data results</td>
<td>Recommend recommended: Garner &amp; Poertner, 2000; Grogan-Kaylor, 2000</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Interpreting findings</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>• Review of measurement, reliability, and validity</td>
<td>Required: FFTA Measures (pp. 10-15); IOM (pp. 210-213), 2014; Smith &amp; Brun, 2006; Wells &amp; Correia, 2012;</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Defining and measuring safety and well-being</td>
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<td>• Overview of well-being paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>• <strong>Computer LAB:</strong> Class will meet in HT-189 lab (CHHS Instructional Computer Lab)</td>
<td>Required: Aslam &amp; Emmanuel, 2010; Biemer, Wheeless, &amp; Smith, 2014 (pp. 3-6); NSCAW Research Group, 2002</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>• Introduction to NSCAW data</td>
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<td>• Developing a good research question (P.I.C.O.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>• <strong>Computer LAB:</strong> Class will meet in HT-189 lab (CHHS Instructional Computer Lab)</td>
<td>No required reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>• <strong>Computer LAB:</strong> Class will meet in HT-189 lab (CHHS Instructional Computer Lab)</td>
<td>No required reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Required/Recommended</td>
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| 3/5   | 7  | • Defining and measuring permanency                                         | **WELL-BEING PAPER DUE!**
|       |    | • Disparities & Disproportionality                                          | Required: Drake, Jolley, Lanier, Fluke, Barth, & Johnson-Reid, 2011; Hill, 2006 (pp.1-25); IOM, 2014 (pp. 46-48; 213-216); Ogbonnaya, 2015; Wood & Summers, 2014
|       |    | • Overview of permanency paper                                              | Recommended: Font, Berger, & Slack 2012; Garland, Landsverk, & Lau, 2003; IOM (pp. 213-216), 2014; Miller, Cahn, & Orellana, 2012; Needell, Brookhart, & Lee, 2003 |
| 3/12  | 8  | • **Computer LAB:** Class will meet in HT-189 lab (CHHS Instructional Computer Lab) | **Required:** Needell, 2013; Putnam-Hornstein & Needell, 2011 |
| 3/19  | 9  | • **Invited Speaker:** Staff member from the San Diego County’s Child Welfare Services Data Unit | **Required:** Johnson, Bogie, Scharenbroch, & Cotter 2010 |
| 3/26  | 10 | • **Invited Speaker:** Cambria Walsh (Project Manager) and Jennifer Rolls-Reutz (Research Coordinator) from The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBC) | **PERMENANCY PAPER DUE!**
<p>|       |    | • Evidence-based practice-what is it?                                      | Required: CEBC handouts; Gibbs &amp; Gambrill, 2002; Littell, 2008; Price et al., 2008 |
|       |    | • Locating information about evidence supported interventions                | <strong>Recommended:</strong> Mullen, Bledsoe, &amp; Bellamy, 2008 |
|       |    | • Assessing empirical evidence                                               |                                                      |
| 4/2   | 11 | <strong>Spring Break- No Class</strong>                                                  | Enjoy your break!                                                               |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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| 4/9  | 11   | • **Invited Speaker:** Megan Finno-Velasquez - Special Topic: Immigration and Child Welfare  
• Research to practice |
|      |      | **Required:** Berger-Cardoso, Dettlaff, Finno-Velasquez, Scott, & Faulkner, 2014; Finno-Velasquez, 2013; Finno, & Bearzi, 2010; Finno-Velasquez, Fettes, Aarons, & Hurlburt, in press |
| 4/16*| 12   | • Logic models & Outcome measurement, program evaluation |
|      |      | Kellogg Foundation, 1998 (pp. 35-43); Kellogg Foundation, 2004 |
| 4/23*| 13   | • Special topic - Retention of public child welfare workers*  
• Special topic - Using Excel to analyze data |
|      |      | Dikinson, & Perry, 2002; Lee, Foster, & Rehner, 2011 |
| 4/30*| 14   | • Review of course & integration with your practice* |
|      |      | **INTERVENTION PPT PRESENTATION DUE**  
No required reading |
| 5/7  | 15   | **GROUP PRESENTATIONS** |

VIII. **Bibliography**


Miller, K. M., Cahn, K., & Orellana, E. R. (2012). Dynamics that contribute to racial disproportionality and disparity: Perspectives from child welfare professionals,


