

# SW4SA3: Critical Child Welfare—from Theory to Practice

* Sept 7, 2021 to Dec 8, 2021 (Wednesdays) 7:00-9:50 p.m.
* Instructor: Dr. Gary C. Dumbrill
* 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 builds on the school’s introductory Child Welfare Course (SW 4W03), is interconnected field placements, and is a part of the school’s Preparing for Critical Child Welfare Pathway (PCPCW).

## Course Objectives:

* Have a robust understanding of the strengths and limitations of current child Canadian 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
* To seek out new knowledge about child welfare, to critically appraise that knowledge, and to know where, when and how to apply or not apply that knowledge
* Understand your own 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
* Address child protection cases with an open mind and fluid thinking
* Recognise how every way you think is also a way of not thinking
* Work anti-oppressively in a child protection setting

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 synchronous (live-real-time) course that meets by Zoom in scheduled class time. Please be familiar with the Zoom and A2L technologies before starting the class.

A Zoom link will be sent to you at your McMaster email before the course begins.

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 appraise child welfare and develop your child welfare social work skills, knowledge. The course hinges on student active engagement with the topics and with each during the scheduled class time.

## Required Texts:

The course begins with a number of online readings, after which 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. As well, during this process, the instructor will recommend readings that 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% | Critical appraisal of an article of knowledge source: Before October 26
3. 30% | Interview reflection: Before Nov 25
4. 30% | Paper on child welfare, or create your own assignment: Before Dec 4
5. 20% | Participation: Ongoing

Assignments are designed to be flexible so that you can adjust them to fit your own learning style and schedule. Possible adjustment include:

* You can flip the dates of any of these assignments
* You can adjust the weight between assignments 2, 3 & 4
* You can skip assignment 4 & count assignment 2 & 3 at 40% each

Adjustments have implications for the class schedule, due dates, and also the amount of work expected in each assignment, so please discuss adjustments with the instructor in advance.

## Requirement/Assignment Details

### 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. 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 in assignments.

### Critical appraisal of an article/knowledge source

In consultation with class members, seek out knowledge source relevant to class learning. Critically appraise (an example of how to do this will be given in class). that knowledge in a written assignment. Submit this assignment to A2L and also share a copy with the class on A2L asking for constructive feedback (do this on A2L in a discussion area set aside for this).

### Interview reflection

Reflect on a simulated interview you undertake in this class (we will practice how to do this reflection before you do the assignment).

### Paper on child welfare, or create your own assignment

Write a paper (5-10 pages) or create a video or presentation that speaks to how to do child welfare well. This work should draw on content in this course and also on your own research and the sense you make of child welfare work. Decide on key messages in this paper and also the audience for the paper, it could be students about to take an introductory child welfare course (such as 4W03), policy makers, or some other audience.

Alternatively, you can suggest your own assignment. The assignment must be related to the course content or an idea that emerged for you during the course that you would like to explore, the assignment must also be something conducive to being assessed/graded. You can be as creative as you wish in this assignment, it can be a paper, art work, performance based, audio/video etc. Please discuss with the instructor in advance.

### Participation

This is a very small seminar type-class where participation is not only important for your own learning but also for the others in the class too. Participation means being present and not only engaging in a learning process yourself, but also constructively building and supporting the learning of others.

Requirements for visibility: To be able to teach and achieve the learning outcomes and for the evaluation of those learning outcomes, students being visible to each other and to the instructor is an essential requirement in 2A06, 3E03, 3F03, 4X03, 3D06 and 4D06. The policy, and contacts for further information and support, is available [here](https://macdrive.mcmaster.ca/f/899b5f2330c8444a933d/?dl=1)

# Assignment Submission and Grading

## Form and Style

* Unless otherwise stated, 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 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 will not be accepted for grading.
* Students are expected to make use of relevant professional and social science literature and other bodies of knowledge in their term assignments. When submitting, please keep a spare copy of your assignments.

Avenue to Learn & 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.

### 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

## **This** course 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.

### 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 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 either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

The School of Social Work requests and expects that:

* Instructors inform students about what they will record, when they will record, and what they will do with the 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, and are deleted when no longer needed for personal study
* There will likely be times when students or guest speakers share personal or sensitive information. In this circumstance we expect everyone to stop recording. The instructor (or student or guest sharing) may also ask for recording to stop, and we expect everyone to respect such a request.

Confidentiality

A cornerstone of professional social work relationships is confidentiality with respect to all matters associated with professional services to clients. Social workers demonstrate respect for the trust and confidence placed in them by clients, communities and other professionals by protecting the privacy of client information and respecting the client’s right to control when or whether this information will be shared with third parties (CASW Code of Ethics, 2005).

In 4SA3 it is recognized that students may participate and learn by discussing their placement and lived experiences. As such, it is important to identify issues of confidentiality that arise in addition to those related to client confidentiality. Each 4SA3 student will simultaneously be in placement class 3D06 or 4D06 where they will have signed a Confidentiality Agreement. The terms of that agreement also apply to 4SA3. If you have not signed that agreement, please speak to the 4SA3 instructor. <https://socialwork.mcmaster.ca/documents/confidentiality-agreement-3d-4d-2020.docx/view>

### 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.

### 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”.

### 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 Jennie Vengris, Undergraduate Chair ([vengris@mcmaster.ca](mailto:vengris@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* *Jennie Vengris, Undergraduate Chair (*[*vengris@mcmaster.ca*](mailto:vengris@mcmaster.ca)*).*

Course Weekly Topics and Readings

WEEK 1: September 8, 2021

Looking at child welfare through the lens of Critical Race Theory

The course and its objectives are introduced, what you hope to get from the course is discussed and is incorporated into the course plan. We will also go through this week’s reading as a class together (but please also read the article before class) examining it as a group in considerable depth. The article will help you apply Critical Race Theory to child welfare, but more than that, reading it as a group will provide an opportunity to reinforce and or refine your ability to read, critically appraise, and apply concepts from research articles to the everyday practicalities of doing social work.

Also in this class, you will have an opportunity to select a child welfare issue you want to look at in depth during this course and to then seek out a reading for this that will be used for assignment. You do not, however, have to make this decision yet, you have up until September 29 to make this decision.

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> ([LINK](https://doi-org.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/10.1016/j.childyouth.2018.08.030))

WEEK 2: September 15, 2021

Risk & attitudes

We consider the issue of risk or risk in child welfare and what this means for your work. We also begin to develop reading topics for the class connected to emerging themes and learning needs (see assignment 2).

Stoddard, J. K. (2021). The risk of risk: Unpacking the influence of “risk” on child welfare decision making. In K. Kufeldt, B. Fallon, & B. McKenzie (Eds.), *Protecting Children: Theoretical and practical aspects* (pp. 288-304). Canadian Scholars.

WEEK 3: September 22, 2021

Guest presentation

This week’s class have a presentation from a guest who is a leader in child welfare. More details will be given in class and when the booking is conformed.

No class readings this week, instead we either start to share or finalize the readings connected to assignment 2. From this week on readings will emerge from this list and from other themes that develop within the class.

WEEK 4: September 29, 2021

Guest presentation

This week’s class have a presentation from a guest who is a leader in child welfare. More details will be given in class and when the booking is conformed.

WEEK 5: October 6, 2021

Learning review & preparation for simulated interviews

We review content so far and the implications for your practice. We also begin to apply this knowledge to the case study you undertook in 4W03 and ask what, if anything, has shifted in the ways you see and would address that case.

In preparation for simulated interviews, we start to consider/reconsider how you would approach the case, and also what type of specialized knowledge you may need to address specific issues in the case. In this class we may have a chance to interview children (who will come as Zoom guests).

READING WEEK October 13, 2021

WEEK 6: October 20, 2021

Simulated case interviews & emerging topics

We begin simulated case interviews and mix this with reviewing readings connected to assignment 2. As well, we also book guests with expertise in specific areas and topics emerging in class to present or speak to these topics.

WEEK 7: October 27, 2021

Simulated case interviews & emerging topics

Continue simulated case interviews and mix this with reviewing readings connected to assignment 2. As well, we also book guests with expertise in specific areas and topics emerging in class to present or speak to these topics.

WEEK 8: November 3, 2021

Continue simulated case interviews and mix this with reviewing readings connected to assignment 2. As well, we also book guests with expertise in specific areas and topics emerging in class to present or speak to these topics.

WEEK 9: November 10, 2021

Guest presentation

Guest presentation to be determined.

Week 10: November 17, 2021

Guest presentation

Guest presentation to be determined.

WEEK 11: November 24, 2021

Guest presentation

Guest presentation to be determined.

WEEK 12: December 1, 2021

Guest presentation

Guest presentation to be determined.

WEEK 13: December 8, 2021

Course conclusion

We pull together learning from the class and conclude.