

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

**COURSE/UNIQUE NUMBER:** SW 382R/64175

**SEMESTER:** SPRING 2014

**MEETING TIME:** TH 2:30-5:30

**MEETING PLACE:** SSW 2.118

**INSTRUCTOR:** MONICA FAULKNER, PH.D., LMSW

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**SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY**

**I. Standardized 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 (for example, the New Deal, the War on Poverty, urban renewal, the contemporary period of welfare reform).

**II. Standardized Course Objectives**

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; **(PB 25)**
2. Understand the economic and political constraints and opportunities in the development of social welfare problems and policies; **(PB 25 and 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)**.

The School of Social Work has been continuously accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) since 1952. In order to maintain our accreditation status, we engage in ongoing curriculum assessment to demonstrate compliance with CSWE's Education Policies 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. The complete EPAS can be optioned 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**

Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7

Assignment: Policy portfolio, exams, policy presentation, food stamp assignment

**PB26 Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action**

Objectives 2 and 8

Assignment: Policy portfolio and policy presentation

### **III. Teaching Methods**

This class is conducted using a variety of teaching methods such as lectures, videos, guest speakers, experiential activities and group discussions. Students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to each class period. Class instruction is designed to encourage student participation and input.

### **IV. Required Readings**

#### **a. Books**

Dinitto, D.M. (2011). *Social Welfare: Politics and Public Policy* (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

LeBlanc, A.N. (2004). *Random Family: Love, drugs, trouble and coming of age in the Bronx*. New York: Scribner.

#### **b. Policy topic book**

Students will be assigned groups based on their interest in various policy topics. Students are required to read the book corresponding to their group topic.

#### **c. Additional readings**

Additional readings from other books and journal articles are assigned. Any additional readings will be available on UT Blackboard.

### **V. Course Requirements**

	<u>Points</u>
Policy Project	
Book reflection	15
Paper draft	5
Final paper	20
Presentation	10
Mid term exam	15
Final Exam	15
Food stamp paper	15
Class participation (Can drop two absences in case of emergency)	<u>5</u>
	100

## GRADUATE GRADING SCALE

94.0 and Above	A
90.0 to 93.999	A-
87.0 to 89.999	B+
84.0 to 86.999	B
80.0 to 83.999	B-
77.0 to 79.999	C+
74.0 to 76.999	C
70.0 to 73.999	C-
67.0 to 69.999	D+
64.0 to 66.999	D
60.0 to 63.999	D-
Below 60.0	F

**A = Superior work:** The assignment significantly exceeds expectations listed in the syllabus. Student does more than is required in the assignment and demonstrates a high level of in-depth critical thinking and analysis (i.e., writing coherent, ideas synthesized, discussion well developed).

**B = Good Work:** The assignment meets all the requirements and demonstrates evidence of in-depth critical thinking and analysis.

**C = Average Work:** The assignment meets the requirements or has minor gaps but lacks evidence of in-depth critical thinking and analysis. Remember, a C- (73 points) or lower is noted as a course failure and will require re-taking the course.

**D-failing = Poor/failing Work:** The assignment has important gaps, both in terms of not meeting the requirements and lacking in-depth critical thinking and analysis.

1. Policy project. Students will explore a policy issue in depth and read an additional assigned book related to their topic. Additionally, students will complete a policy analysis paper and presentation on a specific piece of legislation related to their topic. Students will be able to work individually, in pairs or small groups of up to four students on the policy analysis paper and presentation. The book review will be completed independently. Additional information on this assignment will be provided in class.
2. Exams. There will be a mid-term exam and final exam covering the readings, class lectures, guest speakers and class videos. Exams will be in an essay format. If you are unable to take an exam on the assigned date for any reason other than an emergency, you must notify the instructor at least one week in advance of the test date or risk not being able to complete the exam.
3. Food stamp paper. Students will be required to complete a paper examining the food stamp program. Students will choose one of the options below and write a 5-7page paper demonstrating knowledge of food stamp program's strengths and weaknesses. Additional information will be provided in class.  
*Option 1* – submit a 5-7 page report on what it was like to live within the budget and rules of the food stamp program for two weeks; or  
*Option 2* – submit a 5-7 page report that provides a detailed accounting of your food purchases/expenses for two weeks. The report should examine and compare these purchases in light of food stamp budget allowances and regulations.
4. Class participation. Students will receive five points for class attendance, class participation and professional conduct. Attendance will be taken every class period. A student may miss two classes without penalty. For each additional class missed, one point will be deducted from the class participation grade. In addition, students who inappropriately use cell phones, computers or any other technological device during class will have one point deducted from their participation grade each time the behavior occurs. If all participation points are deducted from a student's class participation grade and continued absences and/or class disruptions occur, additional points will be deducted from the student's final grade in the same manner in which they were deducted from the class participation grade.
5. Extra Credit Points. Up to three points may be obtained for attendance at approved events related to social welfare issues. Information about approved events will be posted on Blackboard. One point can be earned for each event. Points will be added to the student's final grade. Attendance at these events must include at least two hour participation at the event. Students must bring a copy of the event program signed by the speaker or an event organizer to verify attendance. Evidence from event

attendance should be turned into the professor as soon as possible after the event. All attendance materials must be turned in to the professor by the last class day in order to receive extra credit points. Participation in these events cannot be simultaneously counted as an activity for the student's group policy project.

## VI. Class Policies

1. *Class Attendance.* Class attendance is required every class period for the entire class period. Attendance will be taken each class. It is the student's sole responsibility to sign the attendance sheet each class. Students are allowed to drop two absences due to unforeseen circumstances. Any class material missed due to a class absence is the students' sole responsibility.
2. *Class participation.* Students are expected to complete the readings prior to class, and should be well prepared to participate in discussions and experiential learning assignments. Failure to demonstrate through discussions that one has completed the readings will be considered in assigning the class participation grade.
3. *General assignment requirements.* All assignments must be typed, be double spaced and have one inch margins. References/sources used in papers must be in APA format and be academic/scholarly sources. If questions about the credibility of a reference arise, consult with the instructor. The instructor is available to assist students in proof reading and formatting papers. However, students must contact the instructors 14 days before an assignment is due to arrange for assistance. The instructor is also available by email to answer questions about assignments. Students should submit questions or requests for clarifications at least 24 hours before an assignment is due. If an assignment is due in less than 24 hours, the instructor cannot guarantee a timely response.
4. *Assignment due dates.* Students will be penalized 5 points for each calendar day that an assignment is late. UT does not allow Incompletes (grade of X) to provide additional time to complete assignment. Students will be informed of any changes in assignments, due dates, and other class content. If an assignment is due on a date the student cannot attend class or during a time when a student is having difficulties printing a paper, papers may be emailed to the professor by the start of that day's class.
5. *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.
6. *Professional Conduct in Class.* The professor expects students to act like 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. We will not, nor should we, always agree with one another. In this environment we should be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometime we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. However, the professor does require that students engage one another with respect and professionalism.
7. *Use of technology in class.* No cell phone use, ipod or other devices are permitted during class. Computers may only be used for taking notes or relevant in class activities. Any inappropriate use of computers for emailing or internet usage is not permitted. Professional conduct includes respectful and meaningful efforts to participate in group projects. Failure to appropriately use technology may result in a deduction from attendance points.
8. *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.

9. *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://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/>).
10. *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). Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. 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/>.
11. *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, an examination, a work assignment, or a 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.
12. *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 to keep the university informed about changes to their 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>.
13. *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.

14. *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 among 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>.
15. *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:
  - a. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
  - b. If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
  - c. In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor's instructions.
  - d. Do not re-enter a building unless you're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

## VIII. Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
1	1/16	Introduction	Syllabus Intro	
2	1/23	Politics & the policy making process Analyzing social policy	Ch.1 Ch.2	
3	1/30	History of social welfare policy	Ch.3 U.S. Constitution UN Declaration of human rights	Semester plan
4	2/6	Poverty	Ch. 4 Rector	Food stamp paper
5	2/13	Social Insurance	Ch. 5, 6 Finish group book	
6	2/20	Healthcare	Ch. 8	Individual group book reflection
7	2/27	Healthcare	Kaiser- uninsured primer SCOUTUS decision	
8	3/6	Mid-term exam		Exam
9	3/13	Spring Break		
10	3/20	Public Assistance	Ch. 7, 9	
11	3/27	Protecting vulnerable populations	Ch. 10 Burstain (2010) Children's Rights lawsuit	
12	4/3	Family Policy	Random Family	Paper draft due
13	4/10	Social justice (guest speaker)	Ch. 11 Grant Lax & Phillips	
14	4/17	Group presentations		Group presentation
15	4/24	Immigration (guest speaker)	Ch. 12 Suarez-Orozco et al (2011) Fortuny & Chaudry (2011) Taylor et al (2011)	
16	5/1	Final exam		Exam