**POL 344: CHILD WELFARE POLICY**

**SPRING 2018**

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| Dr. Kate Knutson  knutson@gustavus.edu \* Old Main 204-A  **OFFICE HOURS:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 9-10:15 am and Wednesdays 2:00-3:30 pm or by appointment  **CLASS TIMES:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:30-12:20 in Old Main 205  **CLASS EMAIL ALIAS:** s-pol-344-001@gustavus.edu |

Nationwide, there are over 400,000 children in foster care at any given time. Nearly half of the children entering the foster care system are from racially underrepresented groups. In Minnesota, reports of child abuse or neglect in Minnesota increased 25% between 2015 and 2016 and termination of parental rights affects nearly 700 children each year. Here in Nicollet County there were 142 maltreatment reports filed in 2016 (an additional 273 reports came in but were screened out). This course introduces students to the local, state, and national child welfare policies behind these statistics and examines the ways in which governmental and nongovernmental agencies implement policies. The course explores the history of these policies and current debates with special consideration of the impact of race, class, and gender on the development and implementation of child welfare policy.

This course addresses the following student learning outcomes identified by the Department of Political Science:

* Students will be able to identify and analyze key political institutions, processes, and issues at the local and national levels.
* Students will make arguments that are cogent, compelling, and well-substantiated

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

I expect you to complete all of the assigned reading before class. Additionally, you should prepare to discuss the readings by being an engaged reader; underlining key passages and writing down questions or comments you have related to the text are both helpful means of achieving this.

* Richard J. Gelles, *Out of Harm’s Way* (2017)
* Selected readings available through Moodle electronic reserve. Print these and bring them to class.

**ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignment** | **Value** | **Due** |
| Handouts (3) | 15% (5% each) | 2/27, 3/15, and TBD |
| Community Based Learning Project | 20% | Ongoing |
| Research Paper | 45% | 3/29 (proposal) and 5/28 (final) |
| Speaker Log | 10% | Ongoing, due 5/10 |
| Class Engagement | 10% | Ongoing |

**Handouts:** Working with a small group, you will create three informational handouts for the class. I will provide you with detailed guidelines for each of the three assignments.

**Community Based Learning Project:** We are partnering with the Committee Against Domestic Abuse (CADA) this semester on two research projects of use to the organization. Working in a group, you will conduct research and produce a research brief for CADA.

* **Research Brief**: Your project group will provide a 2-3 page (plus appendices) written report to the organization. (15%)
* **Self-Reflection Paper**: You will write an individual reflection of your learning and contribution to the project. (5%)

**Research Paper:** You will pick a topic of your choosing related to the topic of child welfare policy, conduct research, and produce an 8-12 page paper.

* **Paper Proposal:** 2-3 page paper outlining your proposed final paper topic and list of 10 relevant sources. (5%)
* **Presentation:** 15-minute formal presentation of your final paper. (10%)
* **Final Paper:** 8-12 page paper. (30%)

**Speaker log:** Throughout the semester, we will have many opportunities to interact with guest speakers. You will keep a record of the questions you ask of speakers. Each entry should include the guest speaker’s name and position, the question you asked, a summary of their response, and your reaction to their response as it connects to ideas and readings from the course. Each entry (question + response + reaction) is worth one percentage point (10 points maximum). A maximum of two questions per individual speaker can count toward your speaker log.

**Class Engagement:** Your participation is an integral part of this class. Learning is an active process that requires you to take the reins in asking questions, seeking out information, working collectively to achieve understanding of complex problems, and critically examining your assumptions about how the world works. Participation includes attending class on time (obviously, you can’t participate if you’re not here), completing the assigned readings, contributing to class discussions with thoughtful comments, listening attentively, and engaging with the ideas raised by classmates. Many of the topics we will discuss are controversial and it is important to remember that reasonable people can hold different opinions concerning these topics. Please be thoughtful and respectful with the words you use and the way you talk about ideas and people with whom you disagree. Do not assume that everyone agrees with your position; to be safe, operate under the assumption that at least one person in the class disagrees with your position.

**COURSE POLICIES & GUIDELINES**

**Academic Honesty:** Gustavus Adolphus College standards for academic honesty apply in this class. If you have questions about these standards, please consult the College Honor Code. Your decision to remain enrolled in this class will serve as your agreement to abide by the following statement for each assignment you submit: ***“On my honor, I pledge that I have not given, received, or tolerated others’ use of unauthorized aid in completing this work.”*** The Gustavus Guide also states that, “a student may not submit work that is substantially the same in two courses without first gaining permission of both instructors if the courses are taken concurrently, or permission of the current instructor, if the work had been submitted in a previous semester.” You must attribute any thoughts or ideas that are not your own to their source through in text citations even if you are not directly quoting a source. I will give plagiarized work a zero and report the case to the dean.

**Accessibility Resources:** Gustavus Adolphus College is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability, or you think you may have a disability of any nature (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical) and, as a result, need reasonable academic accommodation to participate in class, take tests or benefit from the College’s services, then you should speak with the Accessibility Resources staff, for a confidential discussion of your needs and appropriate plans. Course requirements cannot be waived, but reasonable accommodations may be provided based on disability documentation and course outcomes. Accommodations cannot be made retroactively; therefore, to maximize your academic success at Gustavus, please contact Accessibility Resources as early as possible. Accessibility Resources (<https://gustavus.edu/care/accessibility/>) is located in the Center for Academic Resources and Enhancement. Accessibility Resources Coordinator, Kelly Karstad, ([kkarstad@gustavus.edu](mailto:kkarstad@gustavus.edu)or x7138), can provide further information.

**Attendance:** You are an adult and therefore, you do not need to notify me when you miss class and you do not need to explain your absences to me. Please do not send me an email asking if you “missed anything important in class”! If you miss class for any reason, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate for notes. If you have any questions about those notes, please see me. Missing more than two classes will impact your participation grade regardless of the reasons for the absences. Missing more than five classes may result in failing the course.

**Cell Phones, Computers, and Other Electronic Devices:** Turn off your cell phone and other electronic devices before class. If a cell phones rings or buzzes during class time, the owner will be asked to bring a treat to share with the entire class during our next meeting to compensate us for the distraction.

**Grade Dispute:** I am happy to meet with you to clarify feedback I give you on any coursework. It is important to me that you understand why you received the grade you did and that you are able to use feedback constructively to improve on future assignments. Any formal grade disputes must be submitted in writing to me no later than two weeks after the assignment is returned.

**Grading Policy:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | 95-100 | B+ | 87-89 | C+ | 77-79 | D+ | 65-69 |
| A- | 90-94 | B | 83-86 | C | 73-76 | D | 60-64 |
|  |  | B- | 80-82 | C- | 70-72 | F | <59 |

**Help for Multilingual Students:** Support for English learners and multilingual students is available through the Multilingual and Intercultural Program Coordinator (MIPC), Carly Overfelt ([coverfel@gustavus.edu](mailto:coverfel@gustavus.edu)). The MIPC can meet individually with students for tutoring in writing, consulting about academic tasks, and helping students connect with the College’s support systems.

**Late Assignment Penalty**: It is important to learn how to meet deadlines and manage your time in college. Assignments will be penalized 10% for each day (or portion thereof) they are late.

**Research Help:** You can always get help with your research at the library. Reference librarians will help you find information on a topic, develop search strategies for papers and projects, search library catalogs and databases, and provide assistance at every step. Drop-ins and appointments are both welcome. Visit <https://gustavus.edu/library/reference_question.php> for hours, location, and more information.

**Title IX:** Gustavus Adolphus College recognizes the dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. As such, we are committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination including sexual and gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence like sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or is experiencing these types of behaviors, know that you are not alone. Resources and support are available; you can learn more online at <https://gustavus.edu/titleix/>.

Please know that if you choose to confide in me, I am mandated by the College to report to the Title IX Coordinator, because Gustavus and I want to be sure you are connected with all the support the College can offer. Although it is encouraged, you are not required to respond to outreach from the College if you do not want to. You may speak to someone confidentially by contacting the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART/CADA), Chaplains, Counseling Center, or Health Service staff; conversations with these individuals can be kept strictly confidential. SART/CADA can be reached 24 hours a day at [507-933-6868](tel:%28507%29%20933-6868). You can also make a report yourself, including an anonymous report, through the form at <https://gustavus.edu/titleix/>.

**COURSE SCHEDULE & ASSIGNMENTS**

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| **Week** | **Date** | **Topic** | **Read** | **Due** | **In Class** |
| 1 | 2/13 | Course welcome | -- |  |  |
| 2/15 | Child protection vs. family preservation | “When Should a Child Be Taken From His Parents?” |  | Introduction of CBL projects |
| 2 | 2/20 | Child protection vs. family preservation | *Out of Harm’s Way*, Introduction-Chapter 2 |  |  |
| 2/22 | Development of the child welfare system | “Historical Evolution of Child Welfare Services” |  | Introduction to policy research |
| 3 | 2/27 | Federal oversight of child welfare | -- | **Handout #1** | Informal group presentations |
| 3/1 | State and county oversight of child welfare | “Minnesota Child Maltreatment Report, 2016” |  | Brittany Wojtowicz, CADA |
| 4 | 3/6 | Theoretical approaches | “Democratic Policy Design” |  |  |
| 3/8 | Theoretical approaches | “The Critical Role of Street-Level Bureaucrats” |  | Angie Obermiller, Nicollet County Human Services |
| 5 | 3/13 | The policy environment: Poverty | “The Context of Child Welfare Services” |  | Krista Brandt, The Reach;  Advanced policy research |
| 3/15 | Poverty | -- | **Handout #2** | Informal group presentations |
| 6 | 3/20 | Safe Passage for Children Day on the Hill | -- | **Paper topic proposal**  **(1 paragraph)** | Field Trip |
| 3/22 | The policy environment: Addiction | “Children of the Opioid Epidemic are Flooding Foster Homes” |  | Debriefing DOTH;  Sign-ups for Handout #3 |
| 7 | 3/27 | No Class (Kate at MPCC Day on the Hill) | -- |  |  |
| 3/29 | The policy environment: Mental health | “Should Mental Illness Mean You Lose Your Kids?” | **Handout #3**  **Paper Proposal** |  |
| 8 | *Spring Break: No Class This Week* | | | | |
| 9 | 4/10 | The policy environment: Race and culture | “Shattered Bonds”, Introduction-page 25 |  |  |
| 4/12 | Race and culture | “Shattered Bonds”, page 25-74 | **Handout #3** |  |
| 10 | 4/17 | Race and culture | “Differing concepts of permanency” | **Handout #3** |  |
| 4/19 | Race and culture | “Protecting Native Mothers and their Children” | **Handout #3** |  |
| 11 | 4/24 | Solutions | *Out of Harm’s Way*, Chapters 3-5 | **Handout #3** |  |
| 4/26 | Solutions | *Out of Harm’s Way*, Chapters 6-8 | **Handout #3** |  |
| 12 | 5/1 | Solutions | “Every Kid Needs a Family” | **Handout #3** |  |
| 5/3 | Solutions | “Child Welfare: In Search of Lasting Reform” | **Handout #3** |  |
| 13 | 5/8 | Solutions | “Can an Algorithm Tell When Kids Are in Danger?” | **Handout #3** |  |
| 5/10 | Solutions | “The Allegheny Algorithm” | **Handout #3**  **Speaker Log** | Giving presentations |
| 14 | 5/15 | Presentations | -- |  | Presentations & conferences |
| 5/17 | Presentations | -- |  | Presentations and conferences |
| 15 | 5/22 | Presentations | -- |  | Presentations and conferences |
|  | 5/28  1-3pm | Wrapping Up |  | **Research Paper** |  |