

# SW4SA3: Critical Child Welfare—from Theory to Practice I

* Sept 8, 2020 to Dec 9, 2020 (Wednesdays) 7:00-9:50 p.m.
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* Virtual office hours: By appointment
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# Course Overview

## Course Description:

This is an advanced course that helps you develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to undertake child welfare work. Attention is also paid to you developing an understanding of the social and political factors that shape the way practice is imagined and delivered.

This advanced child welfare course (SW 4SA3) builds on the school’s introductory Child Welfare Course (SW 4W03) and is followed by an additional advanced course (SW 4SB3). These three courses, and the interconnected field placements, form the schools Preparing for Critical Child Welfare Pathway (PCPCW).

You must complete this course (SW 4SA3) with a minimum average grade of C+, and have instructor approval, to progress to the final Pathway course (SW 4SB3).

## Course Objectives:

* Have a robust understanding of the strengths and limitations of current child welfare systems
* Have a critical in-depth understanding of the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to do child welfare well, and demonstrate the ability to apply these in practice
* Understand your attitudes, the ways other people experience your attitudes and work (especially when under stress), and to adjust as necessary
* Work as a team member, including knowing how to support others, how to ask for support for yourself, and how to critically reflect on your role, contribution, and performance as a team member

The basic assumptions of this course concur with the broader curriculum context set by the School of Social Work's Statement of Philosophy:

*As social workers, we operate in a society characterized by power imbalances that affect us all. These power imbalances are based on age, class, ethnicity, gender identity, geographic location, health, ability, race, sexual identity and income. We see personal troubles as inextricably linked to oppressive structures. We believe that social workers must be actively involved in the understanding and transformation of injustices in social institutions and in the struggles of people to maximize control over their own lives.*

## Course Format

This is blended course with weekly synchronous (live-real-time) Zoom meetings in scheduled class time, and weekly asynchronous (A2L content) that you work through at your own pace during each week. Unlike a classroom course where you do readings before coming to class, in this class you do the readings after each class. More information on this is in the section below called Course Weekly Topics and Readings.

Please be familiar with the Zoom and A2L technologies before starting the class. Please work through the A2L “READ ME” module for this class before this course begins, as this will help you familiarise yourself with the ways to navigate, engage with, and take part in this class.

## To take part in this course you will need a computer and internet connection capable of streaming video, a webcam, a microphone, and will need to be available to participate in the class online during the scheduled class time. Expect to spend about 10-hours a week working through this course.

## The course uses problem-based learning, case simulations, and reflexivity where you critically appraiser child welfare and also your own growing skills, knowledge and attitudes as a developing social worker—be prepared to actively engage in these processes with others during this course.

## Required Texts

The course begins with pre-set readings. In addition, students seek out and critically engage with the literature, research, and other forms of knowledge to explore and solve child welfare puzzles that arise in the course. Toward the end of the course all readings are sought out by the instructor and students to dynamically match student’s emerging learning levels and needs.

# Course Requirements/Assignments

## Requirements Overview and Deadlines

1. 0% | Reflective learning portfolio: No date/ not graded
2. 20% | Learning reflection paper: Sept 29
3. 20% | Critical appraisal of a paper: Oct 12
4. 20% | Interview reflection: Nov 25
5. 20% | Final paper: Dec 4\*
6. 20% | Participation: Ongoing

## Requirement/Assignment Details (full details & grading criteria posted on A2L)

### Reflective learning journal:

Please track your learning in this class using a reflective journal as this will help you get the most from the course. Nobody reads this journal but you—the intent here is for you to have an honest unfiltered record of your own thoughts, feelings and development. This journal will provide you with source materials for assignments in this course—the deeper your insights and reflections in the journal—the richer the materials you can draw from (selectively) in assignments.

### Learning reflection paper:

Drawing on your reflective learning journal, write a 5-page paper that critically summarizes your learning in this course thus far. Lists tensions that come up for you in the ideas we have been considering and unanswered questions you have.

### Critical appraisal of a paper:

Select a reading from this course and critically appraise it in a post on A2L (in a discussion area set aside for this assignment). Invite the class to review, comment on, and develop/critique what you have posted.

### Interview reflection:

Reflect on a simulated interview you undertake in this class.

### Final paper:

A 5-page paper that builds on assignment 2 and critically summarizes your learning in this course thus far. Lists tensions that come up for you in the ideas we have been considering and unanswered questions you have and that you also think the class as a whole has. This assignment will shape the work we will be doing in the next semester.

6. Participation:

Engagement and participation in the class both synchronously and asynchronously, including constructively building and supporting the learning of others. In this process the responsibility is not only to each other, but also ultimately to service uses, particularly those who are disproportionately impacted by child welfare.

# Assignment Submission and Grading

## Form and Style

* Written assignments must be typed and double-spaced and submitted with a front page containing the title, student’s name, student number, and the date. Number all pages (except the title page).
* Paper format must be in accordance with the current edition of American Psychological Association (APA) publication manual with particular attention paid to font size (Times-Roman 12), spacing (double spaced) and margins (minimum of 1 inch at the top, bottom, left and right of each page) as papers not meeting these requirements may not be accepted for grading.
* Papers should be submitted in Word or RTF format only
* Students are expected to make use of and cite appropriate sources, which can include Indigenous [oral or written], professional and social science literature, or other relevant sources etc. When submitting any written assignment, you should keep a spare copy.

## A2L & Zoom

This course will be using A2L and Zoom. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, usernames for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss with the course instructor.

## Submitting Assignments & Grading

Written assignments are to be submitted on A2L, see A2L for detailed instructions

## Privacy Protection

In accordance with regulations set out by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act, tests and assignments must be returned directly to the student. In this course, papers will be submitted and returned, and grades communicated, in electronic format via Avenue to Learn.

## Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

# Student Responsibilities

* Students are expected to contribute to the creation of a respectful and constructive learning environment. Students should read material in preparation for class, attend class on time and remain for the full duration of the class.
* Please check with the instructor before using any audio or video recording devices in the classroom, see further details in the copyright, privacy, and recording section below.

## Attendance

Students are expected to attend all classes. If you anticipate difficulty with this, please speak with the instructor. Missing a substantial number of classes often results in essential course requirements not being met (these must be met to pass the course). Students who are close to missing 20% of classes must contact the instructor to discuss.

## Academic Integrity

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty, please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf)

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

* Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
* Improper collaboration in group work.
* Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations

## Authenticity/Plagiarism Detection

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster’s use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

## Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the *Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities* (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

## Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s *Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities* policy.

## Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

## Accessibility Statement

The School of Social Work recognizes that people learn and express their knowledge in different ways. We are committed to reducing barriers to accessibility in the classroom and working towards classrooms that welcome diverse learners. If you have accessibility concerns or want to talk about your learning needs, please be in touch with the course instructor.

## Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office *normally within 10 working days* of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

## Copyright, privacy, and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, including lectures by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution. Recording may be done by a student, but only for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class.

The School of Social Work expects that:

* Instructors inform students when they are recording
* Students who wish to record contact the instructor first. This is so the instructor can inform the class when permission has been given to a student to record (the identity of the student will be kept confidential by the instructor).
* Recordings by students are used for personal study only, and not shared with anyone else
* Recordings by students are deleted when no longer needed for personal study

When recording is occurring, there may be times when a speaker shares personal or sensitive information. In such circumstances please use your best judgement and stop recording and be aware that the instructor (or a student or guest sharing) may ask for recording to stop.

Please speak with the instructor if any of this is a concern for you.

## E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, they may not reply.

## Extensions and Incomplete Courses

### Extensions

All instructors understand that life situations sometimes make it very difficult to hand in an assignment on the date it is due. If you need more time to complete an assignment, talk with your instructor – in advance of the assignment deadline! Once you and your instructor have agreed on a new due date, it is your responsibility to submit your assignment on time. If you find yourself unable to meet deadlines in more than one course, please reach out to Tammy Maikawa, Administrator ([millet@mcmaster.ca](mailto:millet@mcmaster.ca) ) or Sandra Preston, Undergraduate Chair ([prestosl@mcmaster.ca](mailto:prestosl@mcmaster.ca) ). We are here to support you to think about options (such as reducing your course load) that can take the stress off and contribute to your success in the program overall.

### Incomplete courses

If you are not able to complete all of your assignments by the end of term, you have the option of contacting the instructor to request an Incomplete (INC) on the course. If the instructor agrees, (taking into account the amount of outstanding coursework and the time it will likely take to complete), the instructor will enter the grade you have so far in the course (the default grade) and the course will appear in Mosaic as INC (incomplete).

The School’s requirements for completing courses depend on a) the nature of the course (whether it is a foundation course\*, or a social and political context course) and b) when you are hoping to start placement. For example, a student who has an incomplete in a foundation course cannot start placement. Please see the [Policy on Extensions and Incompletes in the BSW Program](https://socialwork.mcmaster.ca/resources/undergraduate-resources/policy-on-extensions-and-incompletes-november-2019.docx/view) for more details.

At approximately 52-60 days after the end of term, the Mosaic system will automatically change an INC to the default grade. Depending on the default grade, this might affect your standing or progress in the program.

*As always, if you have any questions or concerns about your progress in the program, please connect with Tammy Maikawa, Administrator (*[*millet@mcmaster.ca*](mailto:millet@mcmaster.ca) *) or Sandra Preston, Undergraduate Chair (*[*prestosl@mcmaster.ca*](mailto:prestosl@mcmaster.ca)*).*

# Course Weekly Topics and Readings

Unlike a classroom course where you do readings before coming to class, in this class you do the readings after each class. For instance, there is no need to read any of Week 1’s content before that class—you will attend the Week 1 synchronous class then work through the readings and asynchronous content for Week 1 before the Week 2 class. In the synchronous class of Week 2, we review your Week 1 work, after which you move on to complete the readings and asynchronous content for Week 2 (and complete before Week 3. This formula continues throughout the course. Please see A2L for a more comprehensive description of weekly topics and activities.

WK1: SEPTEMBER 9, 2020

Attend synchronous online class by Zoom on Tuesday, September 9th at 7:00pm.

A Zoom link will be sent to you at your McMaster email beforehand. The subject line will include course code SW4SA3. Expect the Zoom class to last between 1-2 hours (a break will be provided). In this class I will provide an overview of how the course works.

After the Zoom class, access A2L and work through the content for WK1 which is (details on how to do this are provided on A2L):

Case critique (complete by next week)

As you engage with this week’s online readings and A2L content you are asked to have a second look at the case you worked with in the previous child welfare class (4W03). You have already critiqued your response to that case, but you will now deepen that critique as you prepare to meet that family in simulated interviews. When you meet your objective will be to offer help and do no harm. How are you going to do that?

Readings:

Adjei, P. B., & Minka, E. (2018). Black parents ask for a second look: Parenting under ‘White’ Child Protection rules in Canada. *Children and Youth Services Review, 94*, 511-524. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2018.08.030> ([McMaster Access Here](https://doi-org.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/10.1016/j.childyouth.2018.08.030))

WK 2: SEPTEMBER 16, 2020

Attend this week’s Zoom class where we will look back at the work you completed in Week 1 and review modifications you may wish to make to the ways you understand and approach the case we have been working with (keep in mind that at some point after reading week you will implement the revised ideas we are developing together in simulated interviews in this case).

After the Zoom class access and work through the asynchronous A2L content for week 2 which is:

Anti-Black racism (complete by next week)

Over the following you will deepen your analysis (covered in 2BB3 and 4W03) of anti-Black racism in child welfare and the ways this is driven by white-supremacy. You already have a good theoretical understanding of anti-Black racism in child welfare, this week you will develop this further and will focus on the implications for your practice. In practical terms, what will you do about these issues when you meet with families?

### Readings:

OACAS. (2016) One vision one voice: Changing the Ontario child welfare system to better serve African Canadians. Practice framework Part 2: Race equity practices [[PDF](http://www.oacas.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/One-Vision-One-Voice-Part-2_digital_english.pdf)]

Rollo, T. (2018). The Color of Childhood: The Role of the Child/Human Binary in the Production of Anti-Black Racism. *Journal of Black Studies*, *49*(4), 307–329. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934718760769

<https://doi-org.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/10.1177/0021934718760769>

WK 3: SEPTEMBER 23, 2020

Attend this week’s Zoom class where we will be joined by a former child welfare worker who now provides peer support and advocacy for Black families involved with CAS. This guest will critique and help us strengthen your ideas about how to disrupt anti-Black racism in child welfare practice. The guest is also a licensed psychotherapist and she will also review, critique and help you strengthen your intervention plans.

After the Zoom class access and work through the asynchronous A2L content for week 3 which is:

A different world view (complete by next week)

We continue to ready ourselves for engagement with families. With that in mind we are going to consider a “different world view” on child welfare practice (i.e. different to “mainstream” practice). This view will not be “different” for you because the text in your previous 4W03 child welfare class, “The Other Side of the Door” by Ken Richard, already examined the approaches we will be considering this week. Please re-review Ken’s work (listed below) and also review the new reading that builds upon this, the “different world view” book chapter, also listed below.

### Readings:

Understanding Child Welfare and Family Violence from a Different World View, in Avalos, C., Baibomcowai-Dell, L., Anderson, K. B., Ense, L., Gonneville, S., Kennedy, B., McGinnis, L., Morris, T., Sky, K., Swan, T., & Riggs, J. (2012). *Working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Families who have Experienced Family Violence: A Practice Guide for Child Welfare Professionals,* p. 67-80. <https://cwrp.ca/sites/default/files/publications/en/FN_Inuit_Metis_Families_Family_Violence.pdf>

Richard, K. (2014). The Other side of the Door: A Practice Guide for Child Welfare Professionals Working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples. OACAS, Toronto, Canada.

<http://www.oacas.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/1114-Other-Side-of-the-Door_web_2017.pdf>

WK 4: SEPTEMBER 30, 2020

Attend this week’s Zoom class where we are joined by Rocco Gizzarelli, Executive Director of Hamilton Catholic Children’s Aid Society. Rocco will talk about his private practice with people who have struggled with sexual and physical aggression issues. Rocco will draw on his experience as a therapist, and as a CAS Executive Director to talk about ways CASs can best work with these and other issues. As well, Rocco will speak about the human qualities and attitudes needed in this work.

After the Zoom class access and work through the asynchronous A2L content for week 4 which is:

Finding your approach (complete by next week)

What is your approach to child welfare? When you meet face-to-face, what will you do and say and do to help? This we look at some approaches that may work for you, and more importantly for the families you will be working with.

### Readings:

Dumbrill, G. (2017). Emic and alliance: Anti-oppressive social work in child protection. In D. Bains (Ed.), *Doing anti-oppressive practice: Social justice social work* (3rd ed., pp. 57-69). Fernwood Publishing. (posted on A2L)

Strengthening your Practice, in Avalos, C., Baibomcowai-Dell, L., Anderson, K. B., Ense, L., Gonneville, S., Kennedy, B., McGinnis, L., Morris, T., Sky, K., Swan, T., & Riggs, J. (2012). *Working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Families who have Experienced Family Violence: A Practice Guide for Child Welfare Professionals,* p. 91-115. <https://cwrp.ca/sites/default/files/publications/en/FN_Inuit_Metis_Families_Family_Violence.pdf>

WEEK 5: OCTOBER 7, 2020

Attend this week’s Zoom class where we consolidate learning so far, identify additional learning that is needed, and begin to look at ways to translate the ideas we have been working with into live practice with case simulations that will begin after reading week.

After the Zoom class access and work through the asynchronous A2L content for week 5 which is:

Consolidate learning (complete by next class)

### Readings:

Engaging with the Aboriginal Community and Systemic Change Being an Advocate, in Avalos, C., Baibomcowai-Dell, L., Anderson, K. B., Ense, L., Gonneville, S., Kennedy, B., McGinnis, L., Morris, T., Sky, K., Swan, T., & Riggs, J. (2012). *Working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Families who have Experienced Family Violence: A Practice Guide for Child Welfare Professionals,* p. 119-140. <https://cwrp.ca/sites/default/files/publications/en/FN_Inuit_Metis_Families_Family_Violence.pdf>

## READING WEEK: NO CLASS October 14, 2020

WEEK 6: OCTOBER 21, 2020

Attend this week’s Zoom class where we move into a process of case interviews and begin by mapping the case. All students will conduct at least two interviews before the end of the semester. As the interviews unfold new puzzles will emerge on how to understand and address issues that arise for the family we are working with. As well, throughout this process, we will be continually changing the family’s social location in relation to race, class, mental health, disability, geography and other variables, each time requiring us to rethink and reconsider how we are making sense of the case, our work, and our thinking. This will help you develop the broadest possible capacity to help children and families and a much deeper insight into your own thinking and the ways the child welfare system operates.

We will also seek out information about specific problems and challenges that emerge for the family and you will learn specific casework and advocacy approaches that will enable us to assist this family. In this process you will need to research and acquire knowledge on a range of specialized topics and issues, and you will be asked to constantly review and sometimes challenge you attitudes and thinking on issues. These activities and learning processes will take us through the remaining weeks of this course in a dynamically build the agenda around your and other students emerging learning needs.

WEEK 7: OCTOBER 28, 2020

In this week’s Zoom class, we undertake case interviews followed by asynchronous topics & readings emerging from that process.

WEEK 8: NOVEMBER 4, 2020

In this week’s Zoom class, we undertake case interviews followed by asynchronous topics & readings emerging from that process.

WEEK 9: NOVEMBER 11, 2020

In this week’s Zoom class, we undertake case interviews followed by asynchronous topics & readings emerging from that process.

WEEK 10: NOVEMBER 18, 2020

In this week’s Zoom class, we undertake case interviews followed by asynchronous topics & readings emerging from that process.

WEEK 11: NOVEMBER 25, 2020

In this week’s Zoom class, we undertake case interviews followed by asynchronous topics & readings emerging from that process.

WEEK 12: DECEMBER 2, 2020

In this week’s Zoom class, we undertake case interviews followed by asynchronous topics & readings emerging from that process.

WEEK 13: DECEMBER 9, 2020

In this week’s Zoom class, we look back to review the course and go over content for 4SB3 in the next semester.