1. COURSE PURPOSE

This course is designed to provide social work students with information on the problem of family violence, as it occurs across the lifespan. Course content covers the range of theoretical, policy and practice issues involving intra-familial child abuse and neglect, intimate partner violence, child witnessing of intimate partner violence, and elder abuse. The course is taught from an ecological theoretical perspective, examining the incidence and impact of family violence on the individual and the family, interventions at the individual and group level, structural influences on family violence, and policy implications in the field of social work. The developmental approach to a survey of violence across the lifespan will be integrated to allow students to gain a greater understanding of the cumulative and overlapping effects of various forms of violence, which occur within families. The philosophical approach is social justice with an emphasis on rights to safety and the protection of society for those who are vulnerable, and an emphasis on the empowerment of survivors of abuse.

II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. To acquire knowledge of the theories most commonly used to understand intimate partner violence, child abuse and elder abuse.

2. To understand the legal, ethical, and social issues which impact on policy responses to intra-familial violence.

3. To recognize psychological, physical, social and cognitive changes that occur in victims of family violence.

4. To acquire knowledge of appropriate techniques for intervening with perpetrators and victims of family violence.

5. To develop an understanding of the roles of social workers and other disciplines in responding to family violence.

6. To appraise various policy alternatives, considering the arguments for and against each alternative, and possible unintended consequences.

7. To appreciate the impact of practice and policy decisions on complex problems involving intimate partner violence, elder abuse and child maltreatment.

8. To increase sensitivity to the impact of victimization on social work clients.
9. To balance intervention approaches to respond to multiple victims within a family.

10. To become more aware of the influence of personal and professional values on practice and policy choices in the field of family violence.

11. To practice interaction in a multi-disciplinary case conference setting.

12. To develop safety plans for victims of domestic violence.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Texts


Other Required Readings


B. Recommended Readings

Periodicals and Other Resources:
Child Maltreatment
Journal of Interpersonal Violence
Violence Against Women

C. Videos to be Used in Class


“For Families: Bridging Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment” (1999), National Children’s Alliance, Washington, DC.


D. Course Assignments
1. Class Participation. The class will be conducted as a seminar with the expectation that students will have thoroughly read class materials and will contribute to class discussion. There will be several in class activities such as a mock case conference, safety planning role play and presentations by policymakers and/or service providers. Students will be asked to monitor media coverage of family violence and to bring articles or stories to class. Student participation and contribution to these activities is expected.

2. Class Exercises:

b. Participate in a Multi-Disciplinary Case Conference.
c. Conduct a Policy Analysis to examine the relative merits of proposed policy responses to children who witness domestic violence.

3. Reaction Paper. Students will develop a 5-7 page reaction paper in response to one of the following activities:
   a. Observe protection order hearings for victims of domestic violence at a local court (e.g., DC Superior Court, or other local court).
   b. Follow media coverage of child abuse and neglect cases, using a minimum of two sources per week over a one-month period.
   c. Attend testimony, a hearing, or meetings with political figures (at the federal, state or local level) regarding legislation or funding to address domestic violence or child maltreatment.
   d. An alternate experience agreed upon by the student and instructor.

The reaction paper should describe the information obtained through the student’s research or observation, the student’s personal reaction to this experience, observations on the societal and system values influencing discussion of family violence, and commentary on whether the activities studied or observed appeared to further effective responses toward child maltreatment or domestic violence. **The paper will be due by Class 10.**

4. Integration Grid - Develop a table summarizing the following for each type of abuse studied: Explanatory theories, incidence, impact, interventions, reporting requirements, and policy issues. (Sample format to be provided by the Instructor.) Will be reviewed in class during Class 13 in preparation for the final exam.

5. Final Exam. Short answer and essay questions integrating full semester content.

E. Grading Policy.

The assignments described above will be the basis for the final grade. Class participation will be graded on the basis of demonstration of knowledge and understanding of course content, accuracy, and contribution to class learning. Grades will be based on the extent to which students achieved course objectives as demonstrated by the quality of course assignments and class participation. The following weighting of course assignments will apply:

- Class Participation 10%
- Class Exercises 20%
Learning Contract
The course will begin with an overview of the syllabus, and a discussion of the learning objectives. There will be discussion of student goals, interests, questions or concerns. Given the subject matter to be addressed, the instructor will provide opportunities for students to discuss personal concerns related to family violence and will make appropriate referrals for any students wishing to obtain further assistance. There will be opportunities throughout the semester for students to provide feedback on the course and to recommend changes to further their learning of the course objectives. The instructor will provide some flexibility in sequence and learning strategies if necessary to meet student learning needs.

F. Course and Instructor Evaluation
NCSSS requires electronic evaluation of this course and the instructor. At the end of the semester, the evaluation form may be accessed at [http://evaluations.cua.edu/evaluations](http://evaluations.cua.edu/evaluations) using your CUA username and password. Additional, informal written or verbal feedback to the instructor during the semester is encouraged and attempts will be made to respond to requests.

CLASS SCHEDULE

CLASS 1
Family Violence as a Social Problem - History and Current Status, Incidence and Theory

- Family violence as a social problem, defining “family violence”
- Historical approaches to child abuse and domestic violence
- Current understandings and myths about family violence
- Survey theories explaining family violence
- Understanding data on the incidence and prevalence of family violence
- Multidisciplinary approaches to intervening in family violence
- Introduction of the Integration Grid


CLASS 2
Child Abuse and Neglect - Incidence, Impact and Theory

- Defining child physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and psychological maltreatment
- The scope of the problem
- Characteristics of victims and perpetrators of child abuse
- Effects of abuse on children
- View Video, “Through My Eyes”

CLASS 3
Child Abuse and Neglect - Social Work Roles and Interventions
- Child welfare agency interventions
- Mandatory reporting requirements and procedures
- Therapeutic interventions
- Multi-disciplinary case conferences and interventions, children’s advocacy centers
- Child sexual abuse interventions

Readings: Barnett, et al, Chapter Four: Child Sexual Abuse, pp. 87-125

CLASS 4
Child Abuse and Neglect - Policy Issues
- Development of “Megan’s Laws” as a policy response to child sexual abuse
- Policy analysis criteria
- Factors that influence the policy agenda
- Federal and state statutes on child abuse and neglect
- Presentation on trends in national policy on child abuse and neglect


CLASS 5
Intimate Partner Violence - Incidence, Impact and Theory
- The scope of the problem of intimate partner violence
- Official estimates of intimate partner violence
- Examining social and personal beliefs about intimate partner violence
- Theoretical explanations for intimate partner violence
- Personal and social consequences of intimate partner violence
- Common interventions - victim/survivor support services, criminal justice system, community responses
- View Video: Defending Our Lives


CLASS 6
Intimate Partner Violence - Legal Interventions and Batterer Accountability
Socially condoned male violence and battering behavior
Characteristics of abusive partners
Treatment interventions
Criminal justice interventions
Protection Orders


CLASS 7
Intimate Partner Violence - Social Work Roles and Interventions/ Safety Planning
Consequences of victimization by an intimate partner
Batterer generated and life generated risks for victims of abuse
Social constraints on abuse victims/survivors
Agency and action - the choices of intimate partner violence victims
Services and interventions for victims of intimate partner violence
Safety planning with victims of intimate partner violence (Class Exercise)

Readings: Davies, et al, pp. 21 - 128

CLASS 8
Intimate Partner Violence - Policy Issues
Federal Violence Against Women Act
Implementation of state and local responses to domestic violence
Balancing criminal justice and social service interventions to address intimate partner violence
Court watch, evaluation and system accountability


CLASS 9
Children Who Witness - Incidence, Impact and Theory & Social Work Roles and Interventions
Scope of the Problem
Explanatory theory, conceptualization of the problem
Research on the impact on children of witnessing domestic violence
Resiliency and protective factors
Addressing service needs of battered mothers and their children
Fathering after violence
View Video – *Something My Father Would Do*
Responding to families in the child protection system when children witness
intimate partner violence
View video - *For Families: Bridging Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment.*
Discuss implications for practice

*Groves, B.M.* (1999). Mental health services for children who witness domestic
research on mothering and domestic violence. In Graham-Bermann, S.A. & Edleson, J.L.
(Eds.) *Domestic Violence in the Lives of Children.* Washington, DC: American
Psychological Association.

Class 10
Children Who Witness - Policy Issues
Policy approaches to address co-occurring domestic violence and child
maltreatment
Legislation to change child abuse laws, criminal codes
Comprehensive policy approaches (e.g., NCJFCJ).
Policy analysis criteria (Gil) and application

Exercise - Small group discussion of policy alternatives. Groups of students receive scenarios
with public policy options for addressing the problem of children witnessing domestic violence.
Small groups discuss the alternatives, and report back on the group process, based on Gil’s
policy criteria:
   A. Who/what is affected by this policy?
   B. What substantive impact would this policy have? What values are inherent in this
      policy approach?
   C. How would society be affected by the substantive consequences of this policy? Could
      there be unintended consequences?
   D. What alternative policies could be designed to achieve the same or different policy
      objectives?

Readings: *Summary of State Laws on Children Exposed to Intimate Partner
Violence* (Handout)
Matthews, M.A. (1999). The Impact of federal and state laws on children exposed to
*National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges*, Guidelines on Effective
Intervention in Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment, 1999, Executive Summary
(Handout)

**Papers Due**

**CLASS 11**

**Elder Abuse - Incidence, Impact and Theory & Policy Responses**

Efforts to define elder abuse, the scope of the problem
Characteristics of elder abusers
Explanatory theories
Multidisciplinary elder abuse interventions
Barriers to assessing for and responding to elder abuse
The policy debate: protection or criminalization?


**Review roles and case scenario for Session 12 Exercise**

**CLASS 12**

**Elder Abuse – Social Work Practice: Multidisciplinary Interventions**

Multi-disciplinary professionals involved in family violence (e.g., law enforcement, medical, mental health, education, social work) - Roles, values, skills, strengths.
Collaboration skills and processes

Exercise: Conduct mock multi-disciplinary case staffing, with assigned roles and case scenario.

**CLASS 13**

**Integration of Family Violence Theory, Practice and Policy**

Discussion of the relationship among various forms of family violence
Integration of analysis of explanatory theories, impact, interventions, and policies addressing the various forms of family violence
Intergenerational transmission of family violence
Family violence prevention


**CLASS 14**

**Final Exam and Course Evaluation**