IPAF 4900: Research Experience Opportunity

Project Title: Where Child Welfare Laws Interact with Research Ethics

Term: Winter 2018

Supervisor: Karen Schwartz, PhD

Administering Unit: Social Work

Description of project:
The project is a comparative study of international Child Welfare policies related to the Mandatory Duty to report abuse and neglect. Mandatory reporting laws have been instituted in numerous countries around the world as a means to protect vulnerable children by identifying cases of abuse and neglect that may result in serious harm. Some countries have only instituted voluntary reporting. Part of this project involves gathering international examples of legislation and policies to answer the following questions: What international jurisdictions have instituted a Mandatory Duty to Report Abuse or Neglect? How does each define what has to be reported? How does each define who should report? What are the consequences for not reporting across international jurisdictions? What are the multicultural issues related to a Mandatory Duty to Report? What are the pros and cons of such a law and do these differ based on the country of origin of the legislation? What are the alternatives to Mandatory reporting in countries without such a law, for example, voluntary reporting? The second part of this project is to gather international examples of ethical issues that arise when, during the course of a research interview, information is given that requires the duty to report. The questions to be answered are: What are the international standards of research ethics? What happens to such disclosures in the context of carrying out research? Does mandatory reporting trump confidentiality in all international jurisdictions?

Number of students required: 1-2

Research duties:
1) Compile a list of scholarly articles and books on International child welfare policies and regulations related to the duty to report abuse and neglect.
2) Compile a list of scholarly articles and book related to international standards of research ethics with respect to confidentiality vs statutory requirements.
3) Produce an annotated bibliography of about 25-30 sources.
4) Regular meetings to discuss findings with supervisor.
5) Write a 5-page reflective memo.

Learning and reflection activities:
1) Improved knowledge of domestic and international child welfare policies and laws.
2) Improving analytical skills including comparative analysis.
3) Reflective memo.
4) Regular meetings with supervisor to discuss the student’s critical reflections of the literature, understanding, interpretation and analysis of the literature and of the differences found in both the literature and original sources (eg. Legislation and/or policy statements from other jurisdictions).
5) Acquiring greater skills in library and field research.

Learning outcomes:
The student will
1) improve his/her ability to work and research independently,
2) learn about the development of child welfare policies, how they are conceived and implemented differently in different countries, and the impact this has on research practice.
3) learn how to evaluate and critically compare the scholarly literature, and
4) gain firsthand experience in the process of academic research.

Evaluation Criteria:
• Bi-weekly meetings with supervisor, 10%, based on attendance, preparedness for meetings, emailing the supervisor an agenda for each bi-weekly meeting
• Annotated log of articles read to be reviewed at bi-weekly meetings, 20%
• Literature review (10 pages), 40%, due the last day of class
• Reflective memo (5 pages), 30%, due the last day of classes

Course component, submission deadline, weight, brief description. At least 50 percent of the course grade should be based on written work.

Skills or knowledge required:
• Course(s) and/or interest in International Child Welfare law and policies and research ethics policies
• Ability to effectively search in academic databases
• Very organized and detailed oriented
• Critical thinking, good writing skills, and ability to work independently
• Enrolled in any of the following programs- Social Work, BPPAM, Law and Legal Studies.

Any required health and safety training:
No
Other considerations:
None
Application instructions:
Participants are selected on the basis of merit and fit with the research project. Please submit a CV, transcript, and cover letter indicating why you are interested in and qualified for this research experience to the undergraduate administrator of the unit listed above. The application deadline is normally April 30th (for IPAF 4900 opportunities in the summer or fall term), August 15th (for fall and winter term opportunities) and November 15th (to take IPAF 4900 in the winter or summer term). Only students with a GPA of 9.5 or higher and at least third year honours standing will be considered.

To find out more about IPAF 4900, please visit: http://carleton.ca/fpa/ipaf-main/