

**The University of Texas at Austin  
School of Social Work**

**Social Policy Analyses & Social Problems**

<b>Course Number:</b>	382R	<b>Instructor:</b>	Debbie Webb, Ph.D., LCSW, LPC, LCDC
<b>Semester:</b>	Spring 2015	<b>Contact Information:</b>	Adjunct Office or SSW 3.130B <a href="mailto:debbiewebb@aol.com">debbiewebb@aol.com</a> 512-799-9358
<b>Unique Number:</b>	61795	<b>Office Hours:</b>	TH: 5:30PM – 6:30PM & by appt.
<b>Meeting Place:</b>	SSW 2.118		
<b>Meeting Times:</b>	TH: 2:30PM – 5:30PM		

**• Course Description**

This course is designed to provide students with 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 the historical, political, economic, and other social conditions that influence policy development in the United States. Specific policy areas that are 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 majority groups as well as populations at risk (e.g., children, people of color, people with disabilities, women, LGBTs) with a particular emphasis on social and economic justice. Students 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.

**• Course Objectives**

By the end of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Understand significant historical events and persons that influenced the field of social work and social welfare policy. (PB 25)
2. Analyze the connections between the history and contemporary structures of social policy. (PB 25)
3. Understand the impact of economics, politics, and social values on the identification of social problems and policy formation in the United States and the ways that issues of diversity (such as culture, class, gender, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, and age) have been addressed. (PB 25)
4. Apply conceptual frameworks for analyzing the development of social welfare policy. (PB 25)
5. Define key concepts in social welfare policy (e.g., universal, residual, public assistance, social insurance, cash, in-kind). (PB 25)
6. Understand the major policies that form the foundation of social welfare policy in the U.S. (PB 25)
7. Apply relevant research frameworks for evaluating the effects of social welfare policy on national, state, and local populations and economically vulnerable subgroups. (PB 25)
8. Analyze the impact of social welfare policy in terms of social and economic justice and the promotion of social work values. (PB 25)

9. Discuss trends in comparative international social welfare policy. (PB 25)
10. Understand roles social workers play in the formation of social policy and the effects of social policies on social work practice. (PB 25 & PB 26)
11. Exercise policy advocacy skills at the legislative and organizational levels. (PB 26)

The University of Texas at Austin 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 Education Policies (EP) and Practice Behaviors (PB) that are assessed in this course. The complete EPAS can be optioned from your Student Handbook.

**EP 2.1.8** Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.

**PB 25:** Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being

**Course objectives:** 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10

**Course assignments:** Class exercises, policy analysis and action project (policy analysis brief, editorial or letter to a legislator, testimony)

**PB 26:** Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action

**Course objectives:** 10 and 11

**Course assignments:** Class exercises, policy analysis and action project (policy analysis brief, editorial or letter to a legislator, testimony)

### III. Teaching Methods

A variety of teaching methods will be used including interactive lectures (students are encouraged to ask questions and make comments during the lectures), readings, guest speakers, videos, class exercises, written assignments, student presentations, peer feedback from class members, interviews with people interested in and knowledgeable about policy issues, and observation of meetings on policy-related issues.

### IV. Required Reading

DiNitto, D. M., & Johnson, D. H. (2012). *Essentials of social welfare: Politics and public policy*. Boston: Pearson.  
Rocha, C. J. (2007). *Essentials of social work policy practice*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

### V. Policies

#### A. Policies Specific to This Course

1. **Professional conduct:** Your attendance, attention, and participation are expected for all class sessions. Daily attendance (roll) will be taken, and the policy on pop quizzes will be strictly applied. Class participation includes reading all assigned materials prior to the class session and actively engaging in class discussions and exercises. Lively class discussion is encouraged. Respectful communication is necessary to the learning environment, especially when a class such as this one focuses on "hot" political topics on a regular basis. Please turn off cell phone ringers and refrain from texting and other non-class activities such as web-surfing, checking your un-related emails, etc. Students are also expected to observe

professional codes of conduct with regard to confidentiality, dress, language, and other matters and exercise good judgment while interacting with agencies, organizations, and other entities on assignments for this course. If there is a challenging problem with which you need assistance, ask for help and attend office hours right away. If there is a miscommunication or potential misunderstanding about an assignment or a comment made in class by you, the professor, or by a student peer, seek clarification immediately and strive to “get into a solution” instead of “staying as a part of the problem.” Excellent, clear, professional communication is always the goal.

2. **Submitting assignments:** (a) All papers should be word-processed and usually in 12- point font, with single-, 1.5-, or double-spacing, depending on the assignment, and with reasonable margins. (b) Submit all assignments in hard copy (do **not** submit them electronically unless asked to do so). (c) Assignment due dates are noted in the course calendar. **All** assignments are due at the start of the class period. Assignments submitted 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 an assignment is late (this includes weekend days). (d) 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. (e) 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 (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 (see item 4 below). If you do not know how to cite appropriately, please learn before you submit any assignments.**
3. **Scholastic Dishonesty:** Scholastic dishonesty may result in a report to the Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Programs in the School of Social Work, the Dean of the School of Social Work, and/or Student Judicial Services. Students may receive an “F” for the course and other sanctions in accordance with University policies, including dismissal from the University. Also see item 4 on scholastic dishonesty under University Policies below.
4. **Course modifications:** Should any modifications or changes need to be made to the course (e.g., calendar, assignments), students will be notified in class and/or by e-mail. 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. **Use of Blackboard:** The course Blackboard site will be used for various purposes (posting some documents, grades, etc.). Some course communication will also be done via e- mail. Also see item 7 on e-mail under University Policies below.
6. **Office Hours: Required:** Make at least one office visit during office hours with Dr. Webb within the first three weeks of classes.
7. **Librarian Assistance: Strongly Recommended:** Go to the UT Austin Perry-Castaneda Library (PCL) in person and ask the Librarian specifically assigned to assist social work students and professors to orient you to research resources such as how to search for recent peer reviewed research articles related to your topic area, and how to use noodlebib utilizing APA format for references.

## **B. University Policies**

**1. 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.

**2. PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT IN CLASS.** 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. 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.

**3. CLASSROOM CIVILITY.** 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 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.

**4. 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 instructor. The instructor 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 can contact a service provider of their choosing, including the UT Counseling Center at 512-471-3515 or online at [www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/](http://www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/).

**5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

**8. 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/>).

**9. USE OF CLASS MATERIALS.** The materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, exams, quizzes, and homework assignments are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized copying of the class materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary actions being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of class materials without the specific, express approval of the instructor 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 includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of sharing those materials with other current or future students.

**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:

- 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 are given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

#### **16. Grade Ranges Corresponding to Letter Grades**

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

## **VI. Course Assignments and Student Evaluation**

Student achievement in meeting course objectives will be based on (a) pop quizzes and (b) a policy analysis and action project.

### **A. Pop Quizzes**

It is important to keep up with the reading assignments in this class and to come to class prepared to discuss the readings. To facilitate this taking place on a consistent basis, at least five "pop" quizzes will be given during the semester (i.e., prior notice of dates will not be given). The lowest grade(s) will be dropped so that the **four highest grades will each count as 5% of your final grade (20% total)**. Each quiz will contain 5 to 10 or more questions. Each quiz will cover the readings for that class day and the previous class day's work as applicable (readings, lectures, discussion, guest speaker). Questions will be multiple choice, true or false, matching, fill-in-the blank, &/or short answer items. Since at least one quiz grade will be dropped, **NO** make-up quizzes will be given unless warranted by a documented serious illness or emergency that results in a student missing more than one quiz.

### **B. Policy Analysis and Action Project**

The policy analysis and action project is intended to help students learn more about the legislative process,

provide each student an opportunity to select and thoroughly analyze an important contemporary legislative issue of particular interest to her or him, select a related bill, and to develop skills in policy practice, including analysis, writing, presentation, and advocacy. Since written and oral communication is critical for social work practice, the project is composed of (1) a policy brief, (2) either a newspaper editorial or letter to a legislator, (3) written and oral legislative testimony, (4) critiques of classmates' testimony. The assignment is also intended to address the EPAS competency and practice behaviors designated for this course. The project components will be graded together and count as 60% of the final grade (see Appendix B). Begin by selecting a bill introduced into the 84th session of the Texas legislature. **The Texas Legislature Online website (<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us>) is a good way to search for a bill, etc., and it is imperative that you acquaint yourself with the very useful information that it contains.** The course instructor and TA will help you get started with the process. Select a bill that addresses child welfare, health care, public assistance, mental health services, services to people with developmental disabilities, aging, or another social welfare issue of interest to you. Identify legislators, organizations, groups, and committees that have worked on the bill or issue or are currently working on the issue(s) or in the field the bill addresses. You may wish to work with groups, organizations, or committees involved in the issue. Become familiar with the bill and related proposals to modify/amend the bill or replace it with other legislation. Investigate the bill's background and legislative history. Conduct a literature review and identify scholarly references and other reports or studies that address the bill and provide **evidence** about what the effects of the bill might be. Seek the opinions or positions of those with various views on the issue and determine which groups and individuals (e.g., state legislators, professional groups, citizen advocacy groups) support, oppose, or are neutral on the issue and their rationale, including any evidence they believe supports their position. Students may work with a partner or in a small group to gather and discuss information; in fact, you are encouraged to do so as part of the learning process, but each student must independently compose her or his brief, editorial or letter, and testimony. **It may help to approach this project by thinking of yourself as a policy analyst employed by a social welfare agency (governmental or private) or a think tank, an aide working for a state legislator, or a staff member of a legislative committee.** In any case, your job is to educate others about the bill and the issue it addresses and provide reasons for supporting, not supporting, or remaining neutral on the bill.

Handouts will be provided and class sessions will address how to identify a bill; write a policy brief, editorial, and letter to a legislator; how to write and deliver testimony; and how to provide feedback to classmates. All written products should be in 12-point font. Use Arial font. **Your policy brief should be 6 to 7 tightly written pages (not including references and appendices [if any]) with 1.5 line spacing and formatted and written in a way that will engage readers. The MAXIMUM length that will be accepted for a complete policy brief will be 10 pages. Cite at least 10 scholarly research references. Cite MORE than one reference per paragraph.** In addition, you may also cite relevant newspaper articles or other credible popular media. You are encouraged to use graphs, charts, quotes, vignettes, or other devices to make the brief informative and appealing to read. Your editorial should be 700 to 750 words. Your letter should be a full one-page including appropriate salutation. Your testimony should be written in such a way that it can be delivered in three minutes. In addition to submitting your brief, editorial or letter to a legislator, and testimony in written form to the instructor, the class will be divided into groups of three or four and each member will be asked to critique the written testimony of the two other class members so that each class member can improve his or her testimony before delivering it to the class. Provide at least one sentence that describes the strengths of your classmates' testimony and two to three that suggest how the testimony might be strengthened or improved. Provide the written critiques to your classmates and to the instructor via email. Be sure to include your name on the critique. On the last day of class, via your project folder, turn in hard copies of your critiques of others' testimonies, and their critiques of your testimony to Dr. Webb.

**If you do not submit each assignment at the start of the class on which it is due, it will be considered late. The more effort you put into your work the first time you submit it, the more meaningful or useful the feedback from Dr. Webb, will be. Revise each assignment as needed before submitting your final work. It is your responsibility to continue polishing and improving your own work, independently, until**

**you turn it in on the last day. Dr. Webb is looking for CONTINUED PROGRESS, not simply correcting previously pointed out areas for improvement. In general, those who continue to improve all their brief's sections can expect to improve their final grade on the brief.**

### **C. Attending Meetings at the Texas Legislature during 2015 (84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature)**

Each student must select and attend at least 4 meetings (i.e., subcommittee) or sessions (House or Senate) of the Texas Legislature, for a minimum of one hour each (type of meeting and topic(s) of interest is up to the prerogative of the student), and then turn in a hard copy of a two page reflection paper about what s/he observed and learned. **ONE of these meetings must be on social work "Student Day at the Legislatures" or on a "make-up day" assigned by Dr. Webb and include attending at least part of one subcommittee meeting at the capitol of Texas. See Dr. Webb for further instructions.** With previous permission from Dr. Webb, other meetings may be electronically accessed online or on cable TV IF it is impossible for the student to attend the meeting in person. Other policy-related meetings may be substituted for legislative meetings, such as City Council meetings, County Commissioner meetings, School Board Meetings, etc. National meetings of Congressional Subcommittees, for example, may be utilized. Place proposed and finally attended meetings on your Policy Project PLAN which should be updated throughout the semester because it is a "living document." All reflection papers about the meetings attended are due by the last day of class and are worth 2.5 points each for a total of 10 points (10% of final grade).

#### **a. Active Participation & Attendance**

Roll will be taken each time class meets and students are expected to be in attendance, if at all possible. Likewise, as expressed earlier in this syllabus, students are expected to actively participate in class discussions and activities in a respectful, professional manner. Please raise your hand to obtain the floor to ask questions, contribute to discussions, agree or disagree with Dr. Webb &/or other students about policy topics, etc. **Active participation (5%) and attendance (5%) will make up a total of 10% of your grade for the semester.** Those who seldom speak in class can expect lower participation grades. Those who have no trouble speaking in class need to be aware of the needs of others to meet this expectation, as well, and thus thoughtfully yield the floor to them, when they volunteer to speak.

#### **Key Assignment Due Dates**

**Thursday, February 12th: Policy analysis and action project PLAN.**

**Thursday, March 5th: Part 1 of the policy brief: (a) title, (b) brief identification of the bill and what it is intended to do, (c) problem bill is intended to address and context/background/history of the bill (use references as appropriate), (d) description of the bill and what it intends to accomplish.**

**Thursday, April 2nd: Revision of Part 1 PLUS submission of first draft of Part 2 of your policy brief: (a) analysis of the bill using available scholarly and other credible literature and viewpoints of representatives of at least three constituent groups, (b) recommendations for improving/modifying or replacing the bill (use references as needed), (c) a brief conclusion, (d) references cited and other resources, (e) appendices (if needed). Also write your first draft of a short Executive Summary (Abstract) to be placed at the beginning of the policy brief.**

**Thursday, April 16th: Hard Copy Newspaper Editorial or Letter to a Legislator turned in to Dr. Webb**

**Thursday, April 23rd: Draft of Testimony sent to assigned group of student peers & Dr. Webb**

**Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>: YOUR written critiques (feedback) given back via email to each of your student**



peers in your assigned group and Dr. Webb. (These will ALSO be placed in your final folder in hard copy and turned in the last day of class.)

Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup>: Written hard copy of YOUR testimony is turned in to Dr. Webb, plus verbally present your testimony to the whole class for feedback today, or on Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup> (depending on date assigned for you for your presentation).

Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>: **COPIES OF ALL Written Work Due** (place FINAL BRIEF and clean copies of all final assignments (Final updated PLAN; Editorial or Letter; Testimony; YOUR written critiques of other students testimony drafts; their written critiques of your testimony; clean copies of all 4 reflection papers) into the LEFT sleeve of a folder, and ALL PREVIOUS drafts which include professor comments into the RIGHT sleeve of your folder.

### **Criteria for Evaluating Policy Brief (See Appendix B: Grading Rubric)**

- 1. Completeness and thoroughness:** How fully has the topic been addressed? Has it been sufficiently researched using scholarly references and other resources (e.g., databases), interviews, and other means (e.g., webinars, meeting attendance) to gain differing perspectives and full knowledge of the issue? Does the paper leave the reader with the impression that major questions have been considered, or are important issues left unaddressed? Has the paper or other product been carefully proofread?
- 2. Organization and clarity:** Is the brief well written and logically organized? Are there appropriate transitions between sentences, paragraphs, and sections? Are the sentence structure, syntax, and grammar of appropriate quality? Have descriptive headings (and subheadings if needed) been used to improve organization? Are issues addressed in a way that someone unfamiliar with them as well as someone knowledgeable about them can understand?
- 3. Referencing:** Are there a sufficient number of appropriate references, including at least 10 scholarly references? Has referencing been done according to the American Psychological Association 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, and are page numbers or paragraph numbers for non-paginated electronic sources indicated for all direct quotations? Are indirect quotes paraphrased sufficiently?
- 4. Originality and Creativity:** Does the work demonstrate that different viewpoints have been considered, compared, and contrasted and that the writer has a thorough understanding of the issues? Has the student used his or her analytical skills in a way that suggests more than a restatement of what others have said about this issue? Has the student suggested points that others have not addressed? Is the work prepared in a way that will gain the interest and attention of the intended audience(s)?

### **Criteria for Evaluating Editorial, Letter to a Legislator, and Testimony**

1. Quality of writing, including organization, grammar, and syntax
2. Extent to which major points are addressed
3. How compelling your written arguments are
4. Compelling/convincing delivery of your verbal testimony

## **VII. Course Calendar**

Date	Topics	Readings (text)	Assignments Due
Thursday Jan 22	<p>Introductions of students and instructor</p> <p>Informal “fireside chat” lecture format and “coaching style” of Dr. Webb.</p> <p>“Inoculation” <u>against</u> any potential “intimidation or fear.” We’ve ALL been there! There <u>are</u> NO “stupid questions!”</p> <p>Course overview</p> <p>Why social workers study social welfare policy (Hint: “Policy affects social work practice and practice affects social welfare policy.”)</p> <p>What is social welfare policy and is it rational?</p>		<p>Self-assess and discuss potential anxiety or comfort with public speaking.</p> <p>Self-assess and discuss level of assertiveness.</p>
Thursday Jan 29	<p>What is policy practice and how do social workers practice policy?</p> <p>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>Class exercise: Changing policy</p> <p>Selecting a bill for your policy project</p> <p>The language of social policy</p> <p>Who pays, who benefits? Them, us, or all of us? (or why tax policy and budgeting are important)</p>	<p>DiNitto &amp; Johnson, “Introduction: Politics, Rationalism, and Social Welfare Policy,” pp. 1-11; Chapter 1, “Politics and the Policymaking Process,” pp. 12-26.</p> <p>Rocha, Chapter 1, “Introduction to Community-based Policy Practice”</p>	
Thursday Feb 5	<p>Does history repeat itself?: Milestones in social welfare policy</p> <p>Politics and policy analysis, implementation, and evaluation</p> <p>How to write a policy analysis brief</p>	<p>DiNitto &amp; Johnson, Chapter 2, The Politics of Policy Analysis, Implementation, and Evaluation,” pp. 27-47; and Chapter 3, “Politics and the History of Social Welfare Policy,” pp. 48-73</p> <p>Rocha, Chapter 2, “Essentials of the Planning Process”</p> <p>Handouts on writing policy briefs</p> <p>Begin reading for your policy analysis</p>	

		project	
Thursday Feb 12	<p>Panel: Careers in social welfare policy</p> <p>Why we can't agree on what poverty is, how to measure it, and whether it exists</p> <p>Securing the basics: Food, shelter, education, and living wage policy</p>	<p>DiNitto &amp; Johnson, Chapter 4, "Ending Poverty: Is It An Issue Anymore?," pp. 74-98; Chapter 9, Preventing poverty: Education and employment policy," pp. 195-219</p> <p>Rocha, Chapter 3, "Essentials of Effective Interpersonal Communication and Participation;" Chapter 6, "Essentials of Interest Group Politics: Coalition Building and Task Force Development"</p> <p>Policy analysis project reading</p>	<b>TYPED policy analysis and action project PLAN (see Appendix A)</b>
Thursday Feb 19	<p>Lecture/Regular Class for 1<sup>st</sup> hour; and Individual project consultations, interviews, hearings, meetings</p> <p>Preventing poverty: Why Social Security is a great achievement and why it isn't broke/n</p> <p>Patty Duke and George Takei (Hikaru Sulu) enroll in the Social Security retirement program</p>	<p>DiNitto &amp; Johnson, Chapter 5, "Preventing Poverty: Social Insurance and Personal Responsibility," pp. 100-121</p> <p>Policy analysis project reading</p>	Select a legislator whom you want to meet with about your topic of interest for this class and <u>make an appointment ahead of time to meet.</u>
Thursday Feb 26	<p>Social Services for older adults</p> <p>Class exercise: Saving Social Security</p> <p>Disability policy: Human timeline</p>	<p>DiNitto &amp; Johnson, Chapter 5 continued; Chapter 6, "Disability Policy: From Public Assistance to Civil Rights," pp. 122-144; and Chapter 10, "Providing Social Services: Help for Children, Older Americans, and Individuals with Mental and Substance Use Disorders," pp. 232-237</p> <p>Policy analysis project reading</p>	
Thursday Mar 5	<p>Disability policy: Seeking full participation for all</p> <p>Reproductive policy: Orange or blue for Texas and the nation</p> <p>Is feminism dead?</p> <p>How to write an editorial and letter to a legislator</p>	<p>DiNitto &amp; Johnson, Chapter 6 continued; and Chapter 11, "The Challenges of a Diverse Society: Gender and Sexual Orientation," pp. 248-267</p> <p>Rocha, Chapter 7, "Essentials of Community-based Policy Practice;" and Rocha, Chapter 10, "Essentials of Judicial Policy Practice"</p>	<b>Part 1 of policy brief is due</b>

		<p>Handouts on writing editorials and letters to elected officials</p> <p>Policy analysis project reading</p>	
Thursday Mar 12	<p>Gay marriage: The last bastion for sexual orientation policy?</p> <p>How to write and present testimony</p> <p><b>(NO CLASS March 19: SPRING BREAK!)</b></p>	<p>DiNitto &amp; Johnson, Chapter 11, "The Challenges of a Diverse Society: Gender and Sexual Orientation," pp. 267-274</p> <p>Rocha, Chapter 9, "Monitoring the Bureaucracy and Creating Change Within Organizations"</p> <p>Handout on how to write and present testimony</p>	
Thursday Mar 26	<p>Tales of two strategies for helping families with young children: Child support enforcement and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)</p> <p>Decision making and survival on public assistance: Could you do it?</p> <p>How other countries do it, why they do it this way, and what difference it makes</p>	<p>DiNitto &amp; Johnson, Chapter 7, "Helping Needy Families: An End to Welfare As We Knew It," pp. 145-167</p> <p>Rocha, Chapter 4, "Communicating with the Public Through the Media"; Chapter 5, "Utilizing Technology in Policy Practice"</p> <p>Policy analysis project readings</p>	
Thursday Apr 2	<p>Child welfare policy: Protection from abuse and neglect, foster care, adoption, disproportionality and other issues plaguing the system.</p> <p>Panel: Views from former foster children, foster parents, advocates, and the state</p>	<p>DiNitto &amp; Johnson, Chapter 10, "Providing Social Services: Help for Children, Older Americans, and Individuals with Mental and Substance Use Disorders," pp. 220-232</p> <p>Policy analysis project reading</p>	<p><b>Revised Part 1 of policy brief PLUS first draft of Part 2 of brief is due.</b></p>
Thursday Apr 9	<p>Is it fair to call it Obamacare?: The state of health policy and U.S. politics</p> <p>Health care around the world: How the U.S. compares</p>	<p>DiNitto &amp; Johnson, Chapter 8, "Financing Health Care: Can All Americans Be Insured?," pp. 168-194</p> <p>Kaiser reading: Summary of Obamacare</p> <p>Rocha, Chapter 8, "Essentials of Legislative Policy Practice"</p> <p>Policy analysis project reading</p>	

Thursday Apr 16	<p>Mental health policy: Still hoping for parity</p> <p>Can policy prevent substance abuse?: A look at the war on drugs</p> <p>Form groups for peer feedback on testimony</p>	<p>DiNitto &amp; Johnson, Chapter 10, "Providing Social Services: Help for Children, Older Americans, and Individuals with Mental and Substance Use Disorders," pp. 237-247</p> <p>Policy analysis project reading</p>	<p><b>Newspaper Editorial or Letter to a Legislator is due.</b></p>
Thursday Apr 23	<p>Not black or white: Race, ethnicity, and social policy</p> <p>What the semester tells us about race and ethnicity in America</p> <p>Is immigration critical for America's future?</p>	<p>DiNitto &amp; Johnson, Chapter 12, "The Challenges of a Diverse Society: Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration," pp. 275-304</p> <p>Policy analysis project reading</p>	<p><b>Draft of testimony in written form (sent to peers in group via email, for peer critiques, AND copied to Dr. Webb). YOUR critiques (feedback) given back to each peer by 5PM Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup> via email.</b></p>
Thursday Apr 30	<p>Project testimony (3 minutes maximum length) presented to peers in class</p>	<p>Give thoughtful verbal feedback to peers in class: State Strengths &amp; Opportunities for improvement.</p>	<p><b>Written hard copy of testimony for Dr. Webb</b></p> <p>Verbal feedback to peers.</p>
Thursday May 7  <b>(Last Class Day)</b>	<p>Project testimony (3 minutes maximum length) presented to peers in class</p> <p><b>Turn in <u>all</u> Final Project Written Work</b></p> <p>Wrapping it up: A look to the future of social welfare policy</p> <p>Where do you stand on social policy?</p> <p>Fill out evaluations.</p>	<p>Give thoughtful verbal feedback to peers in class: State Strengths &amp; Opportunities for improvement.</p> <p>DiNitto &amp; Johnson, "Conclusion: Politics, Rationalism, and the Future of Social Welfare Policy," pp. 305-307</p>	<p><b>Verbal feedback to peers.</b></p> <p><b>All final project written work due [brief, editorial or letter, testimony, all testimony critiques including ones <u>you did for your peers</u>; final revised plan; all previous versions of all papers (corrected ones); &amp; 4 reflection papers].</b></p>

## 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

- Alinsky, S. (1971). *Rules for radicals: A practical primer for realistic radicals*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Amidei, N. (2010). *So you want to make a difference* (16<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: OMB Watch.
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- Birkland, T. A. (2011). *Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, concepts, and models of public policy making* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.
- Blau, J. (2010). *The dynamics of social welfare policy* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bobo, K., & Kendall, J., & Max, S. (2010). *Organizing for social change: Midwest Academy manual for activists* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: The Forum Press.
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- Cummins, L. K., Byers, K. V., & Pedrick, L. (2011). *Policy practice for social workers: New strategies for a new era*. Boston: Pearson.
- Day, P. (2009). *A new history of social welfare* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Pearson.
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- Hoefler, R. (2012). *Advocacy practice for social justice* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Chicago: Lyceum.
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- Schneider, R. L., & Lester, L. (2001). *Social work advocacy: A new framework for action*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole/Wadsworth.
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## **Appendix A: Plan for Policy Analysis and Action Project**

Your name:

Number and title of bill you will analyze:

Describe the bill in a few sentences:

Groups, organizations, individuals you plan to interview (include dates and times of scheduled interviews):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Others (include dates and times of scheduled interviews) :

Meetings you might attend related to this assignment (include date and time of meetings):



## Appendix B: Grading Rubric

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Total points earned (60 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_

**POLICY BRIEF GRADING RUBRIC: Sub T: \_\_\_\_\_**

- 1) Completeness & Thoroughness (10 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Organization & clarity (10 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Referencing (5 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Originality & Creativity (5 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Recommendations (5 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Conclusions (5 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_

**EDITORIAL/LETTER, TESTIMONY & CRITIQUES: Sub T: \_\_\_\_\_**

Editorial/Letter points earned (5 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_

Written Testimony (5 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_

Oral Testimony (5 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR Critiques of Classmates (3 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_

**PLAN: Sub T: \_\_\_\_\_**

Plan for Policy Project (2 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix C: Required Headers for Major Sections in the Policy Brief  
(Note: You may add subheaders, as needed.)**

Cover Sheet (does NOT count towards the total page count)

Executive Summary (This is an abstract of your policy brief so you write it last and it is only due when you turn in the FINAL policy brief on the last day of class.)

Introduction to the Bill (Name; Title; & summary of the facts about the bill.) (Balanced.)

Important Information (Facts about the bigger topic area, as needed. Include graphs, charts, demographics, and other statistics, as you think best.) (Balanced.)

Analysis (Heart of the policy brief; synergistic amalgamation of important research information across no less than 10 of the best research articles related to your topic area. Make sure you have at least two different authors cited in each paragraph. List citations liberally.) (Remain balanced showing both sides of the issue. Do NOT reveal where you stand in this section.)

Recommendations [Those of article authors, if pertinent, and your own recommendations. You may now show where you stand on the policy brief major issue. You may use bullets for each recommendation and make sure you list one or more citations with each one. If it is YOUR idea, put (Author). ]

Conclusions [Those of article authors, if pertinent, and your own conclusions. You may continue to show where you stand on the policy brief major issue. You may use bullets for each conclusion and make sure you list one or more citations with each one. If it is YOUR idea, put (Author). ]