

**The University of Texas at Austin
School of Social Work
Social Policy Analysis and Social Problems**

Course number:	SW382R	Instructor:	Diana DiNitto
Unique number	60910	Office Number:	SSW 3.130B
Semester:	Spring 2016	Office Phone:	512-471-9227
Meeting time	W 2:30-5:30	E mail:	ddinitto@mail.utexas.edu
Meeting place:	Room 2.118	Office Hours:	T 2:30-3:30; W 1:30-2:15 & 5:15-5:45; & by appt.

I. Course Description

This course critically examines, from both historical and current perspectives, the overall structure of the American social welfare system with a focus on the disproportionate social, economic, and political problems of vulnerable populations. The course also considers the parallel historical development of the profession of social work, including the ways in which it responded to social problems across key periods of social welfare policy development.

II. Course Objectives

Note: The School of Social Work has been continuously accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) since 1952. To maintain accreditation status, the school engages in ongoing curriculum assessment to demonstrate compliance with CSWE's Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Several required courses in our curriculum are part of this ongoing assessment, including this course. Below is a list of the specific Educational Policies (EP) and Practice Behaviors (PB) that are assessed in this course. Information about the complete EPAS can be obtained from your Student Handbook.

EP2.1.8 Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.

PB25 Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being. Course objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, & 7.
Assignment matches: short policy assignments and legislative analysis and action project

PB26 Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action. Course objectives 2 & 8.
Assignment matches: short policy assignments and legislative analysis and action project

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the dominant historical themes that have shaped social welfare policy in the United States; (PB25)
2. Understand the economic and political constraints and opportunities in the development of social welfare problems and policies; (PB25 & 26)
3. Understand the relationship between the history of the social work profession and the development of social welfare policy; (PB 25)
4. Apply social work values to critically analyze social problems; (PB 25)
5. Gain knowledge and skills as a background for analyzing major policies that form the foundation of social welfare and analyze organizational, local, state, national and international issues in social welfare policy and social service delivery; (PB 25)

6. Understand social welfare policy arenas impacting service delivery, social work practice, and attainment of individual and social well-being; (PB 25)
7. Understand how social policies differentially affect diverse populations in American society; (PB 25)
8. Gain knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of social workers in the policy process, including advocacy, leadership, research, and community organizing, with the goal of promoting and advocating for social and economic justice through both organizational and social change. (PB 26)

III. Teaching Methods

The teaching methods used in this course are interactive lectures; involvement in policy processes; attendance at lectures and conferences; viewing films, video clips, and televised presidential debates; guest presentations; readings; class discussions; in-class exercises; and student presentations. Student participation is critical to the learning process. As professional advocates, social workers must be able to articulate ideas clearly and persuasively. Therefore, all students are encouraged to actively engage in the opportunities this course provides to learn about policy and policy practice.

IV. Required Readings

Textbook

DiNitto, D. M. & Johnson, D. H. (2016). *Social welfare: Politics and public policy*, 8th ed. Boston: Pearson.

Other readings

Other readings may be assigned throughout the semester, and you will be selecting readings specific to your course project and brief policy assignments described later in the syllabus.

V. Policies Specific to this Course

1. **Professional conduct:** Your attendance, attention, and participation are expected for all class sessions. Attendance includes arriving on time and remaining for the entire class session. Participation includes reading all assigned materials prior to the class session and engaging in class discussions and exercises. Lively class discussion is encouraged. Respectful communication is necessary to the learning environment. Attention includes turning off cell phone ringers and refraining from text messaging and other non-class activities. Students are also expected to observe professional codes of conduct with regard to confidentiality, dress, language, and other matters and exercise good judgment during class and while working with agencies, organizations, and other entities on assignments for this course.
2. **Submitting assignments:** (a) All written assignments should be typewritten in 12-point font with reasonable margins; (b) Assignment due dates are noted in the course calendar. **All** assignments are due at the start of the class period. Assignments turned in after the start of class will be considered late for that day unless **prior** arrangements have been made with the instructor. Except in the case of serious illness or emergency, **five points** will be deducted for each day if an assignment is late (weekend days included); (c) The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA) is the style manual to be used unless another referencing style is more appropriate for the assignment. Appropriate referencing of citations (authors, titles, page numbers, etc.) is required. This includes giving due credit to others when indirect quotes (paraphrasing) and direct (verbatim) quotes are used. Short direct quotes (usually of 5 or more words but less than 40 words) must be placed in quotation marks. Long direct quotes (40 or more words) must be indented. Paraphrasing requires more than changing a word or two in a sentence. Failure to give due credit to others will result in a **“0” for the assignment**

and/or an “F” for the course. Plagiarism is a form of scholastic dishonesty and will be addressed as such (also see item on scholastic dishonesty below in section VI). If you do not know how to cite appropriately, please learn before you submit any assignments.

3. **Scholastic dishonesty:** Scholastic dishonesty in any of its forms may result in a report to the Assistant Dean for Master’s Programs in the School of Social Work, the Dean of the School of Social Work, the Dean of the Graduate School, and/or Student Judicial Services. Students may receive an “F” for the course and other sanctions in accordance with UT Austin policies, including dismissal from the university. Also see information on UT’s scholastic dishonesty policy at <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>
4. **Course modifications:** Course modifications may need to be made for various reasons such as weather that may result in cancelled classes. There are always many policy-related events such as conferences and presentations taking place on campus and in Austin and others that can be accessed via social media. We may want to take advantage of some of them, and this may also require modifying the course schedule. Should any modifications be made to the course schedule related to activities, content, assignments, etc., students will be notified in class and/or by e-mail. Other course communications may also be done via e-mail (also see UT’s policy on e-mail below in section VI). Students should check their e-mail frequently, and students who are absent from class should check on announcements made in class during their absence.
5. **Canvas:** The Canvas website may be used for various class functions such as posting course documents and grades.

VI. University/School of Social Work Policies

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS HONOR CODE. The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND CIVILITY IN THE CLASSROOM. The professor expects students to act as professionals in class. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another’s opinions. A course brings together a group of diverse individuals with various backgrounds. Students are influenced and shaped by such factors as ethnicity, gender, sex, physical abilities, religious and political beliefs, national origins, and sexual orientations, among others. We expect to learn from each other in an atmosphere of positive engagement and mutual respect. Social Work also deals with complex and controversial issues. These issues may be challenging and uncomfortable, and it would be impossible to offer a substantive classroom experience that did not include potentially difficult conversations relating to challenging issues. In this environment we will be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometimes we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. Nevertheless, the professor requires that students engage one another with civility, respect, and professionalism.

UNANTICIPATED DISTRESS. Students may experience unexpected and/or distressing reactions to course readings, videos, conversations, and assignments. If so, students are encouraged to inform the professor. The professor can be responsive and supportive regarding students’ participation in course assignments and activities, but students are responsible for communicating clearly what kind of support is desired. If counseling is needed, students may contact a service provider of their choosing, including the UT Counseling Center at 512-471-3515 or online at www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/.

POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION. Public social networks are not private. Even when open only to approved or invited members, users cannot be certain that privacy will exist among the general membership of sites. If social work students choose to participate in such forums,

please assume that anything posted can be seen, read, and critiqued. What is said, posted, linked to, commented on, uploaded, subscribed to, etc., can be accessed and archived, posing potential harm to professional reputations and prospective careers. Social work students who use social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and other forms of electronic communication (i.e. blogs, etc.) must be mindful of how their communication may be perceived by clients, colleagues, faculty, and others. Social work students are expected to make every effort to minimize material which could be considered inappropriate for a professional social worker in training. Because of this, social work students are advised to manage security settings at their most private levels and avoid posting information/photos or using any language that could jeopardize their professional image.

Students are asked to consider the amount of personal information posted on these sites and are obliged to block any client access to involvement in the students' social networks. Client material should not be referred to in any form of electronic media, including *any* information that might lead to the identification of a client or compromise client confidentiality in *any* way. Additionally, students must critically evaluate any material that is posted regarding community agencies and professional relationships, as certain material could violate the standards set by the School of Social Work, the Texas Code of Conduct for Social Workers, and/or the NASW Code of Ethics.

Social work students should consider that they will be representing professional social work practice as well as The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work program while in the classroom, the university community, and the broader area communities.

POLICY ON SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>).

USE OF COURSE MATERIALS. The materials used in this course, including, but not limited to exams, quizzes, and homework assignments, are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized duplication of the course materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary action being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of course materials without the specific, express approval of the professor may be a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty, which could result in further disciplinary action. This sharing includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of distributing those materials to other current or future students.

DOCUMENTED DISABILITY STATEMENT. Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471- 6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). A student should present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed and followed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS. By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, examination, work assignment, or project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

TITLE IX REPORTING. In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the University of Texas at Austin is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from discriminatory conduct based on gender. Students who report incidents of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, or sexual misconduct to faculty, instructors, and/or staff who supervise students, will be provided

a list of University resources. If the incident is impacting the academic environment, a report will be provided to the University's Title IX Coordinator. Further information, including student resources related to Title IX, may be found at <http://socialwork.utexas.edu/dl/files/academic-programs/other/qrg-sexualharassment.pdf>.

CLASSROOM CONFIDENTIALITY. Information shared in class about agencies, clients, and personal matters is considered confidential per the NASW Code of Ethics on educational supervision and is protected by regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as well. As such, sharing this information with individuals outside of the educational context is not permitted. Violations of confidentiality could result in actions taken according to the policies and procedure for review of academic performance located in sections 3.0, 3.1, and 3.2 of the Standards for Social Work Education.

USE OF E-MAIL FOR OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO STUDENTS. Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible for keeping the university informed about a change of e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

SAFETY. As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should notify the professor regarding any safety concerns.

BEHAVIOR CONCERNS ADVICE LINE (BCAL). If students are worried about someone who is acting differently, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership between the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY. Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors in the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor's instructions.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you are given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

VII. Course Assignments and Student Evaluation

Students will be evaluated on (a) legislative analysis project composed of a policy brief, an editorial, a letter to an elected official or to the editor, and a brief class presentation, and (b) a series of short policy reflection/involvement assignments.

A. Short Policy Assignments

Students will complete seven short assignments designed to complement the class readings and enrich class discussions. Each should be single spaced and at least one page but no more than two pages long. Be prepared to discuss your assignments in class. Each paper is worth 5% of the final grade and will be graded on a 1- to 5-point scale according to the following criteria:

5=excellent	Meets all requirements outlined in the assignment and displays a high level of effort, critical thinking, and writing skills
4=good	Meets all requirements outlined in the assignment and displays a substantial level of effort, critical thinking, and writing skills
3=fair	Meets all requirements outlined in the assignment and displays an adequate level of effort, critical thinking, and writing skills
2=poor	Does not meet some of the requirements outlined in the assignment and reflects an insufficient level of effort, critical thinking, and writing skills
1=not acceptable	Fails to meet the minimum requirements outlined in the assignment and does not reflect the necessary level of effort, critical thinking, and writing skills

1. Paper 1, due Week 4, Feb. 10: Increasing understanding of poverty and public assistance. Before doing this assignment, make sure you have read chapters 4, 7, 9, and pages 427-432 of chapter 11 in the textbook, then do **one** of the following (of course, you can do more than one if you wish).
 - a. If you volunteered for the ECHO Point in Time Count, describe the experience, compare and contrast it with what you read in the chapters about homelessness and poverty and a recent news article you select about homelessness, and, finally, suggest policy and practice solutions that you think would make the greatest differences in ending homelessness in the Austin area and/or the United States at large. Be sure to specifically reference points in the text chapters and the news article; you may also refer to other readings you may have done on this topic. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is a good source of information on policy approaches to homelessness and there are several coalitions that offer a great deal of information on issues of homelessness and solutions to homelessness (see chapter 4 of the textbook).
 - b. Nutrition assistance: In addition to the required text readings, read a recent news article about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and do one of the following: attempt to eat on a SNAP budget for one week OR using a SNAP budget, map out what you would eat for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks for one week and develop a shopping list for the week noting what food items you would purchase and their cost at a typical grocery store. Your paper should reflect on the experience you chose, especially in regard to your views of the adequacy or inadequacy of SNAP benefits. Compare and contrast your experience with the chapter readings, a news article, and other information you have read or know about SNAP. End your paper with your suggestions for improving SNAP with regard to factors such as the program's goals, eligibility requirements and procedures, or other features. A list of resources about SNAP will be provided.
 - c. Public assistance for families with young children: Learn more about the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program in Texas or another state (benefit levels, eligibility requirements, length of benefits, work requirements, etc.) and read a recent news article about the program. Describe that state's program you chose and compare and contrast it with points made in the text readings, especially chapter 7. You may wish to focus on aspects such as the adequacy of benefits and the fairness of the eligibility requirements and program rules. End with suggestions for improving the state's TANF program.
 - d. Child support: If you wish to focus on child support, learn more about the Child Support Enforcement (CSE) program in Texas or another state and read a recent news article about child support enforcement. Describe the method(s) used to determine child support payments in the state you chose and that state's CSE program. Find information that may be available on that state's CSE outcomes, for example, in the House of Representatives publication known as the "Green Book" at <http://greenbook.waysandmeans.house.gov/>. In reflecting on and citing this information, describe the major problems you see with CSE and suggest solutions for addressing them.

2. Paper 2, due Week 5, February 17: Political philosophy. Part of your assignment for this week is to watch a Republican and a Democratic presidential debate (see course schedule for this week). Begin your 1 to 2-page paper by summarizing the context (location, format, topics, moderators,

- audience composition, and other elements) of the debate. In addition to the material you have read in our text (see, for example, the material on political ideology in chapter 1, 3, and 4), read at least one media commentary on each of the debates and be sure to clearly reference them in your 1 to 2-page paper. Select two of the Republican and two of the Democratic candidates. Describe some of their responses to debate questions and reflect on how true or consistent they are with their party's underlying principles. Visit the official campaign website of each of the candidates you have chosen. Compare and contrast the sites with regard to the appeal they might have to voters and also read the positions they have posted on some of the issues facing the country. You may wish to organize your paper around a particular issue, depending on what topic(s) are covered in these two debates (e.g., immigration, wages, gun control, income/corporate taxes, Social Security). Summarize your conclusions about how well each candidate did in the debate, especially regarding any substantive approaches they articulated to improving social welfare policy. **Note: Try to choose an issue other than healthcare policy as we will have another assignment on it.**
3. Paper 3, due Week 6, February 24: Increasing understanding of the Social Security retirement program. After reading chapter 5 and a recent news article of your choosing on Social Security, develop three questions or state three concerns you have about the program, and pose these questions/concerns to two or three of your family members, friends, or colleagues (try to include someone who is currently receiving Social Security and others currently paying into the system but not yet receiving benefits, perhaps someone who is in their twenties and thirties and someone who is in their forties or fifties to get perspectives across generations). In your 1 to 2-page paper, note how and why the material you read affected the three questions/concerns you developed. Reflect on the information you gleaned from the readings and discussions with family, friends, and colleagues. Discuss points such as the adequacy of benefits, the fairness of the programs, how you view Social Security's future, and what measures you think may be needed to improve the Social Security retirement program.
 4. Paper 4, due Week 7, March 2: Increasing understanding of disability policy. After reading material in the textbook, especially Chapter 6, and a recent news article on disability policy, do the following: comment on three things you may not have known about disability policy or surprised you about disability policy citing the reading material. Go to three of your favorite places or take note of three different locations you are at during the week. For each location, note how accessible the location would be to a person with a mobility and/or other disability. If possible, speak with people who have a disability and ask them what policy or policies they would especially like to see changed about disability policy. Conclude your paper with three ideas you think are especially important for changes that should be made with regard to disability policy and note your rationale for selecting these three.
 5. Paper 5, due Week 8, March 9: increasing understanding of healthcare policy. Read material in the textbook, especially chapter 8, and a recent article on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (also referred to as "Obamacare"). Then view the official websites of two Republican and two Democratic presidential candidates. In your 1 to 2-page paper, compare and contrast the candidates' statements on healthcare policy. End your paper by addressing the following question: If the United States was going to scrap its current approaches to healthcare and was going to develop an entirely new system with the goal of improving the health of all Americans, what type of healthcare system/s and approaches to healthcare delivery would you want to see enacted and why? Reference your readings in the paper.
 6. Paper 6, due Week 10, March 23: Increasing understanding of child welfare policy. After reading the section on child welfare policy in chapter 10 of the textbook, read the Austin American-Statesman series entitled "Missed Signs, Fatal Consequences" at <http://projects.statesman.com/news/cps-missed-signs/>. From the perspective of an aspiring professional social worker, use the first part of your 1- to 2-page paper to summarize the points you

thought were most critical from a social work practice point of view, citing the sources. Using these and any other readings you may wish to cite, follow the first part of your paper with a discussion of what might be done through social welfare policy to improve the child welfare system in Texas.

7. Paper 7, you may submit this paper during Week 13, April 13, or Week 14, April 20. Choose either option a or b. Increasing understanding of race, ethnicity, gender, and other factors in social welfare policy.
 - a. This paper should provide your reactions to the Dean Jack Otis Social Policy lecture by Dr. King Davis and should also include specific references to the material presented in chapters 11 and 12 of the textbook. Based on the lecture, text (and any other sources you may wish to cite), also discuss your ideas and preferences for social welfare policies that might improve the well-being of one or more segments of the population that has faced marginalization.
 - b. If you were not able to attend the Otis lecture, or if you prefer, submit a paper on immigration policy during Week 14. In the paper, reflect on the chapter material on diversity, especially the section of chapter 12 on immigration policy and the tentatively scheduled in-class talk on immigration policy (as well as Dr. Davis' lecture if you attended). Do you think U.S. immigration policy is flawed? If not, why not, and what are its strengths. If yes, what are the major problems you see and what policy approaches would you suggest to remedy them? You may also provide your thoughts about both the strengths and weaknesses of current immigration policy. You may wish to consider evidence on the effects of current immigration on the job and economic situation in the United States, the bases and emphases for allowing immigration (family, employment, etc.), and/or other factors such as humanitarian considerations with regard to refugee and asylee status.

B. Legislative Analysis and Action Project

The purposes of the legislative analysis and action project are to provide an opportunity to learn more about the legislative process and an important current legislative issue of interest to the student; to develop skills in policy analysis, writing, and presenting that are critical to the profession of social work; and to learn more about different roles that social workers and others play in the policy process. **This project is worth 65% of the final grade.** It will include (1) a 5 to 6-page single-spaced policy brief (not including references), (2) a 700-750-word opinion editorial that can be submitted to a newspaper(s), (3) a letter to the editor OR a one-page letter to an elected official, and (4) a brief (approximately 10-minute) class presentation in the form of legislative testimony. You can do this assignment alone, in pairs, or in groups of three. All parts of the project will be evaluated and graded as a whole.

Appendix A contains a form for writing up your plan for the legislative analysis and action project. Bring this form **to class on February 10**. Turn in a draft of your brief no later than **March 30** and a draft of your editorial and letter to the editor or elected official no later than **April 13** (you may turn in your drafts earlier than the due date if you wish). You will receive feedback so that you can revise your work as needed. **The drafts are required (not optional) and are subject to the same penalties as final assignments if turned in late. More thorough drafts are likely to result in feedback that will be more useful in revising and finalizing the work. All final products are due on April 27. Submit all drafts reviewed by the instructor and/or TA with your final products along with the project form found in Appendix B and your attendance report found in Appendix C.**

To begin:

- Select a bill or two or more closely related bills on a social welfare topic of major concern (e.g., health care, mental health, child welfare, substance abuse) filed during the last (84th session) of the Texas legislature, which began on January 13, 2015. Suggested topics will be discussed in class. Students may meet with the instructor and/or teaching assistants to discuss topics and plans for the project. A major source of help in selecting a bill is the Texas Legislature Online

(<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/>). You may also select a bill from another state legislature or the U.S. Congress.

- Investigate the history of the issue and the bill; become familiar with the bill and related proposals/bills and their purpose (e.g., to introduce new legislation or modify existing legislation), and learn about the actions the legislature took (or did not take) on the bill.
- Identify particular legislators, organizations, groups, committees, and individuals that worked to pass, amend, or defeat the bill, their positions on the bill, and the methods they used to influence the legislation. Also identify groups that might have remained neutral on the bill and why.

It may help to approach this project, particularly the policy brief, as if you were working as a staff member of a legislative committee, an aide for a state legislator, or a policy analyst for a governmental or private social welfare agency or another organization concerned about social welfare policy such as a think tank, a membership organization like the National Association of Social Workers, or an advocacy group such as a human services coalition. In any case, prepare the policy brief to thoroughly familiarize your "employer" or others, such as an organization's constituents or a broader public audience, about the issue and the bill(s) and help them decide what modifications, if any, are needed and why.

1. The 5 to 6-page policy brief should be organized in a manner that is relevant to the bill(s) you have chosen and written in the third person. We will discuss how to write a policy brief in class and study examples of policy briefs. Below are broad topics and points you should cover in your brief to the extent they are important to the bill(s) you selected:

(a) A brief introduction to the bill(s) stating its/their importance (positive or negative) for social welfare policy in Texas or the nation. Also include in the introduction a brief statement of the brief's purpose (what you intend to accomplish in it or what you want the reader to learn from it).

(b) A description of the problem/issue that necessitated or preceded the bill(s). What is the nature of the problem? How widespread is it? How many people are affected? Who (everyone? the poor? particular age groups?) is affected and how? What are the problem's known or suspected causes? How is the bill(s) intended to address the problem?

(c) The bill or bills' historical background, including historical antecedents. How much attention has this problem/issue received historically? How has the problem/issue been handled previously? How has the policy response changed over time? What is the bill(s) or existing policy's legislative history? What recent events or situations led to the bill(s) being introduced? What are other state, federal, nations', or international policies regarding the problem/issue?

(d) A description of the bill(s). How will the bill(s) work if it/they become law? What resources or opportunities is the policy expected to provide (e.g., economic opportunity, cash, in-kind services, redistribution of goods and services, empowerment, status, preventive services, education, other)? Who will be covered by the policy and how (e.g., selective entitlement, universal entitlement, means testing, other)? How will the policy be implemented? What are the policy's intended short- and long-term goals and intended outcomes? Under what administrative auspices will the policy be further developed and implemented? What funding is needed? What provisions are made, if any, for overseeing, evaluating, and coordinating policy implementation to ensure and/or determine its effectiveness? What criteria will be used to determine the policy's outcomes and effectiveness? How long is the policy expected to exist (i.e., is there a specific requirement for review and continuation)?

(e) Identification of individuals and groups concerned about the policy issue and their positions on the bill(s). **Be sure to interview concerned individuals and groups** (e.g., elected officials, legislative assistants, members of citizens' or advocacy groups, human service providers, consumer group members) and, if possible attend meetings of organizations, agencies, and

committees where the issue is being discussed. Incorporate information gleaned from these activities in the analysis section of your brief (see point f below) and cite them correctly in the reference section. You may wish to do more than simply list the individuals and groups concerned and their positions and instead weave them into your analysis.

(f) An analysis of the bill. The points covered in items f, g, and h are the **heart of the policy brief** and should comprise at least half the paper. Your analysis should reflect information addressed in the a model(s) of policy analysis studied in this class or found in other sources. Address issues such as the value premises or ideological assumptions that underlie the bill. On what knowledge base or scientific grounding, if any, does the bill(s) rest? Is there empirical evidence that the bill(s) may achieve its intended result(s)? Are the goals just, democratic, and attainable? Is the bill(s) expected to contribute to a better quality of life for the target population by promoting social and economic justice, self-determination, self-realization, civil liberties or rights, empowerment, or other benefits, or might the bill(s) adversely affect the quality of life of the target or other groups?

(g) Your conclusions. Based on your objective analysis, what conclusions have you reached about the bill(s) (i.e., proposed policy)? Are the goals politically feasible--i.e., is there sufficient legislative support for the bill/s? Is public sentiment favorable toward the goals? Are the goals of the proposed policy economically feasible--i.e., is sufficient funding available to implement the policy and is it likely that funding will be continued as needed in the future? Are the goals administratively feasible--i.e., are there responsible administrative agencies capable of effectively implementing the policy to achieve its stated goals? Might alternative policies better achieve the goals? Is the policy important enough to justify the expenditure of scarce resources?

(h) Your recommendations. What are your recommendations regarding the proposed policy? Do you recommend it as it is currently stated? Would you suggest modifications? How would you improve it?

(i) **At least 12 scholarly references and three interviews correctly cited in APA format and noted in the text of the brief.** Include both theoretical and empirical scholarly references and be careful about dubious sources of information (e.g., unsubstantiated references from unknown sources on the Internet). You may ALSO include references from the popular literature (newspapers, magazines) but these do not substitute for the minimum of 12 scholarly references.

THE POLICY BRIEF SHOULD PROVIDE A BALANCED, UNBIASED, CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE BILL(S), PRESENTING ACCURATELY AND FAIRLY EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE AS WELL AS PROPONENTS AND OPPONENTS' POSITIONS. NO MATTER HOW STRONGLY YOU FEEL ABOUT THE POLICY ISSUE(S) and BILL(S), YOU ARE PRESENTING AN OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS TO HELP OTHERS MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS.

2. Your editorial and letter to the editor or an elected official should be based on your research on the policy brief AND your position on the proposal. In preparing to write an editorial, study the op-ed page of newspapers such as the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Austin American-Statesman*, or your hometown paper and read the paper's instructions for submitting an editorial. Generally, they are about 700 to 750 words. If you decide to submit your editorial to a newspaper and it gets published prior to the end of the semester, you will receive 5 extra points toward your final grade. Instructions on writing an editorial and letters to the editor and legislators will be provided.

3. Make a 10-minute presentation to the class in the form of mock legislative testimony. Instructions for developing and presenting legislative testimony will be provided. Take a couple minutes to set the stage by explaining the bill and its status (e.g., was it tabled, left in committee, passed, vetoed by the governor); then use the remaining time to present your views and rationale for them. If you are working

with a partner(s), each of you will have 10 minutes to present, and you should coordinate your testimony so as to limit repetition of the same points.

Criteria for Evaluating Legislative Analysis and Action Projects:

1. **Completeness and thoroughness:** How fully has the topic or issue been addressed? Has the topic or issue been sufficiently researched using scholarly and other resources, interviews, and other means in order to gain differing perspectives and full knowledge of the issue? Has the theoretical and empirical literature on the subject been incorporated in the project? Does the work leave the reader with the impression that major questions have been considered, or are important issues left unaddressed? Has the work been carefully proofread? (25 points maximum)
2. **Organization and clarity:** Is the policy brief or other product well written and organized in a logical manner? Are there appropriate transitions between sentences, paragraphs, and sections? Are the sentence structure and grammar of appropriate quality? Have descriptive headings and subheadings been used to improve organization of the policy brief? Are issues addressed in a way that someone unfamiliar with them can understand as well as someone knowledgeable about them? Is the editorial and letter to the editor or legislator presented appropriately for that medium? (25 points maximum)
3. **Referencing:** Are there a sufficient number of (at least 12) appropriate references? Has referencing been done according to American Psychological Association (APA) or other appropriate referencing style? Are the references well integrated in the text? Are short direct quotations noted in quotation marks; are longer direct quotations indented; are page numbers or paragraph numbers for non-paginated electronic sources indicated for all direct quotations? Are indirect quotes paraphrased sufficiently? (25 points maximum)
4. **Originality and Creativity:** Does the work demonstrate a thorough understanding of the issues, varying viewpoints that have been compared and contrasted, and political considerations that will likely influence the legislation? Does the work demonstrate that the writer's or writers' analytical skills have been used in a way that suggests more than a restatement of what others have said about this issue, and have points been suggested that others have not addressed? Is the work written and formatted in a way that will gain the intended audiences' interest and attention? (25 points maximum)

Grading Scale: The grade for the legislative analysis assignment and the final course grade will be based on the following scale:

94 and above=A Work is exceptional on all criteria	74.0-76.999=C Work is adequate on most criteria
90.0-93.999=A- Work is exceptional on most criteria	70.0-73.999=C- Work is adequate on some criteria
87.0-89.999=B+ Work is good/very good on all criteria	67.0-69.999=D+ Work is inadequate on some criteria
84.0-86.999=B Work is good/very good on most criteria	64.0-66.999=D Work is inadequate on many criteria
80.0-83.999=B- Work is good/very good on some criteria	60.0-63.999=D- Work is inadequate on most criteria
77.0-79.999=C+ Work is adequate on all criteria	Below 60.0=F Work is inadequate on all criteria

VIII. Course Calendar

Date	Topics	Readings (text)	Assignments Due
Week 1 Jan. 20	<p>Introductions of students and instructor</p> <p>Course overview</p> <p>What is social welfare policy and why isn't it more rational?</p> <p>What is policy practice and what do policy practitioners do? (Hint: "Policy affects practice, and practice affects policy.")</p> <p>Introducing the Social Work Grand Challenges</p> <p>Class exercise: If you could change a policy</p> <p>Volunteer Opportunity: ECHO 2016 Point in Time Count (if you participate, the experience can be used in the short policy assignment due on Feb. 10).</p>	DiNitto & Johnson, Introduction: Politics, Rationalism, and Social Welfare Policy	
Week 2 Jan. 27	<p>Theories and language of welfare states</p> <p>Selecting a bill for your policy project</p> <p>An overview of the 84th Texas legislative session and how social workers get involved in policy practice: Guest speaker, Will Francis, LMSW, Government Relations Director, NASW Texas</p>	DiNitto & Johnson, Chapter 1, "Politics and the Policymaking Process"; Chapter 3, "Politics and the History of Social Welfare Policy"	Use these first weeks to get a start on your legislative analysis project
Week 3 Feb. 3	<p>Poverty and inequality in America</p> <p>Who pays, who benefits? Them, us, or all of us? (or why tax and budgeting policy are important)</p> <p>Why we can't agree on what poverty is, how to measure it, and if it exists in the USA</p> <p>Applying for TANF, SNAP, & Medicaid</p> <p>The LBJ School is hosting a Texas Fatherhood Summit on this day. We may be able to attend for part of the class.</p>	DiNitto & Johnson, Chapter 4, "Ending Poverty: Is It An Issue Anymore?"; Chapter 11, "The Challenges of a Diverse Society: Gender and Sexual Orientation," pp. 427-432	

<p>Week 4 Feb. 10</p>	<p>Poverty and inequality cont.</p> <p>Tales of two strategies for helping families with young children in the USA: Child support enforcement and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)</p> <p>How other countries do it, why they do it this way, and what difference it makes</p> <p>Class exercises: Living on public assistance and calculating a living wage</p>	<p>Radey, DiNitto, & Johnson, Chapter 7: "Helping Needy Families: An End to Welfare As We Knew It"; Kindle, DiNitto, & Johnson, Chapter 9, "Preventing Poverty: Education and Employment Policy"</p>	<p>Submit plan for Legislative Analysis and Action Project (see Appendix A)</p> <p>Short assignment #1 due</p> <p>See information below for next week's assignment</p>
<p>Week 5 Feb. 17</p>	<p>Prior to this class watch the Democratic presidential debate on PBS on Feb. 11 and the Republican debate on CBS News on Feb. 13.</p> <p>How the Texas legislature really works (what making sausage and making social policy have in common—a review of how an idea might become a bill and how a bill might become a law)</p> <p>Guest speaker, Daniel Williams, Policy Coordinator/Regional Field Coordinator, Equality Texas</p> <p>How to write policy briefs, editorials, testimony, and letters to elected officials</p>	<p>DiNitto & Johnson, Chapter 2, "Analyzing, Implementing, and Evaluating Social Welfare Policy"</p> <p>Materials on writing policy briefs, editorials, testimony, and letters to elected officials</p>	<p>Short assignment #2 due</p>
<p>Week 6 Feb. 24</p>	<p>Social Security: Will it be there for you?</p> <p>Patty Duke and George Takei (Hikaru Sulu) enroll in the Social Security retirement program</p> <p>Class exercise: Saving Social Security</p>	<p>DiNitto & Johnson, Chapter 5, "Preventing Poverty: Social Insurance and Personal Responsibility"</p>	<p>Short assignment #3 due</p>
<p>Week 7 Mar. 2</p>	<p>Social construction and the history of disability policy</p> <p>New visions for disability policy</p> <p>Social Work Day on the Hill will take place in Washington, DC on March 2. Details are pending, but we may be able to join via live streaming.</p> <p>Guest speaker, Elaine Eisenbaum, Research Associate and Communications and Outreach Manager, Texas Center on Disability Studies: A human timeline of disability policy in the USA</p>	<p>DiNitto, Eisenbaum, & Johnson, Chapter 6, "Disability Policy: Embracing a Civil Rights Perspective"</p>	<p>Short assignment #4 due</p>

<p>Week 8 Mar. 9</p>	<p>Path dependence and the road to health care reform</p> <p>Is it fair to call it “Obamacare”?</p> <p>Guest speaker: TBA</p> <p>A global tour of health care policy: Frontline film “Sick Around the World” and related class exercise</p>	<p>DiNitto & Johnson, Chapter 8, “Providing Healthcare: Can All Americans Be Insured?”</p>	<p>Short assignment #5 due</p>
<p>Week 9 Mar. 16</p>	<p>Spring break: No class</p>		
	<p><i>Note: Social work student day at the legislature will be held in Austin on March 22. Details are forthcoming. We will discuss participation.</i></p>		
<p>Week 10 Mar. 23</p>	<p>Child welfare policy: Protection from abuse and neglect, foster care, adoption, disproportionality and other issues plaguing the system</p> <p>Guest speakers: Child welfare panel</p> <p>Social services for older adults: Protection from abuse, neglect, and exploitation, guardianship, conservatorship, long-term care, and other issues as Americans live longer</p>	<p>Ritter, DiNitto, & Johnson, Chapter 10, “Providing Social Services: Help for Children, Older Americans, and Individuals with Mental and Substance Use Disorders,” pp. 369-399</p>	<p>Short assignment #6 due</p>
<p>Week 11 Mar. 30</p>	<p>How social policy can end the war on drugs</p> <p>Closing mental health and substance abuse service gaps</p>	<p>DiNitto & Johnson, Chapter 10, “Providing Social Services: Help for Children, Older Americans, and Individuals with Mental and Substance Use Disorders,” pp. 399-416</p>	<p>Draft of policy brief due</p>

Week 12 Apr. 6	Issues of diversity in social welfare policy (race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation) Dean Jack Otis Social Problem and Social Policy Lecture: Dr. King Davis presenting on “New Directions: Policy Change in the Post-Obama Era, 9:00-11:30. Dr. Davis will discuss how race, gender, age, religion and region determine control of resources, participation in policy-making, and definition of policy directions. <i>This is an important school event. Please do your best to make arrangements to attend this lecture. We may modify our course schedule for this day to accommodate your attendance at the lecture.</i>	DiNitto & Johnson, Chapter 12, “Challenges of a Diverse Society: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation”	
Week 13 Apr. 13	Issues of diversity in social welfare policy (race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation) cont. Immigration Guest speaker (tentative): Luis Zayas, Dean, UT Austin School of Social Work	DiNitto & Johnson, Chapter 11, “The Challenges of a Diverse Society: Gender and Sexual Orientation,” pp. 433-470	Short assignment #7 due this week or next Drafts of editorial and letter due
Week 14 Apr. 20	Brief project reports		If you did not turn in short assignment #7 last week, it is due this week.
Week 15 Apr. 27	Brief project reports Course instructor survey		All components of final legislative analysis and action project due
Week 16 May 4	What’s ahead in social welfare policy? Wrapping up the semester: Your future in social welfare policy	DiNitto & Johnson, “Conclusion: Politics, Rationalism, and the Future of Social Welfare Policy”	

VIII. Course Evaluation

In addition to the official Course Instructor Survey that all students will be asked to complete at the end of the term, the instructor will request feedback from students at various points during the term. Students’ input is welcome throughout the term to improve the course.

IX. Additional References

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Appendix A: Plan for Legislative Analysis and Action Project

Your name(s):

1.

2.

3.

Topic of interest:

Number, brief title, and two to three sentence description of bill(s) you will analyze:

Appendix B: Report of Legislative Analysis and Action Project

Your name:

Your team members' names (if any):

- 1.
- 2.

Number and brief title of bill(s) you analyzed:

Names, titles, and affiliations of those you personally interviewed:

List any meetings and other events you attended (include a brief description of each):

Your contributions to the project, including written products:

Other information you wish to provide about your work:

Appendix C: Attendance Report

Name: _____

The definition of attended a class session is that you were present for the entire session (neither arrived late nor left early). Unless you are ill, have an (unforeseen) emergency, or are excused to observe a religious holiday, the first absence results in 10 points subtracted from your final grade. Generally, missing two or more classes will result in an F for the course or the need to withdraw from the course depending on circumstances.

Week	Date	Attended (circle yes or no)		If no, indicate reason if you wish
1	Jan. 20	Yes	No	
2	Jan. 27	Yes	No	
3	Feb. 3	Yes	No	
4	Feb. 10	Yes	No	
5	Feb. 17	Yes	No	
6	Feb. 24	Yes	No	
7	Mar. 2	Yes	No	
8	Mar. 9	Yes	No	
9	Mar. 16	Yes	No	
10	Mar. 23	Yes	No	
11	Mar. 30	Yes	No	
12	Apr. 6	Yes	No	
13	Apr. 13	Yes	No	
14	Apr. 20	Yes	No	
15	Apr. 27	Yes	No	
16	May 4	Yes	No	

The above is a true reporting of my class attendance.

Signature