**THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS**

**Cassidy Baker, MSW, LCSW-S**

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**Child Welfare Policy and Practice (SOWK 4700)**

**(3 credit hours)**

**Fall 2015**

**Classroom: Wooten 212**

**Class Time: Tuesday & Thursday 9:30 am - 10:50 am**

**Office: Chilton 238C**

**Telephone: 940-565-2687**

**Office Hours: Mon 2:00 – 4:00, Wed 9:00 – 11:00, available most days, appointments preferred**

*The Professor for this course has the option to revise or alter the course syllabus at any time as class needs dictate.*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course presents the history of child welfare practices and social institutions, the development of child welfare policies and the social service delivery system. The dynamics of child abuse and neglect, family structures, support systems and methods of intervention will be examined and discussed. Students will have the opportunity to examine their own beliefs and values, as well as those beliefs, values, and ethics inherent in the child welfare system. The development of assessment skills on both a macro and micro level will be expected.

*Dealing with situations that have a traumatic impact on children can be difficult for individuals to handle. Honesty, open communication, and processing of feelings and thoughts are encouraged any time you are affected by the classroom material.* ***If you find that you are unable to process the impact of the material on you in a classroom setting, please schedule a private meeting with the professor.*** *All students are encouraged to practice a healthy lifestyle that includes positive coping skills and stress* *reduction activities.*

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. Students will develop an understanding of the history and evolution of child welfare practices.
2. Students will identify, evaluate, and apply policies to current practice.
3. Students will understand the identifying factors and family dynamics of child physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical neglect, emotional neglect, and abandonment.
4. Students will have a better understanding the child protective services system, as it currently exists in Texas and the United States.
5. Students will learn intervention protocols and strategies applicable to the provision of services to families and children.
6. Students will learn to assess their own beliefs, values and ethics in addition to assessing policies and family functioning.

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS POLICIES**

**STUDENT CONDUCT**

Any student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in any instructional setting at UNT. This includes traditional face-to-face classes, online or blended classes, labs, discussion groups or boards, field trips, and verbal and/or written (including email) communication with the instructor and/or other students. Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to, disrespectful treatment of other students (verbal or written), disrupting lecture, and use of inappropriate or profane language or gestures in class or other instructional settings.

A student engaging in unacceptable behavior may be directed to leave the classroom or other instructional setting and may also be referred to the Dean of Students to consider whether his/her conduct violates UNT’s Student Code of Conduct.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Academic integrity emanates from a culture that embraces the core values of trust and honesty necessary for full learning to occur. As a student-centered public research university, UNT promotes the integrity of the learning process by establishing and enforcing academic standards. Academic dishonesty breaches the mutual trust necessary in an academic environment and undermines all scholarship. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, forging the signature of the instructor or of another student, fabrication, and/or facilitating or sabotaging the academic dishonesty of other students.

Any suspected occurrence of academic dishonesty will be investigated and handled in accordance with UNT policy and procedures. The following academic penalties may be assessed at the instructor’s discretion upon determination that academic dishonesty has occurred. *Admonitions and educational assignments are not appealable.*

1. *Admonition*. The student may be issued a verbal or written warning.
2. *Assignment of Educational Coursework*. The student may be required to perform additional coursework not required of other students in the specific course.
3. *Partial or no credit for an assignment or assessment*. The instructor may award partial or no credit for the assignment or assessment on which the student engaged in academic dishonesty, to be calculated into the final course grade.
4. *Course Failure.* The instructor may assign a failing grade for the course.

Should the procedure for appeal of a case of academic dishonesty extend beyond the date when the instructor submits course grades for the semester, the student will be assigned a grade that reflects the penalty, which shall be adjusted, as appropriate, at the conclusion of any appeal process.

Specific details and description of UNT’s Policy on Student Standards of Academic Integrity (18.1.16) and students’ right to appeal are available at <http://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/pdf/7-Student_Affairs-Academic_Integrity.pdf>.

**DISABILITY ACCOMODATION**

In accordance with university policies and state and federal regulations, UNT is committed to full academic access for all qualified students, including those with disabilities. To this end, all academic units are willing to make reasonable and appropriate adjustments to the classroom environment and the teaching, testing, or learning methodologies in order to facilitate equality of educational access for persons with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide the student with an accommodation letter to be hand delivered to the instructor to begin a private discussion regarding the student’s specific needs in the course.

Students may request accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Every semester, students must obtain a new letter of accommodation, and they must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class.

Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to request that students discuss such letters during their designated office hours in order to protect the privacy of the student.

For additional information, visit the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) in Sage Hall, suite 167, or their website at <http://disability.unt.edu>. You may also contact the ODA office by phone at 940.565.4323. Specific information on UNT’s policies related to disability accommodations is available at <http://policy.unt.edu/policy/18-1-14>.

Please note that disability accommodations are not retroactively applied to the start of a course. Accommodations in the course become effective after the student has delivered an official accommodation letter from UNT’s ODA.

**PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE**

The college experience is intended to assist in preparing students for professional and career pursuits. That preparation includes learning to use professional etiquette in dealing with people in positions of authority. The appropriate way to address your instructor depends on her/his particular education credentials. These are usually indicated on the course syllabus. If your instructor has a:

* Doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D.), you should address them as: Dr. Instructor’s last name
* Master’s degree (MA, MS, MSW, MSSW) you should address them as: Professor Instructor’s last name
* Law degree (J.D.) you should address them as: Professor Instructor’s last name

If you are not certain about an instructor’s education credentials, you should address them as “Professor.” It is not appropriate to call the instructor by his/her first name unless given permission.

Professional etiquette extends to all types of communication with your instructor. Written communication—including email—forms a permanent record and so it is important to use care about how you make requests, ask questions, or express concerns. Slang (*e.g.,* Hey, Yo) and texting abbreviations should be avoided. The use of profanity is not permitted.

Any type of communication—verbal or written—is most likely to achieve the intended result when it is polite or courteous. Please note that communication can be polite even if there is some type of conflict involved. Instructors may choose not to respond to emails or other forms of communication that are perceived as insulting or disrespectful.

**REQUESTS FOR AN INCOMPLETE**

Students may request a grade of incomplete ("I") only if he/she meets all of the following conditions:

* The request occurs on or after November 9, 2015;
* The student is passing the course;
* There is a justifiable and documented reason beyond the control of the student (*e.g.*, serious illness or military service) for not completing the course on schedule; and,
* The student has the approval of the instructor and the department chair.

Students meeting these criteria must arrange with the instructor to finish the course at a later date by completing specific requirements outlined by the instructor. These requirements must be listed on a “Request for Grade of Incomplete” form signed by the instructor, student, and department chair. More information on UNT’s Incomplete Grade policy is available at <http://registrar.unt.edu/grades/incompletes>.

**REQUESTS TO DROP THE COURSE**

We want you to succeed in this class and at UNT. If you are concerned about your progress in the course, or believe you need to drop for other reasons, it is important that you contact the instructor as soon as possible. We want to make sure that dropping the course is your best or only option.

There are consequences to dropping classes that extend beyond losing your invested time, money, and effort. Dropping one or more classes may make you ineligible for financial aid. There are also limits on the number of courses you can drop. You can learn more about this at <http://registrar.unt.edu/registration/dropping-class>.

If you absolutely have to drop the course, you must pick up a drop form from the Eagle Student Services Center and take it to the instructor for her/his signature. Once the instructor signs the form, you are responsible for taking it to the Registrar’s Office in the Eagle Student Services Center to have it processed. Please be aware that when you choose to drop can affect your grade:

October 2, 2015 Last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” for courses that a student is not passing

November 2, 2015 Last day a student may elect to drop a class. The instructor will assign a grade of “W” or “WF” based on the student’s actual performance-to-date in the course.

# CLASS POLICIES

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Attendance and Punctuality **COUNT** in this class.

In order for students to achieve the course objectives, this class will depend heavily on the use of guest speakers, videos, and class/group discussion. There are activities done during class that will be important for you to participate in as part of your learning. Absenteeism will negatively impact your grade. Class attendance is required every class period for the entire class period.

**Three absences are permitted without penalty for unforeseen circumstances (provided no assignments are due that day). One letter grade will be deducted from your final grade on the fourth absence and for each additional two absences thereafter. This could be the difference between you passing and failing this class. Furthermore, arriving late and/or leaving early may also negatively impact your grade. I will take roll at the beginning of each class. If you come in late, be sure to talk to me after class so I can note that you are present. If you are more than fifteen minutes late, you will be counted as absent for the day. Regular attendance is expected, as is punctuality**. **Absences may be excused with documentation in accordance with UNT attendance policy 15.2.5.**

As any professional social worker should do in the workplace, if you know you are going to miss a class or are going to be significantly tardy, you must contact your instructor via e-mail in advance to alert her of your situation. In advance means before the class period starts, not during or after the class is over.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND MAKE-UP POLICY**

If you miss one of the scheduled classes for any reason, you are expected to get copies of notes and handouts from your colleagues. Any work that was due that day will be considered late and will receive an automatic 10 point deduction. The assignment will then be graded with an additional deduction of ten points a day for each day it is late starting the day after the assignment was due. All assignments are due at the beginning of class.

Make-up exams will only be given in circumstances approved in advance by the instructor. Students who no-show for an exam without advance approval from the instructor will not be allowed to make it up and will receive a grade of zero. There will be no exceptions.

**E-MAIL COMMUNICATION**

From time to time, I may need to communicate with the entire class or contact you individually. If/when those occasions arise, I will only email your UNT account. You are responsible for the information in that email. Failing to check it or have the address in the proper format will not be excused. Information may also be posted on Blackboard but if you need to get in touch with the instructor, do not expect her to respond to messages you post on Blackboard because she doesn’t check it regularly.

# REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Cynthia Crosson-Tower (2013), *Understanding child abuse and neglect*, 9th edition, Pearson.

Additional readings will be provided by the instructor or will be posted on Blackboard.

**METHODS OF INSTRUCTION**

This class will be taught using a variety of methods including lecture by the instructor, presentations by guest speakers who actively work in the child welfare or legal field, viewing and discussing relevant videos, participation in classroom activities, participation in group projects that will be worked on outside of the classroom, as well as two exams. Depending on availability, class size, and if time allows, we may also have the opportunity to go on a field trip to the local courthouse to observe a CPS trial or hearing(s).

**CRITERIA FOR STUDENT EVALUATION**

Students’ progress will be evaluated utilizing the following criteria:

Your final grade will be based upon completion of a service-learning project, a topic-specific group class project, campus-wide participation in a Halloween Visitation Party for families involved with CPS, and two exams. Your attendance, participation, and professionalism through the semester may also affect your final grade.

Assignments include:

1. A 20-hour service learning project and field experience paper or a child welfare research. (100 Points)
2. Topic specific group project and accompanying professional paper, study materials and handouts. (100 Points)
3. Two exams will be given during the semester. They will be short essay questions and will be taken from readings, lectures, and guest speakers. Students should not miss class on exam days. (100 Points Each)
4. CPS Halloween Event and reflective paper. (100 Points)
5. Optional final exam (If you choose to take the optional final exam, the grade you receive will replace your lowest exam grade for the semester).

Point Breakdown

A = 450 - 500, B = 400 - 449, C = 350 - 399, D = 300 - 349, F = 300 or below

**COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS**

It is expected that readings will be done **prior** to class discussions. Guest speakers may be scheduled throughout the semester and will be announced in advance, if possible. The instructor reserves the right to modify the schedule as class needs dictate.

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| **WEEK** | **DATE** | **GENERAL TOPIC** | **ASSIGNMENT** |
| **1** | Aug 25 | **Class Introduction** Syllabus Review (text and assignments)***Jacqueline Fox, CVS Worker, Partner for CPS*** ***Halloween Party*** | **Finish filling out SLP background checks** |
|  | Aug 27 | **History Of the Child Welfare System** | **READING: Ch. 1 & Legislative History handout on Blackboard** |
| **2** | Sept 1 | **History Of the Child Welfare System, cont.****Film: Orphan Trains** | **READING: Ch. 1****SLP Background Checks Due Today** |
|  | Sept 3 | **Searching for Strengths:****Core Values for Child Welfare Professionals** | **READING: Resource vs. deficits and Core Value Handouts on Blackboard****Sign up for Group Project/Presentation** |
| **3** | Sept 8 | **Core Values Continued** | **Turn in TB test results by today!****Sign up for CPS Halloween Party workgroups** |
|  | Sept 10 | **Partnering with Parents for Child Safety*****Chandra Fugett, Parent*** |  |
| **4** | Sept 15 | **Family Systems** | **READING: Ch. 2**  |
|  | Sept 17 | **Maltreatment and the Developing Child** | **READING: Ch. 3** |
| **5** | Sept 22 | **Defining Abuse and Neglect:****Continuum Exercise** | **READING: Ch. 4, 5, 6 and Statutory Definitions Handout on Blackboard** |
|  | Sept 24 | **EXAM #1 (Chapters 1-4)** | **Exam # 1** |
| **6** | Sept 29 | **Defining Abuse and Neglect, cont.** | **READING: Ch. 12 & 13** |
|  | Oct 1 | **How a Child Comes Into Care: Reporting and Investigation****The System Exercise** | **READING: Ch. 10** |
| **7** | Oct 6 | **The Intersection of Family Violence and Child Maltreatment*****Donna Bloom, Attorney******Denton County Friends of the Family*** |  |
|  | Oct 8 | **Film: Broken Child** |  |
| **8** | Oct 13 | **Group Presentations** | **Group Papers Due** |
|  | Oct 15 | **Group Presentations** |  |
| **9** | Oct 20 | **Risk Assessment****In Class Group Work Session on CPS Halloween Visitation Party** | **READING: Ch. 10 and Risk Assessment Form handout on Blackboard** |
|  | Oct 22 | **A Capital Murder Case: Criminal Prosecution of Child Physical Abuse*****Michael Graves, Chief of the Family Violence Division******Denton County DA’s Office*** |  |
| **10** | Oct 27 | **Courts and the Law** | **READING: Ch. 11 and Legal Timeline handout on Blackboard** |
|  | Oct 29 | **Decorate for CPS Halloween Visitation Party** | **Meet at 535 S. Loop 288 Denton, Texas** |
| **FRI!!** | Oct 30 | **CPS HALLOWEEN VISITATION PARTY** | **Meet at 535 S. Loop 288 Denton, Texas** |
| **11** | Nov 3 | **The Investigative Stage of Service*****Martin Lopez and Natalie Taylor, CPS Investigative Supervisors*** | **READING: Ch. 10** |
|  | Nov 5 | **Legal Systems Response*****Cynthia Burkett, Attorney at Law*** | **READING: Ch. 11** |
| **12** | Nov 10 | **Legal Systems Response*****District Attorneys representing CPS*** | **CPS Halloween Event Paper Due!****READING: Ch. 11** |
|  | Nov 12 | **The Conservatorship Stage of Service** | **READING: Ch. 14 and Family Plan and Service Levels Handouts on Blackboard** |
| **13** | Nov 17 | **EXAM # 2 (Ch. 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 15)** | **Exam # 2** |
|  | Nov 19 | **Advocacy in Child Welfare*****Lori Powell, CASA of Denton County*** |  |
| **14** | Nov 24 | **Aging Out of Care** | **READING: Aging out of care handout on Blackboard****Service Learning Hours and Paper Due!** |
|  | Nov 26 | **HAPPY** | **THANKSGIVING!!!** |
| **15** | Dec 1 | **Adoptive Parenting*****Ray Croff, Adoptive Parent*** |  |
|  | Dec 3 | **Self-Care for the Child Welfare Worker****Service Learning Reflection**  |  |
| **16** | Dec 10 | **EXAM #3 (optional)** | **Optional Final Exam** **8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.****YOU MUST ARRIVE AT 8 AM TO TAKE THE FINAL** |
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**ASSIGNMENTS**

**A.** ***Service Learning Project and Field Experience Paper***

Each of you will have the opportunity to participate, learn and experience Child Protective Services (CPS) firsthand through a service learning project. You must complete 20 service hours of volunteer work within the agency, which will allow you to observe the jobs social workers (and non-social workers) perform on behalf of children and families who experience abuse and neglect.

You will complete and return the Volunteer Registration/Background checks packet to your instructor no later than **September 1, 2015**. The packet must be complete before you can be assigned a placement. *You must also complete the criminal history permission form as well as have a current TB test (or proof that you’ve had one in the last year).* All Students must maintain confidentiality regarding CPS clients and behave professionally at all times.

Upon completion of your 20-hour volunteer service you will submit a 3 to 4 page paper detailing your impressions, personal reactions, observations, and insights of your field experience. One page of your paper should include a description of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, including the location of your placement, mission statement, organizational structure, and population served. This paper may be turned in at any time throughout the semester up until **November 24, 2015.** *All service learning project hours and papers MUST be turned in by that date*.

The project will be graded on your successful completion of twenty hours of volunteer work with CPS as well as the completion of the 3 to 4 page paper. In addition all students will be expected to participate in class discussions regarding their experiences at CPS. **If you fail to complete the 20 hours of service and turn in a signed time sheet by the due date, the highest grade you will be able to make on this assignment is a 50.** There will be no exceptions. You will have ample time during the semester to get the hours completed.

At the completion of the service learning placement, students must email the person they worked with primarily and thank them for their time, this is a professional courtesy. A copy of this email is to be attached to the paper. **A deduction of ten points will be assessed if this is not completed.**

***Alternate Assignment: Child Welfare Research Paper***

If it is *absolutely impossible* for you to complete a service learning project, you may to turn in a research paper that comprehensively addresses any area of child welfare of significant interest to the student. The topic should be approved in advance by the instructor and won’t repeat the subject of any group projects. The research paper must be turned in by **November 24, 2015. \*\*Completion of a research paper in lieu of the service learning hours and paper will only be allowed in the circumstances where the student isn’t permitted to volunteer at DFPS.\*\***

As in all written work, good English (i.e. accurate spelling, correct grammar, clear sentence structure and coherent paragraphing) is required. Good quality writing is a professional skill of particular necessity to those working in the field of child welfare and preparing cases for legal oversight and court presentation.

The child welfare research paper is to be 12-15 pages typed, double-spaced, font size # 12 and with margins of one inch. Title pages as well as a bibliography are required. It is to be written and cited according to APA standards and is to include a minimum of six (6) sources. Sources must include a personal interview with a professional working in the field and the student must cite a minimum four professional child welfare (or other directly related professional) journals. The instructor must approve journals selected outside of the field of child welfare. Use of Internet references is highly supported. The following outline is to be used as a guide for development of your paper.

1. Introduction: Statement of the problem or concern. Identify and describe the dynamics of the problem. Include the demographics of the population impacted and/or of the community examined.

II. Findings: Literature review (sources cited). Determine the scope of the problem, the population impacted, the history, the risk factors, interventions attempted, community resources/responses, lack of community resources/response, outcome success, the prognosis for problem resolution, the short and long-term impact on the victim, the community response existing and/or needed (policies, agencies, resources, laws, etc.).

III. Conclusion: Summarize the current status of the problem. Include your personal feelings and impressions about the situation, the victim and the perpetrator (if relevant). Discuss the implications for the future. Make recommendations based on your research findings.

**Grading Criteria for Child Welfare Research Paper:**

The paper will be graded on the use of appropriate document structure, depth of knowledge presented, overall content, clarity of language and the writing skill evident. A paper with major problems in grammar, spelling and format will have a letter grade deduction. All papers are due at the beginning of class on the date assigned. Late papers will not be accepted (unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor). A late paper will receive an automatic ten point deduction. The paper will then be graded minus ten points for each day the paper is late. Please note copies of journal articles cited must be attached.

**B. *Group Project***

During the second week of classes, you will select a topic of interest from the list below to complete a group project. This project will be completed in small groups. Once you have selected a topic it must be approved by the instructor so there are no topics repeated in a class. You and your partner(s) will write a group paper, using APA format, reflecting your interest, research, and conclusions. The paper, which will be completed by all group members, will be 8 to 10 pages in length. You will then create study materials/handouts, activities, etc. and present the topic in an interesting, and most importantly, informative manner to the class. Groups will make a 20 minute presentation. You may utilize full-text internet articles, professional publications, interviews with professional social workers, governmental documents, etc. to research and present your topic. . **(YouTube videos cannot comprise more than five minutes of the total presentation length).** You must include a minimum of five sources. This project paper will be due **October 13, 2015 and presentations will be heard October 13, 2015 and October 15, 2015.**

Suggested topics include, but are not limited to the following: (Other topics chosen must be approved by the instructor in advance.)

* Family Violence and the Impact on Children
* Role of the Legal System and Mediation in Child Welfare Practice
* Attachment Issues in Children (Attachment Disorders)
* Family Group Conferencing and the Family Group Decision Making Model
* Addressing Institutional Racism and Disproportionality in Child Welfare
* Failure to Thrive
* Gay and Lesbian Children in Foster Care
* Adoption of Children with Special Needs
* Family Preservation Movement, Models and Practices
* Adoption Disruption
* Kinship Care
* Transracial Foster Care and/or Adoption
* Substance-Abusing Parents and Their Young Children
* Permanency Planning
* Juvenile Sex Offenders
* Youth Aging Out of Foster Care
* Child Deaths and Abuse in the Foster Care System
* Role of Foster Parents and Foster Parent Associations
* Grief in Children

**Grading Criteria for Class Presentation:**

50% of the grade will based on the overall oral presentation focusing on organization of presentation, verbalcommunication, non-verbal communication, supplemental material (study materials/handouts) and general presentation quality.The remaining 50% of the grade will be based upon the quality and content of the required paper.

**C. *Exams***

Two exams will be given during the semester. Five questions will be taken from the provided “Review Questions” that will be posted on Blackboard at the beginning of the semester. Students should not miss class on exam days. An optional final exam will be offered.

**D. *CPS Family Halloween Party Class Project***

 The class will brainstorm to plan, develop, and execute a Halloween Visitation Party on 10/30 for families involved with Child Protective Services in Denton County. The majority of this project will be worked on outside of class. Class members will elect committee chairs who will lead groups in specific activities related to the project.

 The project is meant to facilitate a family event and visitation for children who are currently in the custody of CPS. (Your participation in this event is worth 25% of your final grade.)

Your performance will be evaluated based upon a three page, typed, doubled-spaced reflective paper that will be turned in by **November 10, 2015** at the conclusion of the event, as well as your overall observed and reported participation and peer-review input from your group members. The reflective paper should include information about your role in the party, your evaluation of how the project went, how the community benefitted from your efforts, and suggestions for how the assignment/event can be improved. **Attendance at the event is mandatory and a 30 point deduction will be assessed if you do not participate.** All class members must work together to make this successful.