ADOPTION: PRACTICE AND POLICY (master outline)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course covers the concepts, knowledge, skills and policies associated with contemporary adoption practice. The practice method reflects a triad perspective, meaning that adoption is examine from the viewpoints of birth parents, adoptees, and adoptive parents. For each topic area, social work roles, activities, tasks and skills are explored along with policy issues. Exemplars and case studies are presented for illustration purposes. Consideration of triad needs at different life cycle stages are presented. The issues of ethnically competent adoption practice are emphasized throughout the course in each content area, as is the issues of values and ethics.

OBJECTIVES

As a result of this course, students will achieve the following objectives. The ability statements related to these objectives are in parenthesis...:

a. develop skills in empirically-based adoption practice (CRITICAL THINKING)

b. have an increased understanding of the various roles that social work practitioners play in the delivery of adoption services in a variety of practice settings (SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE, PROFESSIONAL USE OF SELF)

c. be able to describe the major components that make up the continuum of adoption services, the major task of each component, the most relevant intervention strategies for each component, and the policies relevant to each component (CRITICAL THINKING, SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE, COMMUNICATION).

d. become familiar with clinical issues in contemporary adoption practice (SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE)

e. become familiar with values and ethical issues in contemporary adoption practice (VALUES AND ETHICS)

f. become sensitive to cultural and subcultural differences in adoption with birth families, adoptees and adoptive parents (DIVERSITY)
g. develop an understanding of socio-political and organizational contexts of adoption policies, services, and practices in domestic and international adoption (CRITICAL THINKING)

h. be able to critically analyze some of the current issues and dilemmas that exist in the delivery of adoption services and be able to develop a plan for advocating or promoting change in policy or practice (VALUES AND ETHICS, COMMUNICATION, ADVOCATES FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE)

COURSE OUTLINE

The course outline indicates topics covered and the readings that go with each topic.

a. Required Texts


Packet of Readings

b. Recommended Texts


COURSE TOPICS

An Overview of the Adoption Systems

Home Studies, Matching, Subsidies and Post Adoption Support

Recruitment

Domestic infant adoption—open & closed adoptions

International adoption

Older child adoption

Siblings and Adoption

Transracial Adoptions
Adoption of Children with a History of Physical and Sexual Abuse

Nontraditional Families and Adoption
  Single Parent
  Gay & Lesbian Adoption

Search and Reunion

Clinical and Practice Issues with Birth Parents

Clinical and Practice Issues with Adoptees

Clinical and Practice Issues with Adoptive Families

Policy Issues:
  Evaluation of Adoption Agencies
  Assessment of Developmental Delays of International Adoptees
  Costs, Sliding Fee Scales, Subsidies and PASS
  Broker Agencies
  Interstate Compact
  Recent Federal Legislation: MEPA & SAFE
  Managed Care

Specialized Topics

IN-CLASS POTENTIAL SMALL GROUPS

DEVELOPING ADOPTION SENSITIVE PRACTICE

Come up with a list of terms that we use when we talk about adoption. Which of these terms have multiple meanings? Which can be insensitive? Develop a list of terms that are more sensitive when dealing with adoption.

ACQUIRING A FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

A developmental perspective is a frame of reference for viewing human growth and development within the context of families and families’ transactions with their environments. If we adapt a developmental perspective, we would focus on preventive policy and programs, strengths, and empowerment rather than remedial, restorative or reactionary policies and programs. Think about the array of adoption services and propose what a developmental perspective would look like. For example, one program that seems to be developmental in perspective is a program where every family, regardless of income or parenting experience, receives periodic visitation from a social worker in her home after the adoption of a child for several weeks to several months. The purpose is to provide support, guidance and assistance to the parent in order to promote strong parent-child relations and decrease the stressors associated with either creating a family through adoption or adding to a family through adoption. Be creative and think about policies and programs that would be developmental!

MATCHING CHILDREN AND PARENT

You will be given a description of potential families and waiting children. Match children and families. How did you make the match? What were the issues you discussed in matching? Were there any families you would screen out? Why? Why not?

DIAGRAMMATIC CHILD ASSESSMENT

From a case given to you, diagram a placement genogram. What benefits are there to you from
diagramming a complicated history? What are the problems in diagramming a complicated history? What benefits are there to a child from diagramming a complicated history? What are potential problems in diagramming a complicated history for a child?

Possible ASSIGNMENTS

Acquaintance with the Literature

Find 3 articles relevant to an area of interest you have in adoption and in one or more of the areas covered during the first weekend. They can be related to a current area of practice but must be articles you haven't read previously. They can also be related to an area of interest where you have minimal experience. Two of the three articles must be empirically-based and one article should be an issue related to cultural competence/diversity in adoption.

Copy the article and write a one page summary, answering the following questions:

- What was the main point of the article?
- What theory base did it use in its development? (sometimes it will not be readily apparent, so you will have to use your critical thinking/analysis skills)
- What practice-relevant information did you get from the article? (be clear, specific & concrete)
- What questions do you have after reading this that you didn't have previously or what questions do you have about the article itself (i.e., a critique of the article)?

While I think collaboration is an important part of the graduate school experience, I want you to work independently on this assignment. I would be very surprised to find 2 or more students who have the same 3 articles by chance. Please work by yourselves. Some of these articles will be useful for class discussion as well as in the small group project/presentation.

HOME STUDY OR CHILD ASSESSMENT

Choose a case from your employment or practicum. If you don't have an adoption case that you can use, the instructor will provide you a resource for securing a case. Either conduct an adoptive home study or assess a child or sibling group for adoption. Home study guidelines and child assessment/sibling assessment guidelines will be distributed.

CASE ANALYSIS FOR COURSE SYNTHESIS

Choose a case from your employment or practicum. If you don't have an adoption case that you can use, the instructor will provide you a resource for securing a case study. In developing your responses, be sure to integrate appropriate content and techniques covered in the class lecture, discussion, readings, & small group presentations. The paper should contain the following elements:

1. Brief psychosocial assessment including a family genogram, placement genogram and a social network map or ecomap (2-3 pages plus diagrams)
2. The roles of the social worker at various stages in the case (1-1.5 pages)
3. The application of ethnically competent practice principles (1-1.5 pages)
4. The dilemmas confronting the practitioner in dealing with the case (1-2 pages)

5. Discuss the family support/empowerment methods/intervention techniques you would employ (2-3 pages)

6. Discuss how you would evaluate your practice in this case (2-3 pages).

**PRESENTATION**

You may break into small groups (up to 3 people per group) or work individually to write a 15-18 page paper on a current problem or innovation in adoption practice. The format of the paper should be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADOPTION PROBLEM</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>INNOVATIONS IN ADOPTION PRACTICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Major Issues to Address</td>
<td>2. Discussion of how to use technique or approach and empirical support for the technique.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Possible Solutions: Practice &amp; Policy</td>
<td>3. Problems with technique/approach, critique of innovation or relationship to the evaluation of practice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Web Resources**

Develop a list of web resources for one of the specific topic areas discussed in class. Provide a paragraph description of the site as well as the location.

**Policy Related Assignment**

Overview: Take a policy related to adoption. Trace its legislative roots. Outline both the implicit and explicit value base of the policy. Discuss how the specific policy influences practice. Outline an advocacy project for either improving the existing policy or changing the policy.

Choose a specific adoption problem, topic or issue. Address these specific questions:

1. What policy has been developed to deal with the problem/topic/issues? Briefly discuss the history and scope of this policy.

2. What is the legislative history and political processes through which this policy developed (or a change in this policy took place?).

3. What are the core values (e.g., equality, equity, adequacy, social justice, etc.) or ideology on which this policy is based?

4. What choices (including value choices) does this policy make regarding: a) allocations (include demographic profile of recipients); b) provisions; c) service delivery; and d) financing and funding?

5. What alternatives (including value choices) are not chosen for a) through d) above?

6. What is your assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of this policy?
7. If one looks at what these policies and programs are actually doing, rather than what is claimed, how is the problem/issue/topic really being defined?

8. Are the results of these policies and programs being evaluated? If not, why not? If yes, are findings being utilized?

9. Based on the best information about effectiveness, what is happening in the implementation of these policies?

**Policy Change**

1. What specific set of recommendations do you propose for policy change? In recommending alternative policies, incorporate experiences within the United States and, when relevant, the experiences of other nations. Consider whether interventions at both the structural and individual levels are needed to achieve the stated objectives.

2. How do these alternative policies affect allocations, provision, service delivery, and financing mechanisms?

**Action Considerations**

1. What institutions, organizations, and decision-makers are primarily responsible for achieving this policy change?

2. What are the major sources of support for achieving the desired policy change (e.g., constituencies, influential individuals, media, public support)?

3. Conversely, what are the major sources of resistance to change?

4. What kinds of knowledge are needed in order to affect change?

5. What strategies must be employed to affect change (e.g., 1) consensus strategies such as public information, 2) changing attitudes and values; 2) political strategies such as negotiation, compromise; and/or 3) conflict strategies such as confrontation, protest)?

6. Are these actions and strategies consistent with professional values?

**Second Policy Assignment**

Exploring Opportunities to Make, Change and/or Assess Social Policies

Select any current federal, state or local policy that has or will adoption and assess it at the micro, mezzo and macro levels. It is important to note that the micro and mezzo level assessments are to provide a foundation for the macro level work. The major focus of this project is to actively engage in macro-level analysis and activities. (The policy can be something that is currently under debate/consideration, or one that has been enacted in the last two or three years.) The choice of a policy can be based on the student's field placement or work experience, but need not be; students are free to choose any relevant policy of interest.

Micro level: Provide a brief and coherent assessment of how the chosen policy has/will impact actual clients.
Mezzo level: Provide a brief, clear and coherent assessment of the impact of the policy on the functioning of a specific agency or type of agency.

Macro level: Employ and describe strategies to affect change related to the chosen policy. Possible activities include direct lobbying of public officials regarding issues generated by the micro and mezzo level analyses, linking with existing coalitions, mobilizing groups, using the media or internet and a host of other mechanisms of policy practice. If the policy has not been passed, students might undertake efforts to support or oppose the legislation. If the policy has been passed students might consider efforts to affect the way the policy is implemented or to have additional measures or safeguards put in place. The purpose of this part of the project, which should be the major focus of the term project, is to actively engage in the process of making or changing social policy. Along the way, students will document and assess their efforts. The final written product should clearly detail efforts taken, why they were taken and to what end. Students should provide an honest assessment of the likely impact of their efforts, and what if anything they would do differently in the future.

In all written and oral communications for the project, students must clearly identify:
· The policy under consideration and whether it is a federal, state or local one;
· The affected population(s) that will be the focus of the term project (note if the project will be restricted to a particular geographic area, hint: this may make the project feel more doable);
· The affected agency or type of agency that will be the focus of the term project;
· The social/policy change strategies that will be employed as part of the project.
7. REQUIRED READINGS

COURSE TOPICS

An Overview of the Adoption Systems


Home Studies, Matching, Subsidies, and Post Adoption Support


Recent Federal Legislation: MEPA & SAFE

http://www.hhs.gov/progorg/ocr/mepafact.html


International adoption


Older child adoption


siblings and adoption


transracial adoptions


Adoption of children with a History of Physical and Sexual Abuse


Nontraditional Families and Adoption

Single Parent
Gay & Lesbian Adoption


Search and Reunion


Clinical and Practice Issues with Birth Parents


Clinical and Practice Issues with Adoptees


Clinical and Practice Issues with Adoptive Families


Specialized Topics


**RECOMMENDED READINGS**

**COURSE TOPICS**

*An Overview of the Adoption Systems*


*Home Studies, Matching, Subsidies and Post Adoption Support*


*Recruitment*


Recent Federal Legislation: MEPA & SAFE


Issues in infant adoption


International adoption


Older child adoption

Siblings and Adoption


Transracial Adoptions


Adoption of Children with a History of Physical and Sexual Abuse


Nontraditional Families and Adoption

Single Parent
Gay & Lesbian Adoption


Hannah. (February 15, 1989). Supreme court agrees to hear adoption case. Ohio Capitol Connection [On-line]. Available: http://www.ohcapcon.com/search97cgi/vtopic.exe?action=view&VdkVgwKey=http%3A%2F%2F38%2E254%2E150%2E10%2Fhtbin%2Fcom%2Foh%24entry%3A%5Bhannah%5D890215%5FhANAH%5F%2F%2EHTM&DocOffset=7&DocsFound=7&QueryZip=%3CA%3D%3E%28%3CMany%3E%27adoption%27%2C+%3CMany%3E%27homosexual%27%29&Collection=Hannah&SortField=Hannah&SortOrder=ASC&SearchUrl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Eohcapcon%2Ecom%2Fsearch97cgi%2Fvtopic%2Fexe%3FQueryZip%3D%253CAnd%253E%2528%2527adoption%2527%2C+%2527homosexual%2527%29&ResultTemplate%3Dolis%255Fart%26QueryText%3Dadoption+%2B%27homosexual%26action%3Dsearch%6Collection%3DHannah%26SortField%3Dpdate%26SortField%3DTITLE%26ResultStart%3D1%26ResultCount%3D10&
Hannah. (March 28, 1989). Supreme court rules on adoption by homosexuals. Ohio Capitol Connection [On-line]. Available: http://www.ohcapcon.com/search97cgi/vtopic.exe?action=view&VdkVgwKey=http%3A%2F%2F38%2E254%2E150%2E10%2Fhtbin%2Fj%2Feh%2Fohn%2Foh%2Fmrec%2Fh%2F90%24entry%3A%5Bhanna%5D900328%5F%5F5HANNAH%5F2%2F2EHTM%2FDocOffset=4%2D%26DocsFound=7&QueryZip=%3Can%3E%28%3E%29%26Collection=Hannah%26Collection=Hanna99%26SortField=pdate%26SortField=TITLE%26SortOrder=ASC%26SearchUrl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Eohcapcon%2Ecom%2Fsearch97cgi%2Fvtopic%2Eexe%3FQueryZip%3D%26ResultTemplate%3Dolis%2Fart%2Ehts%26QueryText%3Dadoption%2B%26homosexual%26action%3Dsearch%26Collection%3DHannah%26SortField%3D%26%26ResultCount%3D10&


Hannah. (May 9, 1989). Referred to committee. Ohio Capitol Connection [On-line]. Available: http://www.ohcapcon.com/search97cgi/vtopic.exe?action=view&VdkVgwKey=http%3A%2F%2F38%2E254%2E150%2E10%2Fhtbin%2Fj%2Feh%2Fohn%2Foh%2Fmrec%2Fh%2F90%24entry%3A%5Bhanna%5D890510%5F%5F5HANNAH%5F21%2EHTM%2FDocOffset=5&DocsFound=7&QueryZip=%3Can%3E%28%3E%29%26Collection=Hannah%26Collection=Hanna99%26SortField=pdate%26SortField=TITLE%26SortOrder=ASC%26SearchUrl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Eohcapcon%2Ecom%2Fsearch97cgi%2Fvtopic%2Eexe%3FQueryZip%3D%26ResultTemplate%3Dolis%2Fart%2Ehts%26QueryText%3Dadoption%2B%26homosexual%26action%3Dsearch%26Collection%3DHannah%26%26ResultCount%3D10&
Hannah. (July 7, 1994). The committee also reviewed DHS rules for the adoption of children. Ohio Capitol Connection [On-line]. Available: http://www.ohcapcon.com/search97/cgi/vtopic.exe?action=view&VdkVgwKey=http%3A%2F%2F38%2E254%2E150%2E10%2Fhtbin%2Fcom%2Foh%24entry%3A%5Bhannah%5D940707%5F%HANNAH%5F2%2EHTM&DocOffset=3&DocsFound=7&QueryZip=%3CAnd%3E%28%3CMany%3E%27adoptio n%27%2C+%3CMany%3E%27homosexual%27%29&Collection=Hannah&Collection=Hannah&SortField=d-pdate&SortOrder=TITLE&SortOrder=ASC&SearchUrl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Eohcapcon%2Ecom%2Fsearch97%2Eexe%3Faction%3Dsearch%26Collection%3DHannah%26Collection%3DHannah%26SortField%3Dpdate%26SortField%3DTITLE%26SortOrder%3Ddesc%26SortOrder%3DASC%26ResultStart%3D1%26ResultCount%3D10&

Hannah. (February 14, 1996). Extensive adoption reform passes second house. Ohio Capitol Connection [On-line]. Available: http://www.ohcapcon.com/search97/cgi/vtopic.exe?action=view&VdkVgwKey=http%3A%2F%2F38%2E254%2E150%2E10%2Fhtbin%2Fcom%2Foh%24entry%3A%5Bhannah%5D960214%5F%HANNAH%5F1%2EHTM&DocOffset=1&DocsFound=7&QueryZip=%3CAnd%3E%28%3CMany%3E%27adoption%27%2C+%3CMany%3E%27homosexual%27%29&Collection=Hannah&Collection=Hannah&SortField=d-pdate&SortOrder=desc&SortOrder=ASC&SearchUrl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Eohcapcon%2Ecom%2Fsearch97%2Eexe%3FQueryZip%3D%3F%3D%26QueryText%3Dadoption%2B%26Collection%3DHannah%26Collection%3DHannah%26SortField%3Dpdate%26SortField%3DTITLE%26SortOrder%3Ddesc%26SortOrder%3DASC%26ResultStart%3D1%26ResultCount%3D10&

Hannah. (August 5, 1998). 122-HB446 Regarding standards person with criminal background must meet to become adoptive parent. Ohio Capitol Connection [On-line]. Available: http://www.ohcapcon.com/search97/cgi/vtopic.exe?action=view&VdkVgwKey=http%3A%2F%2F38%2E254%2E150%2E10%2Fhtbin%2Fcom%2Foh%24entry%3A%5Bhannah%5D980805%5F%HANNAH%5F2%2EHTM&DocOffset=8&DocsFound=9&QueryZip=%3CMany%3E%27hb446%27&Collection=OH122&Collection=OH122a&Collection=OH122L&SortField=sbillnum&SortOrder=asc&SearchUrl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Eohcapcon%2Ecom%2Fsearch97%2Eexe%3FQueryZip%3D%3F%3D%26QueryText%3Dhb446%26Collection%3DOH122%26Collection%3DOH122a%26Collection%3DOH122L%26SortField%3Dpdate%26SortField%3D lbnum%26SortOrder%3Dasc%26SortOrder%3DASC%26ResultStart%3D1%26ResultCount%3D10&


Search and Reunion


Lifton, B. (1992). *Healing the cumulative trauma*. Presentation delivered to the


Clinical and Practice Issues with Birth Parents


Clinical and Practice Issues with Adoptees


York: Basic Books.


Clinical and Practice Issues with Adoptive Families


Policy Issues


Specialized Topics


