

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

Course Number: SW 360K/395K

Unique Number: 63820/63615

Semester: Fall 2009

Meeting Time: Thursday, 2:30 – 5:30

Meeting Place: SSW 2.130

Instructor's Name: Marilyn Waters, LCSW

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Office Hours: TH 1:30 – 2:30 and by appointment

Office Location: SSW, 3.104A (Adjunct Office)

SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH KINSHIP CARE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

I. STANDARDIZED COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to cover practice and policy issues related to work with kinship care families. Kinship care is the use of family members or fictive kin to care for children in the public welfare system or to prevent children from entering the system. The course is designed to prepare students to work in private and public child welfare settings. It will also enhance the knowledge of those students who work in or are interested in the field of gerontology. The course is open to graduate and upper division undergraduate students.

II. STANDARDIZED COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Understand the history of the evolution of kinship care in the child welfare system.
2. Understand the historical precedents of kinship care in national and international cultures.
3. Understand the evolution of natural, informal, and formal kinship care.
4. Understand federal and state policy and program issues.
5. Understand the values, benefits, and challenges of kinship care.
6. Describe the characteristics of kinship placements.
7. Understand theoretical and evidence-based kinship care service delivery models.
8. Develop actual or emerging evidence-based skills in assessment, intervention, and case management.
9. Discern clinical issues for the kinship caregiver, birth parent, and child.
10. Understand legal relationships and proceedings and ethical concerns or dilemmas.

11. Understand the role of family team meetings or family group decision-making in kinship care.
12. Obtain enhanced awareness of race, culture, and other considerations related to social justice.

III. TEACHING METHODS

A variety of teaching methods will be employed to achieve course objectives, including lecture, class discussion, reading assignments, small group discussions, and videos/films. Lectures are designed to supplement readings. Guest speakers may be invited to address specific topics.

IV. REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED TEXTS AND COURSE MATERIALS

Required Text

Crumbley, J. and Little, R. (1997). *Relatives Raising Children: An Overview of Kinship Care*. Washington, D.C: Child Welfare League of America.

A Course Supplement with required reading may be purchased at Speedway Printing in Dobie Mall.

V. COURSE POLICIES

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend all class sessions and actively participate by raising questions and issues in all class discussions and exercises. Students are expected to complete the readings prior to class, and should be well prepared to participate in discussions. Failure to regularly attend the class and demonstrate through discussions that one has comprehended the readings will be considered in assigning the final grade.

Students will be allowed two (2) unexcused absences. Roll will be taken each class period. In cases where a student misses more than the allotted two unexcused absences, the instructor reserves the right to lower that student's final grade by one point for each class missed beyond the first unexcused absence. In extenuating circumstances of absence, students are to notify the instructor. Any student missing more than 6 classes (excused or unexcused) may be in jeopardy of not passing this course. **Students are responsible for any material missed due to absences.**

Late Assignments

Except in the case of extreme emergencies, and then only with the permission of the instructor, late assignments WILL NOT be accepted without penalty. Assignments not turned in class on the day it is due will be considered late. If accepted, late assignments will be assessed point penalties at the rate **of three (3) points** each day they're late. If the due date is a problem, then the student should see the instructor and negotiate another due date well in advance.

Policy on Absence for Religious Holidays:

By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Constructive Feedback

Student feedback is welcome. Students are encouraged to provide feedback to the instructor during office hour visits, if they desire. If you are experiencing any problems in the class, please discuss them as soon as possible with the instructor in order to maximize your learning opportunities in the class.

Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students

Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to their e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin’s policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

The University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (<http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/>)

Professional Conduct in Class

The instructor expects students to act like professionals in class. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another’s opinions. We will not, nor should we, always agree with one another. In this environment we should be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometime we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. However, the instructor does require that students engage one another with respect and professionalism in order to create a safe learning environment. Boundaries of privacy and confidentiality will be respected.

Documented Disability Statement

Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

Safety

As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should notify the professor regarding any safety concerns.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If students are worried about someone who is acting differently, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

Emergency Evacuation Policy

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor's instructions.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

VI. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Students are expected to turn in all required assignments on the agreed upon due date at the beginning of class.

Due to the format and content of this course, both attendance and contribution are imperative. Students' participation is highly encouraged, and is both valuable to them and to their classmates.

The instructor reserves the prerogative to change class assignments as needed to meet the course objectives. The changes will be discussed with the students in class before implementation.

- 1. Required Reading Questions/Opinions, Class Participation, and Attendance.....15 pts.
- 2. Exam 30 pts.
- 3. Short Paper..... 15 pts.
- 4. Position Paper 30 pts.
- 5. Reflection Papers10 pts. (5 points each)
100 pts.

Class Participation 15 points

This will be determined on attendance, the quality of participation in class discussions, and the submission of a written question/opinion from assigned readings. Students will bring to class each week – **one** written discussion question **or one** opinion from **each required reading**. These will count toward your participation points. Class readings and assignments will require *informed* classroom participation.

Examination 30 points

One examination based on readings and lectures will be given in the course. Questions will consist of multiple choice, matching, true/false, short answer, application and /or essay. The exam will be given as scheduled on the course outline. Exam content will vary slightly based on undergraduate (UG) or graduate(G) student status.

Reflection Papers 10 points (5 pts. each)

The purpose of the reflection papers is to give you an opportunity to explore your own thoughts and feelings regarding issues that are very much a part of the kinship care experience. Grading for the papers will be based on your ability to answer each of the questions, the depth of your writing, and your ability to reflect self-awareness. Be candid in your reflections as you will not lose points because your opinions are different from the instructor's opinions. Students will be required to write 2 short reflection papers. Each reflection paper is worth 5 points. Each paper will be three paged, double spaced, based on video presentations.

1st Reflection Paper 5 pts.

The first two videos will be shown during class on September 3rd. These videos present the experiences of two kinship families. The reflection paper will be due at the beginning of class on September 10th. You may choose to draw comparisons and contrasts for the two videos. The following questions should be addressed in the paper:

- 1. What feelings(emotions) did you experience as you watched the videos?
 Regarding the caregiver? Regarding the birth parent?
 Regarding the children? Regarding the professionals involved?
- 2. How were the main characters affected by the kinship placement?
- 3. What were some of your own personal values that came into conflict and/or

were in alignment with what you saw and heard?

4. How effective was the child welfare service delivery system in responding to the needs of the main characters – caregiver, birth parent, and children? What do you think should have been done differently?
5. How did watching the videos impact your beliefs, attitudes, or knowledge regarding case management with kinship care families?

2nd Reflection Paper **5 pts.**

A video with discussion by birth parents of children placed in kinship care will be shown October 15th. The paper is due October 22nd. The questions to be answered for the second reflection paper will be provided for students before the video is shown.

Short Paper **15 Points**

Each student will complete one 5-7 paged (double spaced) paper. This brief paper gives the student an opportunity to research a child welfare issue, its impact on kinship families, and implications for kinship care policy and practice. The paper is due October 8th. Based on self interest, students will choose from one of the topics listed.

Topics

Poverty and Kinship Care
Alcohol, Substance Abuse and Kinship Care
Parental Incarceration and Kinship Care

Components of the paper:

- Describe the issue.
 1. Demographics associated with the issue, e.g. what population is largely impacted by the issue?
 2. History of the issue including any legislation that has been passed to address it – state or national?
- How does the issue correlate with or impact kinship care?
- How does this issue create risk for or impact kinship caregivers, birth parents, and children?
- How does disproportionality of children of color in the child welfare system show up in this area?
- Contact one agency/organization that provides services to respond to your issue. How well is this issue being addressed or not being addressed for kinship care families? State whether it's a national, state, or local agency and identify the person you communicated with at the agency. Information from an agency's website will not suffice as contact with the agency.

Position Paper **30 Points**

Each student will select a kinship practice or policy issue with controversial/competing points of view. The topics will provide the student the opportunity to conduct extensive research on a critical issue in the kinship practice area. Students should describe the

practice or policy, stating the competing points of view that are relevant. After identifying the different points of view, students should take a position in regard to key controversies in this area of practice, justifying your position based on the literature and research. Papers should address the relevance of cultural competence. The paper should be 10-12 pages (double spaced.) Students should let the instructor know which topic you plan to address on October 1st.

Practice Areas

Developmental Stage of Caregiver vs. Needs of Children
 Legal Permanency vs. Permanent Commitment
 Family Responsibility vs. Community/Government Support
 Caregiver Licensure vs. Nonlicensure as Foster Parent
 Kinship Care vs. Family Reunification

Papers should address the following areas:

1. Description and demographics of the issue.
2. Competing perspectives on the issue.
3. Potential impact on disproportionality and requirements for culturally competent practice.
4. Analysis of the challenges and opportunities faced by practitioners.
5. State your position and ideas about practice/policy in this area, including how to strengthen services for children through policy and practice changes.
6. Describe at least one thing you learned about the role of the practitioner through researching this topic.

Assignments

<u>Due Dates</u>	<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Possible Points</u>
9-10-09	1 st Reflection Paper	5
10-1-09	Position Paper Topic	---
10-08-09	Short Paper	15
10-22-09	2 nd Reflection Paper	5
11-19-09	Position Paper	30
12-3-09	Exam	30

VII. Grading Policy/Grading Criteria

Each class requirement has been assigned points. Grading in this course will be based on attendance, class participation, assignments, and the quality of student work.

Grades will be assigned as follows:

Undergraduate

100-94 A
 90-93 A-
 89-87 B+
 86-84 B

83-80	B-
79-77	C+
76-74	C
73-70	C-
69-67	D+
66-64	D
63-60	D-
59 & below	F

Graduate

100-94	A
90-93	A-
89-87	B+
86-84	B
83-80	B-
79-77	C+
76-74	C
73-70	C- (Class failed/no credit: 73 and below)
69-67	D+
66-64	D
63-60	D-
59 & below	F

Grading of all written assignments will take into account the quality and content of the writing. Written material should be carefully proofread and errors corrected prior to submission. Points will be deducted for errors, misspellings, incorrect grammar, incorrect usage of APA style, poor organization and repetition of information. The American Psychological Association (APA) – 5th edition format should be used when relevant.

VIII. COURSE SCHEDULE

**Session 1
August 27th**

*Introduction, Overview of Class
Child Welfare in Historical Context
History of Kinship Care in National and International Cultures*

**Session 2
September 3rd**

*Evolution of Kinship Care in the Child Welfare System – National and State Level
Benefits, Challenges, Characteristics of Kinship Families*

****Videos**

Seretean, Tracy (Producer/Director). (2000). *Big Mama*. California: Cinemax Reel Life.
Weisberg, Roger & Nossel, Murray (Directors). (2002). *Why Can't We Be a Family Again*. New York: Public Policy Productions.

Required Reading

Crumbley, J. and Little, R.(1997). Relatives Raising Children: An Overview of Kinship Care. Washington, D.C: Child Welfare League of America, 1-7.

Butts, D(2005). "Kinship Care: Supporting Those Who Raise Our Children." *Elders As Resources*. Baltimore, Maryland: Annie E. Casey Foundation.

**Session 3
September 10th**

*Legal Relationships and Services
Permanency Planning*

*****1st Reflection Paper Due**

Required Reading

Crumbley & Little, 73-91.

Geen, R.(2003). "Permanency Planning with Kinship Foster Parents. In Kinship Care: Making the Most of a Valuable Resource. Washington, D.C: The Urban Institute Press.

Freundlich, M. and Wright, L.(2003). Post Permanency Services. Washington, D.C: Casey Family Programs, 67-113.

**Session 4
September 17th**

*Federal and State Policy Issues
The Impact of Race, Culture, and Values on Kinship Care Policy*

Guest Speaker: Member of State Kinship Care Coalition.

Required Reading

Crumbley & Little, 93-111.

Freundlich, M. and Wright, L. (2003). Post Permanency Services. Washington, D.C: Casey Family Programs, 115-134.

**Session 5
September 24th**

The Impact of Race, Culture, and Values: Working with Kinship Families

Required Reading

Crumbley & Little, 65-66.

Freundlich, M., Morris, L., and Hernandez, C.(2003). "Kinship Care: Meeting the Needs of Children & Families of Color." A Position Paper of the Race Matters Consortium.

Recommended Reading

Hill, R.B. (2006) "Synthesis of Research on Disproportionality in Child Welfare: An Update" A Report prepared for the Casey-CSSP Alliance for Racial Equity in Child Welfare. Access at www.cssp.org/major_initiatives/racialEquity.html.

Hill, R.B. (2007) "An Analysis of Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality and Disparity at the National, State, and County Levels." A Report prepared for the Casey-CSSP Alliance for Racial Equity in Child Welfare. Access at www.cssp.org/major_initiatives/racialEquity.html.

**Session 6
October 1st**

Kinship Care Practice and Services – Dept. of Family & Protective Services

*****Position Paper Topic Due**

Guest Speakers – Child Protective Services Staff, Dept. of Family & Protective Services.

Required Reading

Geen, R.(2003). "Providing Services to Kinship Foster Families." In Kinship Care: Making the Most of a Valuable Resource. Washington, D.C: The Urban Institute Press.

**Session 7
October 8th**

Clinical Issues For Kinship Caregivers

*****Short Paper Due**

Required Reading

Crumbley & Little, 9-19.

Minkler, M., Roe, K., and Price, M.(1992). "The Physical and Emotional Health of Grandmothers Raising Grandchildren in the Crack Cocaine Epidemic." The Gerontologist 32(6), 752-761.

Russes, V. & Malm, K. (2003)."In Their Own Words- Kin Speak Out about Their Caregiving Experiences." Kinship Care: Making the Most of a Valuable Resource, edited by R. Geen. Washington, D.C: The Urban Institute Press.

Session 8 October 15th

Clinical Issues For Birth Parents

****Video**

Crumbley, Joseph (Producer).(2005). *Kinship Care: Birth Mothers Speak Out*. Jenkintown, PA.

Required Reading

Crumbley & Little, 19-26.

Smith, A., Krisman, K., Strozier, A., Marley, M.(2004). "Breaking Through the Bars: Exploring the Experiences of Addicted Incarcerated Parents Whose Children are Cared for by Relatives." Families in Society, 85(2), 187-195.

Johnson, E. & Waldfogel, J.(2002). "Parental Incarceration: Recent Trends & Implications for Child Welfare." Social Service Review, 76(3), 460-479.

Session 9 October 22nd

Clinical Issues For Children in Kinship Care

*****2nd Reflection Paper Due**

****Video**

Crumbley, Joseph (Producer). (2005). *Kinship Care: Teens and Young Adults Speak Out*. Jenkintown, PA.

Required Reading

Crumbley & Little, pgs. 26-35.

LaVigne, N., Davies, E., and Brazzell, D. (2008). "Broken Bonds": Understanding & Addressing the Needs of Children with Incarcerated Parents. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Justice Policy Center.

Zuravin, S., Benedict, M., and Stallings, R. (1999). "Adult Functioning of Children Who Lived in Kin Versus Nonrelative Family Foster Homes." In Kinship Foster Care: Policy, Practice, and Research, edited by R.L. Hegar and M. Scannapieco. New York: Oxford University Press.

Session 10
October 29th

Family Group Decision Making

Guest Speakers: Casey Family Programs and Department of Family and Protective Services.

Information about the topic will be given to students before the date of the presentation

Session 11
November 5th

Service Needs and Service Models
Assessment and Intervention with Families

****Videos**

State of California Dept. of Social Services and Edgewood Center for Children and Families (Producers). *An Everlasting Embrace*. Distributor: Intermedia, Seattle, WA.

Nomadic Pictures. (2001). *Legacy of Community Action*. (Documentary).

Required Reading

Crumbley & Little, 37-56.

Jackson, S. (1999). "Paradigm Shift: Training Staff to Provide Services to the Kinship Triad." In Kinship Foster Care: Policy, Practice, and Research, edited by R.L. Hegar and M. Scannapieco. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wilson, D. (1999). "Kinship Care in Family Serving Agencies." In Kinship Foster Care: Policy, Practice, and Research, edited by R.L. Hegar and M. Scannapieco. New York: Oxford University Press.

**Session 12
November 12th**

*Assessment and Intervention with Families(cont.)
Case Management with Kinship Families*

Guest Speakers: Casey Family Programs and Child Protective Services Staff

Required Reading

Crumbley & Little, 57-63.

Fahlberg, V.(1991). A Child's Journey Through Placement. Indianapolis: Perspectives Press, 141-174.

**Session 13
November 19th**

Case Management (cont.)

*****Position Paper Due**

November 26th – Thanksgiving Holiday!

**Session 14
December 3rd**

Exam and Class Wrap Up