

**MESSIAH COLLEGE**  
**HDFS 253 - Community Services for Individuals and Families**  
**Spring 2007**

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world;  
indeed it's the only thing that ever has.--Margaret Mead*

**Instructor:** Debra L. Berke, Ph.D., CFLE

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**Office Hours:** W 10:00-12:00 or 2:00-4:00PM or by appointment

**Location:** B130

**Dates:** T

**Time:** 2:30-5:30pm

**Required Texts:**

Woodside, M. & McClam, T. (2006). *An introduction to human services* (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole. (Hereafter referred to as WM).

Bogensneider, K. (2006). *Family policy matters: How policymaking affects families and what professionals can do* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. (Hereafter referred to as B).

Reserve readings in library as assigned.

**Course Goals:**

This course is designed to provide students with an overview of the impact of government policies on families and contemporary American social services. The first part of the course will examine the current state of the family, family trends, and the implications for family policy. Students will learn how to assess the effectiveness of policies and programs from a family perspective, learn about the policy-making process, and critically examine different roles professionals can play in influencing policy development. In the second part of the course, the historical underpinnings of our present social service system coupled with a basic format for understanding components (social, economic, political, religious) which may impact its functioning will be explored at the local, state, and federal levels. We will examine how demographic changes, values, attitudes, and perceptions including the influences of racism, sexism, and ageism affect the well-being of children and families. Finally, a wide range of services and interventions designed to help children, families and adults will be highlighted.

**Course Objectives:**

1. To understand the ways in which families and government interact.
2. To understand how family policy is influenced by demographic changes, values, attitudes and perceptions of the well-being of families and children.
3. To apply a family perspective to policy analysis by assessing current policy issues in terms of their sensitivity to and supportiveness of families.
4. To advocate on the behalf of others.
5. To understand current social problems, services, and methods of human service practice.
6. To understand of basic human service values and beliefs.
7. To appreciate the influences engendered by cultural, ethnic, and sexual diversity in

providing human services.

8. To experience vicariously the demands, expectations, and rewards offered by a career in human services through field trips, guest speakers and course assignments.
9. To further develop oral and written communication skills.

### **Course Requirements:**

1. **Readings and class participation:** Students should complete required readings by assigned dates. Each student is expected to do the assigned readings before class and to come to class with two questions about the readings. These must be typed and will be collected at the beginning of each class. You may get extra credit by volunteering to lead a discussion on a class reading. **A maximum of 50 points will be given for participation throughout the semester.**
2. **Attendance:** Roll will be taken every class. If you attend all classes, you will receive 5 points extra credit on your final grade. You are allowed to miss **one** class and may make up that absence (if you make it up satisfactorily, you will receive the extra credit points). To do so, you will be given a choice from several different assignments. More than one absence will receive a deduction of 10 points each regardless of circumstances.
3. **Agency analysis/Shadowing:**
  - A. The agency analysis is to be done in pairs. (You are to visit the agencies, write up the paper and do the presentation together.) Select two (2) social service agencies and arrange visits to both. **You must select your agencies with the assistance of the Internship Office.** One of the agencies that you select must be supported primarily (more than 50%) by public funds, and the other should be supported primarily (more than 50%) by private funds.
  - B. The shadowing is to be done individually or in pairs. Arrange to shadow (follow someone around during the course of a work day) someone in a human services profession for **a minimum of 4 hours**, noting the different responsibilities he or she has. Keep in mind the person you shadow may need to get approval from a supervisor and may have trouble finding time on their calendar to fit you in. Therefore, plan on arranging this experience **at least 3 weeks in advance. Do not wait until the last minute!!!** You may use a car from Messiah College to drive to your agency. If you use a car from Messiah please make arrangements 3 weeks in advance. While you are shadowing a person, ask them to describe if this is what they do in the course of a typical day (or what they would do in a typical day if you are not there on a "typical" day). Also ask them for a copy of their job description. Be sure to dress professionally and behave in a professional manner.

Guidelines for writing paper:

1. Identify each agency indicating its location and major funding sources. List the name(s) and telephone number(s) of the individuals contacted or with whom you met.
2. Describe the clientele served by each agency by providing sociodemographic data such as age, sex, social class, ethnicity, race, etc. Use yearly statistics from the agency, if available.
3. Indicate the presenting problems/needs of the clients served by each agency (e.g., addictions

counseling, mental health counseling, financial counseling).

4. What range of services (cash, counseling, contraception information, food stamps, etc.) is offered by each agency?

5. Comment on the adequacy or inadequacy of these services offered (your views as well as the agency's views).

6. Describe the atmosphere of each agency (both physical and emotional). Questions to guide your description are: Were staff pleasant and friendly? Was the waiting room comfortable? Is there a stigma(s) attached to receiving services from this agency? Would you feel comfortable referring clients to these agencies? Why or why not? Try to put yourself in the client's place.

7. Describe any differences between your two agencies based on funding sources (public versus private).

8. On one page indicate a description of a typical work day of the person that you shadowed as well as a brief reflection of your experience. The following is an example:

8:00 Report in, check with secretary for messages, return phone calls from people seeking benefits.

9:00 Conduct meetings with potential benefits recipients, complete multiple forms for each person.

11:00 Compile memos to files for people seen today; send paperwork and recommendations to supervisor.

12:00 Lunch

12:30 Attend department meeting.

Your paper should be no more than seven (7) pages typed, double-spaced. **This is due April 3 and worth a maximum of 125 points.** (Each team will write their agency analysis together that is approximately five pages [100 pts.], but each member of the team should attach their own one page shadowing reflection to this paper [25 pts.] )

4. Analyses of current policy issues: Students are expected to keep up-to-date on current family policy issues being debated or decided in local, state or federal government; executive, legislative or judicial branches of government; businesses; advocacy groups; or nonprofit organizations from a daily newspaper (i.e., state paper, New York Times), weekly news magazine (i.e., Time, Newsweek, U.S. News & World Report) or daily television news broadcast. You may use the Internet to search for a story in any of the above sources. For each assignment, list the title and source of two articles you read (or title(s) of television news story). Write a 2 page typed, double-spaced summary of **one** of these to turn in, using this format: title of article, source, brief summary of the article (1-2 paragraphs), policy implications for families based on the Anderson text (should be the majority of your paper), and your own reaction based on the class readings and your own experiences or beliefs (1-2 paragraphs). Copies of both articles must be attached. **Two** summaries are required, one on issues at the **state level due April 17** and one on issues at the **federal or global level due April 24**. Be prepared to report on at least one of these in class. **Each summary is worth a maximum of 20 points.**

5. Advocacy involvement: “Advocate: To plead or support the cause of another.” This assignment requires you to engage in advocacy for individuals/families. For example, you may write a letter to the editor of a newspaper, magazine, or newsletter to comment on an issue or to correct what you perceive to be a bias or misuse of information in the media. You can also write an informative article for a newsletter, volunteer for an organization serving individuals/families, or help organize an alternate chapel addressing issues relating to individuals/families. This assignment may be done individually or in pairs. If you choose to do it in pairs, you must complete the entire assignment as a pair. You may earn a total of **50 advocacy points, choosing from the following options**:

Write letter: 5 pts.

Write article: 5 pts. for each page

Volunteer: 10 pts. for each hour

Organize alternate chapel: 10 pts. if you use speakers, 20 pts. if you present, 10 pts. if you do an evaluation of the chapel and assess amount of info learned

Other options by negotiation with instructor

Your advocacy involvement can take place at any point during the semester, but it should be completed by **May 1** at the latest (i.e., I must receive your portfolio by this date). Your portfolio should include: (1) a copy of anything you have written (letters, reports, overheads, etc.), (2) a summary of your experience (i.e., journal/log), and (3) a brief written statement of what this involvement meant for you, answering the following questions: How have your views changed (if they have at all) about the issue you advocated for? What facilitated this change or lack of change for you? What was the response you received about your advocacy, and how did you feel about it and or respond to the response? What personal/professional strengths and weaknesses did you learn about through this process? Based on your experience, how do you propose we advocate in the future for the issue you selected? The reflection paper should be 2-3 pages and is worth **25 points**. I will grade the reflection paper on each area/question covered on a scale (range 1-5), using 1 as little reflection, integration of key concepts, insight, etc., and 5 as outstanding reflection, integration of key concepts, insight, etc.

6. Exam one - will be a take-home exam consisting of questions covering *An introduction to human services* and class discussions/speakers/field trips. **This will be worth a maximum of 100 points.**
7. Exam two - will be a take-home exam covering family policy. **This will be worth a maximum of 100 points.**

**NOTE:** All written assignments should be well-organized and demonstrate critical thinking. Assignments should be professional in appearance--typed, double-spaced, neat, and proofread for correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Assignments will be graded both in what you say (thoughtful analysis) and how you say it (grammar and clarity). **No plastic report covers please!**

All assignments are due, without exception, at the beginning of the class period on the due date. Assignments handed in after the beginning of class will be counted one day late and will be subject to a **10% reduction per day.**

**Grading:**

Participation	50
Agency analysis	100
Shadowing	25
Policy analyses	40
Advocacy	50
Advocacy summary	25
Exam One	100
Exam Two	<u>100</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>490 points</b>

**Grading Scale:**

A	93+	B	83-86	C	73-7	D	60-66
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	F	59-
B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69		

**I reserve the right to change or modify this course schedule. Students who choose not to attend class are responsible for checking with the instructor for any changes.**

***AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT: Any student whose disability falls within ADA guidelines should inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester of any special accommodations or equipment needs necessary to complete the requirements for this course. Students must register documentation with the Office of Disability Services (OM 342).***

**Course Schedule:**

**Section I: Human Services: Theories, Concepts & Application**

**February**

6	Introduction to the Course Introduction to Human Services *Guest speaker: Beth Clark, Messiah College Internship Office*	WM Ch. 1
13	Human Services, Past and Present Panel: Services to Children and Adolescents	WM Ch. 2, 3
20	Field Trip to YWCA of Greater Harrisburg (2:30pm) and Community Action Commission (3:45pm)	
27	Models of Delivery, Client and Helper Panel: Services to Adults	WM Ch. 4-6

**March**

6	The Practice of Human Services Panel: Services to Families	WM Ch. 7-10
13	Work on Agency Analysis/Shadowing	
20	<b>Spring Break</b>	

**Section II: Understanding and Evaluating Family Policy**

27	What is Family Policy *Exam One due*	B Ch. 1-5
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**April**

- 3 The Family Perspective in Policy Analysis B Ch. 6-8  
 Family Impact Analysis: Process of Evaluating Policy  
**\*Agency Analysis/Shadowing due\***
- 10 Strategies for Getting Involved in Family Policymaking B Ch. 12-15
- 17 Using Theory and Practice B Ch. 9-11  
 Video: "Nickel and Dimed in America"  
**\*Policy Analysis at the State Level due\***
- 24 The Future of Family Policy B Ch. 16  
**\*Policy Analysis at the Federal or Global Level due\***

**May**

- 1 Class Presentations: Advocacy  
**\*Advocacy Portfolio due\***
- 8 **Work on final in groups**
- 15 **Final Exam Two due no later than 10:00am; please bring typed exam to my office.**

**Useful Websites**

The United States Senate <http://www.senate.gov/>

The United States House of Representatives <http://www.house.gov/>

The Library of Congress <http://thomas.loc.gov/>

The National Governors Association is the bipartisan organization of the nation's governors and it promotes visionary state leadership, shares best practices and speaks with a unified voice on national policy. [www.nga.org](http://www.nga.org)

The Pennsylvania General Assembly <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/>

The American Association of Family and Consumer Science Office of Public Policy collects, analyzes, interprets, and distributes information about issues and concerns that affect family and consumer sciences programs. <http://www.aafcs.org/policy/index.html>

Women's Policy, Inc. (WPI) champions the interests of women throughout the country on the most significant social, economic, and health issues across the public policy spectrum.  
<http://www.womenspolicy.org/welcome/>

The Brookings Institution: Center on Children and Families focuses on the well-being of America's children and their parents, particularly those in less advantaged families; understanding the reasons for poverty or low income, especially among working families; and policies which could improve the prospects and the life chances of these families and children.  
[http://www.brookings.org/es/ccf/ccf\\_hp.htm](http://www.brookings.org/es/ccf/ccf_hp.htm)

The Urban Institute is a nonpartisan economic and social policy research institution.  
<http://www.urban.org/>

Child Trends is dedicated to improving the lives of children by conducting research and providing science-based information to improve the decisions, programs, and policies that affect children.  
<http://www.childtrends.org>

Moving Ideas Network is dedicated to explaining and popularizing complex policy ideas to a broader audience. Our goal is to improve collaboration and dialogue between policy and grassroots organizations and to promote their work to journalists and legislators. <http://www.movingideas.org/>

Family Research Council shape public debate and formulate public policy that values human life and upholds the institutions of marriage and the family. <http://www.frc.org/>

The Center for Family Policy and Practice is a nationally-focused public policy organization conducting policy research, technical assistance, training, litigation and public education in order to focus attention on the barriers faced by never-married, low-income fathers and their families.  
<http://www.cffpp.org/>

The Alan Guttmacher Institute (AGI) advances sexual and reproductive health and rights in the United states and worldwide through an interrelated program of social science research, policy analysis and public education to encourage enlightened public debate, promote sound policy and program development, and inform individual decision making. <http://www.agi-usa.org/>

The Foundation for Taxpayer and Consumer Rights is a nationally recognized consumer group that has been fighting corrupt corporations and crooked politicians since 1985. Over the years, FTCR has saved Americans billions of dollars and improved countless peoples' lives by speaking out on behalf of patients, ratepayers and policyholders. Big Business has an endless amount of money and thousands of lobbyists working everyday to protect and increase their profits - no matter who it hurts. We get in their way and work to protect and improve the lives of American consumers and taxpayers.  
<http://www.consumerwatchdog.org/>

The Federal Trade Commission deals with issues that touch the economic lives of most Americans. The agency has a long tradition of maintaining a competitive marketplace for both consumers and businesses. <http://www.ftc.gov/index.html>