Social Policy Analysis and Social Problems

I. Course Description

This course is designed to provide students with the concepts to form the ability to analyze contemporary social welfare policy issues and programs and to understand the relationship between social policy and social work practice. The course focuses on historical, economic, political, and other social conditions that influenced the policy developed over time in the United States. Specific policy areas discussed are those in which social workers play major roles: income maintenance (with a focus on social insurance and public assistance), health, mental health, child welfare, and aging. Policy issues and programs are addressed as they affect major groups as well as populations at-risk (e.g. people of color, people with disabilities, women, gay men and women) with a particular emphasis on social and economic justice. Also, policies effecting quality of life for aging Americans will be examined. Students will learn to use policy analysis tools in order to understand how policy influences practice and planning decisions and how social workers can influence social welfare policy.

Specific contact points in Texas State Government and the U.S. Federal Government will be discussed and these will serve as a resource for the class and possible future employment.

II. Course Objectives

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.

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 differently 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)

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 Analysis Paper
PB26 Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action Objectives 2 and
8. Assignment: Collaborative Book Review

III. Teaching Methods

Social workers need to be able to articulate ideas clearly and persuasively. To enhance the development of this skill, this course will require a high level of class participation by students. A variety of teaching methods will be used including weekly readings, instructor lectures, video presentations, small group discussions, and guest speakers on topics related to social welfare policy. I encourage your active participation in creating an exciting learning experience for all of us.

IV. Required and Recommended Texts

DiNitto, D. (2011). Social Welfare: Politics and Public Policy, (7th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Students will also be required to read one additional text from a list of Optional books, as well as several articles provided by the instructor.

V. Course Requirements

Final grades for the course will be determined by the following:

Class Participation	10% (10 points)
Quizzes (4 Total)	40% (40 points)
Book Review	10% (10 points)
Policy Analysis Paper	30% (30 points)
Summary of Discussion	10% (10 points)

Note: There will be no mid-term or final exam given in this course.

Grades: Grades will be determined as follows:

94 - 100	A
90 - 93	A-
87 - 89	B+
84 - 86	B-
80 – 83	C+
77 – 79	C
74 – 76	C-

Course Evaluation:

At the end of the term students will have the opportunity to evaluate the course and the instructor using the official Course Instructor Survey of the School of Social Work at UT-Austin. Of course, constructive feedback on the class is welcome throughout the duration of the term.

Criteria for Evaluating Student Learning:

Class Participation (10 points): All students begin with 10 points at the beginning of the semester. Students who miss more than three classes or who do not participate in discussions will lose 1 point per class (including portions of class).

Quizzes (40 points or 10 points each): Students will be given (4) quizzes throughout the semester. The quizzes will ask basic questions taken from the class lectures and readings, so it is important that students read each week's assigned readings before class. Quizzes will be administered on a random basis and may be given at any time during the semester. Students will be allowed to drop the lowest grade they receive (total score will be based on the 3 best quiz scores). No make-up quizzes will be given. All quiz answers can be found in the class required DiNitto text.

Book Review (10 points): Students will prepare a 3-4 page (double-spaced) book review, which the student will select from a list of books that will be distributed in class by the instructor.

Evaluation and grading of the book review assignment will be based upon how clearly you describe the content of the book and your thoughtful analysis of the book's main points. Reviews should also respond to the following questions:

> What are the book's main points?
>
> How effectively does the author address a particular aspect of poverty or social welfare policy? Defend your answer with specific references to the text.
>
> In what ways does the book make an effective plea for a change in some social policy? Are you convinced?
>
> Would you recommend this book to another social worker? Why/why not?

Policy Analysis Paper (30 points): Each of you will write a 9-11 page paper (double-spaced, using 1.5 spacing) that reflects your analysis of an issue contained in a particular piece of state or federal legislation. The legislation should be related to a particular social policy referenced in your optional book.

Your analysis paper will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Completeness of overall analysis (e.g. did you cover all the relevant questions?).

Appropriate balance and tone of presentation (i.e., are you presenting both sides fairly?).

Level of research and use of appropriate sources (sufficiently broad scope of research, not based solely on online sources).

Writing skill (including grammar, syntax, and overall flow of argument.

Clear closing summary

See section VIII for further assignment instructions.

VI. Class Policies

Class Attendance: Because this is an upper-level course, much of your learning will be generated by interactions with one another. In order to enhance our mutual learning, I expect that each of you will come to class regularly, asking questions, responding to one another's presentations, and participating thoughtfully in class discussions and exercises. Students who miss more than three classes throughout the semester can expect to receive fewer points for class participation.

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.

Documentation Style: All papers must be typed (or printed on a jet printer) and double-spaced. Do proof for spelling and grammatical errors before turning them in; these types of errors are distracting and often make it more difficult for me to follow the development of your ideas. No paper will receive an "A" with multiple spelling and grammatical errors, regardless of the quality of ideas presented.

Late Assignments: Please do not ask to turn in assignments late unless you are ill. If you are ill and cannot turn in an assignment on time, please call me at my office and leave a message, including a phone number where you can be reached. Unless excused by illness, assignments turned in late will be docked 5% of the possible total points each day that the assignment is late.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259 (TTY 471-4641). Please notify me of any special accommodations that you may need prior to the end of the second week of class.

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.

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.

Scholastic Honesty: Students who violate the University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal form the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic honesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the website of Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs).

Student 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 to adhere to policies and practice related to agency and/or community safety. Students should notify the instructor 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 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.

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 of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered 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're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

VII. Course Schedule

Assigned readings should be read by the date listed. Students should be prepared to discuss them in class on that date. Supplemental readings and current topic papers will be handed out in class.

Date:	Discussion Topics:	Readings: (DiNitto)
Week 1		
Jan. 17 *Course Overview		*Overview of the Text
	*Review of the Syllabus	DiNitto, "Social Politics
	*Why this Class: "Policy and	& Public Policy"
	Politics"	Overview of class polices,
		readings and expectations
Week 2		
Jan. 24	From redistricting to political	*Chapter One:
	continuance	Politics, Rationalism, and Social
		Welfare

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Week 3

Jan.31 *Class Discussion on Texas   *Chapter Two:
            Government   Government & Social Welfare
           *Balance of Government
            power

Week 4

Feb.7   *Understanding Poverty   *Chapter Three:
        *Homeless   Defining Poverty: Where to
                         Begin?
        *Emergent Policies on Poverty

Week 5

Feb.14   *Social Security   *Chapter Four:
        *Unemployment   Preventing Poverty: The
        *Changes in Public Policy in   Social Insurance
         The Last Century Programs

Week 6

Feb.21   *Parental Responsibility   *Chapter Five:
       *Discussion on Child Support   Helping the "Deserving
       *Impacts of TANF   Poor": Aged, Blind, and
                          Disabled

Week 7

Feb.28   *Current Changes in Addressing   *Chapter Six:
         Welfare   Ending Welfare as We Knew It:
                         Temporary Assistance for Needy
                         Families

        Book report due March 6th

Week 8

March 6   *Food Stamps, Nutrition, and   *Chapter Seven:
         Fighting Hunger: Nutrition   Policy and Programs
        *Travis County Health and   in the United States
         Human Services

SPRING BREAK – MARCH 12-17

Week 9

March 20   *Understanding Medicaid and   *Chapter Eight:
         Medicare   Improving Health Care:
         *Policies of Managed Care   Treating the Nation's Ills
        *Health Care Reform

Week 10

March 27   *Head Start - Revisited   *Chapter Nine:
          *Early Childhood Education   Changing Paradigms Oct. 31
          *Guest Speaker   in the Poverty Wars:
                                          Victories, Defeats, and
                                          Stalemates

Week 11

April 3 *Rights of the Mentally Ill   *Chapter Ten: Providing
            *Promoting Independence   Social Services: Help for
            *Aging and Policy   Children, the Elderly and
                                        People with Mental Illness
                                        And Social Services

Week 12

April 10   *Historical Policy Changes
           in Serving Persons
          with Developmental Disabilities
          *Mental Health Consumers

Week 13

April 17   *Equal Rights for Women -   *Chapter Eleven:
           Opportunity and Access   Challenging Social
           Disparities and Rage   Welfare: Racism and
                                        Sexism

Policy Analysis Paper Due April 24

Week 14

April 24   *Housing and Affirmative Action   *Chapter Twelve:
                                          Implementing and
                                          Evaluating Social Welfare
                                          Policy: What Happens
                                          After a Law is Passed

Week 15   *Impacting the Political Process
May 1   *Revisit the Texas Legislature
          *Implementation of Social Policy
          *Evaluation,   CQI

          *Last Day of Class   *Review
          No final exam   **"Summary of Discussion"**

VIII. Assignment Instructions

Policy Analysis Paper: (Specific Guidelines & Scoring; see page 11)

Based on the optional text you choose to review, each of you will prepare an

analysis of a particular policy.

Your policy analysis should be organized around the following framework:
* What is the nature of the issue being targeted by the policy?
* How is the issue being defined? (issue definition)
* How has the policy been dealt with in the past? (historical analysis)
* What are the values implicit in the policy? What are the state goals of the policy? Are there any differences between stated and unstated goals? Is there consensus about the Appropriateness of the goals among different groups? (social analysis)
* What are the likely effects of the policy on the economy as a whole? Is the short-term cost more than the long-term cost? (economic analysis)
* Who are the major stakeholders, the policy's supporters? Opponents? Which stakeholders appear most powerful and why? How would you characterize the political process? involved in creating the policy? (political analysis)
* If the policy has historic roots, what are the outcomes of the policy in relation to the stated goals? If the policy is a new one, how will the policy outcomes be evaluated? (policy or program evaluation)

* Based on your training as a social worker, do you think the policy is likely to decrease the impact of poverty for some segment of the population? If "no," what recommendations might you make around reform of the policy?

* Closing summary.

Your policy analysis paper should also include a list of references that you cite in your paper; this list should include a variety of print, online, and/or interview references (15 references minimum).
Note:

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A policy analysis should be a balanced critical evaluation of the policy issue or proposal, presenting accurately and fairly the position of the proponents and opponents. No matter how strongly you feel about the policy issue, you should present an analysis that is as objective as possible, that includes recommendations that are based on empirical evidence, and that embodies a well-considered philosophical and theoretical perspective. (N. Kelly)

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Please use the following guidelines for a Policy Analysis Paper

Title: Full title indicating the topic or issues that the paper is dealing with.

I.   **Introduction (Setting the stage : 2.5 Points)**
1). The social policy or program that will be studied in this paper
2). The social problem(s) that the policy/program is intended to address
3). Significance of the problem to social policy and social welfare (Why is this an important issue that needs to be studied?; What issues frame the contemporary discussion of the problem?)
4). Organization of paper

II.   **The Causes, Scope and Implications of the Problem (7.5 Points)**
What are the causes of (or socioeconomic, psychological, political and cultural factors influencing) the problem. How serious is the problem? What are the characteristics of the population most affected by the problem? Illustrate the extent of the problem using statistics or case examples. (A brief description or the historical background of the problem/program/policy may be provided).

III.   **Description and Analysis of Policies/ Programs (10 Points)**
What are the current federal/state polices/programs that deal with this problem? What is their (political, social, and/or economic) rationale? Are they meeting the needs of the population group(s) most affected by the problem? That is how well do they work? Have they been implemented as planned? Are they cost-effective? What are anticipated versus unanticipated results? Strengths and weaknesses.

IV.   **Conclusion and Policy Recommendations (10 Points)**
Based on your analysis and critique, state needed improvement in current policies and programs if you found them inadequate: What *goals* should be set to improve things? What policy strategies can achieve these goals? *Who* should take responsibility for improving things? What cost might be involved in your proposed strategy? Are they justified by the benefits to be realized? Are your recommendations implementable? What might go wrong with your solutions?

V.   **References (proper use of APA style):**
APA style. (Article and books listed should be those that are actually cited in the paper). Popular magazines, tabloids, and books that are not of academic nature must not be used as reference source. Newspaper articles maybe cited only when the subject is brand new and academic research bases reference materials are nonexistent. Sources from the Internet may be cited (with proper citation, of course) when they are of academic and research –base nature. You are strongly encouraged to use the U.S. government publications available on the Internet. In some cases, the most recent government publications are available only through the Internet. (See attached list of on-line resources.)

Assignment Due: Class Syllabus also provides additional instructions**.**

IV. Bibliography

Armador, Xavier, Ph. D. (2000). "I am Not Sick I Don't Need Help! Helping the Seriously Mentally Ill Accept Treatment. A Practical Guide for Families and Therapists". Peconic, NY: Vida Press

Center of Mental Health Services, *Medical Necessity in Private Health Plans:*
        Implications for Behavioral Health Care. (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of
        Health and Human Services (DHHS), 2003).

Center of Mental Health Services, *The Provision of Mental Health Services in Managed*
        Care Organizations. (Washington, DC: U.S. Departments of Health and Human
        Services (DHHS), 2003).

Collins, Jim. (2001). "Good To Eat: Why Some Companies Make the Leap… and
        Other's Don't". New York, NY.: HarperCollins Publishers Inc.

DiNitto, M. Diana. (2004) 6th ed. Social Welfare, Policies and Public Practice." Allyn &

Bacon

Ellis, Rodney A. (2003). "Impacting Social Policy, A Practitioners Guide to Analysis
    And Action". Thompson, Brooks/Cole.

Evans, Katie and J. Michael Sullivan. (1990). "Dual Diagnosis: A Guide for Counselors
    And Case Managers." New York, NY: Guilford Publications, Inc.

Fawcett, B. Stephen, Ph. D. (2000). "Promoting Health for All." University of Kansas.

Haynes, S. Karen; Michelson, S. James (2003) 5th ed. "Affecting Change: Social
    Workers in the Political Arena." Allyn & Bacon

Nasar, Sylvia. (2001). "A Beautiful Mind: The Life of Mathematical Genius and Nobel
    Laureate John Nash." New York, NY.: Touchstone.

Mechanic, David. (1999). Mental Health and Social Policy; The Emergence of Managed
    Care. 4th edition. Allyn & Bacon.

Popple & Leighninger. (2004). 3rd edition, "The Policy-Based Profession: An
    Introduction to Social Welfare Policy Analysis." Allyn & Bacon.

"Preventing Drug Use among Children and Adolescents" A Research Guides. U.S.
    Department of Health and Human Services. (2003). 2nd edition. NIH Pub No.
    04-4212 (B). Publication.

Public Health, Strategic Planning Outline.

Rae, Ann; Wanda Nicholas-Wolosuk. (2003). "Changing Social Policy, an Incremental
    Approach." Allyn & Bacon.

Rosen, Laura Epstein and Xavier Francisco Amador. (1997). "When Someone You
    Love is Depressed: How to Help Your Loved One Without Losing Yourself."
    New York, NY.: Fireside.

XI.   Online Policy and Other Sites

Administration on Aging: aoa.gov
Administration for Children and Families: acf.gov
Agency for Health Care Research and Quality : ahrq.gov
Bureau of Labor Statistics: bls.gov
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: cbpp.org
Centers for Disease Control: cdc.gov
Center for Law and Social Policy: clasp.org
Center for Mental Health Services: mentalhealth.gov.
Center for Substance Abuse Prevention: samhsa.goc/csap
Center for Substance Abuse Treatment: samhsa.gov/csat
Children's Defense Fund: childrensdefence.org
Congressional Budget Office: cbo.gov
Department of Health and Human Services: hhs.gov
Executive Office of the President: whitehouse.gov
Food and Drug Administration: fda.gov
Health Care Financing Administration : hcfa.gov
Health Resources and Services Administration: hrsa.gov
Indian Health Services: HIS.GOV
Knowledge Exchange Network: hen@mentalhealth.org
Legislation (Current bills): http://thomas.loc.gov/

Legislation (previous laws): http://thomas.loc.gov/home/bdquery/html
Legislation (copies of historical laws): http://lcweb2.loc.gov/const/mdbquery.html
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill: nami.org
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors: nashpd.org
National Center for Children in Poverty: http://cpmcnet.columbia.edu/dept/nccp
National Institute of Health: nih.gov
National Institute of Drug Abuse: nida.nih.gov/NIDAhome1.html
National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism: niaaa.nih.gov/
National Institute of Mental Health: nimh.nih.gov/home.cfm
Office of Managed Care: mentalhealth.org/cmhs/managedcare
Office of National Drug Control Policy: (1) whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/ (2)whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/policy/papers
Rand Drug Abuse Policy Research Center: rand.org/centers/dprc
Robert Wood Johnson Substance Abuse Policy Research Center: Phs.bgsm.edu/sshp/rwj/rwj.htm
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: samhsa.gov
Texas Department of Health: tdh.state.tx.us
Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation: tmhmr.state.tx.us
Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse: tcada.state.tx.us
Texas Health and Human Services Commission: hhsc.state.tx.us
Texas Legislation On-line: http://www.capitol.state.tx.us
The Brookings Institution: brook.edu
The Electronic Policy Network: epn.org
The Urban Institute: urban.org
U.S. Census Bureau: census.gov
Welfare Information Network: welfareinfo.org

X. Online Policy Sites

For a list of links to many policy-related sites: www.newyorkwired.com/sspolicy.htm

Department of Health and Human Services: hhs.gov
Administration for Children and Families: acf.gov
Administration on Aging: aoa.gov
Agency for Health Care Research and Quality: ahrq.gov
Centers for Disease Control: cdc.gov
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services: cms.hhs.gov
Food and Drug Administration: fda.gov
Health Resources and Services Administration: hrsa.gov
Indian Health Services: his.gov
Executive Office of the President: whitehouse.gov
Families USA: The Voice for Health Care Consumers (good resource for Medicaid Information): familiesusa.org
Future of Children (good research on child welfare and health): futureofchildren.org
Office of National Drug Control Policy: (1) whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/ (2) whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/policy/papers
Legislation (Current bills): http://thomas.loc.gov/
Legislation (previous laws): http://thomas.loc.gov/home/bdquery.html
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill: nih.gov
National Institutes of Health: nih.gov
National Institute of Drug Abuse: nida.nih.gov/NIDAhome1.html
National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism: niaaa.nih.gov
National Institute of Mental Health: nimh.nih.gov/home.cfm
President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health: mentalhealthcommission.gov/
Rand Drug Abuse Policy Research Center: rand.org/centers/dprc
Robert Wood Johnson Substance Abuse Policy Research Center: phs.bgsm.edu/sshp/rwj/rwj.htm
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: samhsa.gov
Center for Mental Health Services: mentalhealth.gov

Center for Substance Abuse Prevention: samhsa.gov/csap
Center for Substance Abuse Treatment: samhsa.gov/csat
Knowledge Exchange Network: ken@mentalhealth.org
Office of Managed Care: mentalhealth.org/cmhm/managedcare
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directore: nashpd.org
National Mental Health Association: nmha.org
National Mental Health Information Center: The Center for Mental Health Services:
mentalhealth.org/cmhs/ManagedCare/resource
Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation: tmhmr.state.tx.us
Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse: tcada.state.tx.us
Texas Health and Human Services Commission: hhsc.state.tx.us
Texas Department of Health: tdh.state.tx.us