Cluster Course Addition
(New Course to UNST)

All changes to Clusters must be approved by PSU's Senate Curriculum Committee

1. COURSE TITLE AND NUMBER.  Sp 399 Communicating about Violence and Children

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will focus on both theory and skills in order to improve the quality of interpersonal communication with children (grades K-6), with particular attention given to issues of child abuse (emotional, physical, sexual and domestic violence). We will examine and dialogue about perceptions, values, stereotyping, language use, nonverbal communication, power, control and conflict in relation to children. Course requirements include: attendance and participation in all classes, midterm & final, weekly writing & “show & tell” assignments, and completion and report on research project.

   A. DEVELOPMENT.  This is an existing course.
   B. AVAILABILITY.  The course will be offered at least twice a year and in Summer Session.
   C. PREREQUISITES.  None.

2. COURSE OUTLINE.
   Instructor committed to teaching the course, Jennifer Talbot.

   Instructional Format and Content Outline: The course will include: lecture, interactive discussions, group exercises and student presentations.

   Course Outline:
   Week One: Intro – Course Overview
   Week Two: Stereotypes & Assumptions
   Oppression - Anti-Bias work with Children
   Week Three: Empathic Listening
   Week Four: Domestic Violence
   Week Five: Midterm (Term Project Outline Due)
   Domestic Violence
   Week Six: Family Violence Movie “The Mighty”
   Week Seven: Child Abuse
   Week Eight: Sexual Abuse
   Disclosure as Storytelling Process
   Week Nine: Term Project Presentations
   Week Ten: - Term Project Presentations
   Week Eleven: Final Exam

3. GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS.  

   A CONTENT: To say that child abuse and domestic violence are a huge social problem is to state the obvious. 21,000 children witnessed domestic violence in Multnomah County in 1999. *(Domestic Violence in Multnomah County; Multnomah County Health Department, Portland Multnomah Progress Board, Police Bureau, 1999).* 11,241 children were victims of child abuse and neglect in Oregon in 1999. *(SCF Report on: The Status of Children in Oregon, State Services to Children and Families, 1999).*
Throughout their educational experience, students are exposed to a number of theories and statistics without options for change, plans of action or procedures for ethical practices. This leaves them feeling separate from the issues and/or too overwhelmed to effect change. This course attempts to expose students to theories of family violence and connect them firmly to student's everyday experiences related to communication issues and children. In addition, this course will encourage students to make ethical choices as citizens, by strengthening their ability to critically examine what they have learned and how they have learned it.

This course was originally offered at the 200-level, however the content is rigorous and appropriate for a 300-level course.

B. UNST GOALS: This course will address the University's Communication goal by raising student's awareness of common themes or messages communicated to and about children. We will do this through discussion, course readings and exercises on power, oppression, child abuse and family violence in the United States. Students will also learn what practitioner's learn about appropriate communication skills for addressing these issues with children.

The course meets the University's Inquiry and Critical Thinking AND Ethical Issues and Social Responsibility goals by developing student's ability to make objective rather than subjective observations and by enhancing their capacity and desire to be critical thinkers who are capable of making conscious choices. Students will also be able to recognize the direct impact their choices have on creating a safer world compared to that of maintaining the status quo.

The course integrates the University's Variety of Human Experience goal by enhancing student's understanding of the interconnection between child abuse and all other forms of oppression (like age-ism, sexism, racism, homophobia etc). By strengthening student's knowledge of the basic dynamics of child abuse and family violence we will address the irony of believing that "child abuse is bad" while at the same time believing that certain groups of people are less deserving of safety and respect than others.

C. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT. The course is designed primarily as a discussion experience. The lectures, weekly mini-presentations and exercises are aimed at improving the quality of discussion by promoting critical thinking and effecting speaking and listening.

The following course criteria indicates how students will be evaluated: attendance, midterm, a final, weekly reports and class presentations and a final research project and presentation. The following criteria provides insight into the teaching strategies used in the course:

Weekly Reports:
- Observe various aspects of our culture (i.e.: books, architecture, music, toys, recreation, videos, advertising etc.- there are endless possibilities) and reflect on what is being communicated to and/or about children related to the previous week's dialogue.
- Observations need to be specific and thorough with correct spelling and grammar. Avoid using: good/bad judgments, sweeping generalizations, moralizing, or stereotyping.
- Address: perceptions, values, stereotyping, language use, nonverbal communication, power, control and conflict in relation to children.
Final Project: A two-part project comprised of a research paper and a class presentation. The final project is designed to give students an opportunity to utilize the theories from the course and apply them in an area of interest. Topics must be chosen from any aspect of communication with children that we have been studying such as perceptions, values, stereotyping, language use, nonverbal communication, power, control and conflict, child abuse, family violence and sexual abuse.

D. SUITABILITY.

The course is suited for the Family Studies Cluster because it is a timely topic for adult students. Family communication issues are the core of this course. The Course Objectives for Communicating about Violence and Children clearly identify the appropriateness of the course in this cluster.

1) Raise student's awareness of common themes/messages communicated to and about children.
2) Raise student's awareness of the myriad of mediums of communications to and about children.
3) Develop student's ability to make objective rather than subjective observations about messages being communicated to and about children.
4) Provide students with effective, developmentally appropriate skills for addressing difficult topics with children.
5) Enhance student's knowledge of the basic dynamics of child abuse and Family violence.

Students will make observations about messages communicated to and about children in our culture. We will discuss how those messages are connected to child abuse and family violence. Students will learn that one of the most important components to addressing issues of abuse with children is effective listening. Students will be encouraged to address their own biases, how and where they learned them and how it is connected to child abuse and family violence.

COURSE APPROVED FOR CLUSTER INCLUSION BY

DEPARTMENT CHAIR __________________________ DATE

CLUSTER COORDINATOR ______________________ DATE 10/25/01

CHAIR, CLUSTER COORDINATOR ______________________ DATE

CHAIR, UNST COMMITTEE ______________________________ DATE