

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

SOCIAL POLICY ANALYSIS AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Course Number:	SW 382R	Instructor:	Shetal Vohra-Gupta, Ph.D, LCSW.
Unique Number:	62640	Office Number:	3.212E
Semester:	Spring 2011	Contact Information:	sgupta@austin.utexas.edu
Meeting Time/Place:	Thursday 2:30-5:30 SSW 2.118	Office Hours:	By Appt.

I. Course Description

This course critically examines, from both historical and current perspectives, the overall structure of the American social welfare system with a focus on the disproportionate social, economic and political problems of vulnerable populations. The course also considers the parallel historical development of the profession of social work, including the ways in which it responded to social problems across key periods of social welfare policy development (for example, the New Deal, the War on Poverty, urban renewal, the contemporary period of welfare reform).

II. 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 polices that advance social well-being

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

Assignment: Policy Analysis Mini Assignments

PB26 Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action

Objectives 2 and 8

Assignment: Final Project

III. Teaching Methods

This course is designed to incorporate a variety of teaching methods, including interactive lectures, experiential group activities, reading assignments, and audiovisual material to help students understand the development of social welfare policy and its analysis and to demonstrate this knowledge in class discussions, written assignments, and presentations.

IV. Required and Recommended Texts, and Materials

Text:

DiNitto, D. (2011). Social welfare: Politics and public policy (7th ed). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Supplemental Readings:

Additional readings are drawn from an extensive assortment of articles, book chapters, essays, and electronic media sources. These readings will be made available through Blackboard.

V. Course Requirements

There will be no in-class midterms or final exams. Students will be graded on a series of proportionally weighted requirements, including:

- A) Class Participation 15%
- B) Policy Analysis Mini assignments 40%
- C) Food stamps Report 20%
- D) Final Project: Policy Blog/Short Film 25%

A. Class participation:

Students will be graded on the quality of their contribution to the collective learning pursuits of the class, including participation in the class, moderator preparation, Blackboard discussions, and/or office visits. Since attendance is key condition of participation, more than two absences will reduce the overall participation grade atleast below an “A”. Any subsequent absence will reduce the overall participation by one letter grade.

B. Mini assignments

Students will be given 3 mini assignments throughout the semester:

- #1: Definitions of policy analysis (10)
 - i. 7-10 definitions of policy analysis (different authors)

- #2: Bringing a policy to share with the class (15)
 - i. History of how it formed
 - ii. Strengths and weaknesses
 - iii. Impact
 - iv. Future recommendations
- #3: Following policies with the Texas Legislation (15)
 - v. Texas Legislature online
 - vi. Texas Tribune

C. Food Stamps report

It is important for social work students to have personal experience with issues that affect low-income clients. You may elect to fulfill one of the following two options:

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.

Both options are intended to familiarize students with the food stamp program, and to demonstrate your knowledge of program strengths and weaknesses. The reports may be submitted anytime during weeks 5-12 (**February 17th – April 7th**). Whatever option you choose to pursue, the paper should include the following:

- 1) Be clear about which option you have chosen and why.
- 2) Demonstrate awareness of the rules that apply to the food stamps program.
- 3) Provide information about what it takes to apply for and receive food stamps.
- 4) Describe an appropriate food stamps budget for your household, and defend the appropriateness of the level you have chosen.
- 5) Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the program.
- 6) Clearly and accurately document your purchases during the two-week period.
- 7) Summarize your experience (Was it valuable? What was learned?).

D. Policy Blog/Short Film

Student must team up with a classmate to develop a policy blog that covers a social welfare topic that relates to a theme covered in class. The blog will need to address and/or describe:

- Five articles or reports
- Two peer-reviewed academic articles
- Two public policy think tanks and their positions on the chosen policy topic
- Two legislative briefings or activities
- Social Work Advocacy Day at the legislature

All students will be required to share links to their blogs during the last week of class. Blog subjects selected for this assignment must be pre-approved by the instructor. More information about this assignment will be posted.

OR

Working in groups of three, students may create a short film (no longer than 10 minutes) on a current legislative bill (or bills) that relate to topics covered in the course. Subjects selected for this assignment

must be pre-approved by the instructor. All films will need to be posted on YouTube. More information to about this assignment will be posted.

GRADING SCALE

100 - 94 = A
93 - 90 = A-
89 - 87 = B+
86 - 84 = B
83 - 80 = B-
79 - 77 = C+
76 - 74 = C
73 - 70 = C-
69 - 67 = D+
66 - 64 = D
63 - 60 = D-
59 and below = F

A = 100 – 90 points 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 = 89 – 80 points Good Work: The assignment meets all the requirements and demonstrates evidence of in-depth critical thinking and analysis.

C = 79 – 70 points 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 = 69 and below Poor/failing Work: The assignment has important gaps, both in terms of not meeting the requirements and lacking in-depth critical thinking and analysis.

Overall Criteria for Evaluating Student Assignments

Your written work should be well-conceptualized and researched, clearly organized, and supported by examples and details. Show evidence of your own creative and thoughtful analysis. Papers should follow the APA style format. Additional criterion and evaluation guidelines will be provided for all assignments.

V. Class and 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. Attendance. It is important for social work practitioners to be punctual in both attendance and in meeting deadlines. Therefore, class attendance is expected, as is handing in assignments on time. Students who fail to attend class on a regular basis (missing more than one class without a valid excuse, e.g., medical documentation) may receive one or more course grades lower than their final grade when points are totaled.
3. Late Assignments. All assignments must be turned in on the due date and must be submitted at the beginning of the class period. Changes in work schedules, personal celebrations, transportation problems, computer/printing problems, etc. are not considered legitimate reasons for missing an assignment. Late assignments will result in a deduction of five points for each day it is late. Any legitimate adjustments in due dates must be discussed with the instructor at least 24 hours PRIOR to the regularly scheduled due date.
4. Policy on Scholastic Honesty. It is expected that work handed in will be your own. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty (i.e., plagiarism and cheating during exam, etc.) 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/>).

5. APA. The School of Social Work uniformly requires APA editorial style as the standard format for all written assignments. Details of the APA style are included in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Information on APA style and format can be found at the Learning Resource Center (LRC) in the School of Social Work.
6. Referencing. Appropriate referencing is required. Failure to use quotation marks for direct quotes or citation for indirect quotations and/or others ideas may result in a “0” for the paper and/or an “F” for the course.
7. Course Feedback. Social work practitioners are assertive and function as team members. Therefore, feedback about the course is welcome and the course will be viewed as a joint effort between students and the instructor.
8. Professional and Ethical Conduct. 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. Discrimination, harassment, and intimidation will not be tolerated. Please do not engage in any behaviors which may distract the instructor or other students during class, including chatting and ringing of cell phones/pagers. During class discussion or group activities, students may share information about their own personal and professional tasks, trials, and triumphs. Please note that each one of us is expected to adhere to the Social Work Code of Ethics by acting responsibly and maintaining confidentiality. Students’ class performance and grades are kept confidential.
9. Course Modifications. Any modifications, amendments, or changes to the syllabus and or assignments are the discretion of the instructor. Changes will be announced in class. It is the responsibility of the student to inquire about any changes that might have been made in his/her absence.
10. 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 also notify instructors regarding any safety concerns.
11. 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/>.
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. 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.

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're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.
16. Use of Blackboard in Class. In this class the professor may use Blackboard—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://courses.utexas.edu>—to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to submit assignments, and to give students online quizzes and surveys. Students can find support in using Blackboard at the ITS Help Desk by calling 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Please plan accordingly.

VI. Course Schedule

Date	Description	Text/Readings
Week 1 1/20	Introduction and Overview of Course Does policy really effect social work? Video: Influencing State Policy	None
Week 2 1/27	Highlights of social work history Policy Analysis Frameworks Policy and Research DUE: Mini Assignment #1	DiNitto, Chapter 1 and 2 Jackson (1986). It took trains <i>Katz & Stern</i> (2006). What America Was:
Week 3 2/3	Theories of the welfare state History of Social Welfare Policy What caused the Great Depression? Video: The Great Depression	DiNitto, Chapter 3 Tuttle, W.M (1995). Rosie the riveter Seaborn (2009). The new deal under attack
Week 4 2/10	The War on Poverty and the Great Society Poverty and inequality in America	DiNitto, Chapter 4

	Texas poverty <u>Guest Lecturer:</u> Dr. Miguel Ferguson	Matusow (1984). War on Poverty I Pimpare (2009). The failures of American poverty
Week 5 2/17	Welfare and its Reform The color of social policy Gender and policy	DiNitto, Chapter 11 Edelman (2009) Welfare and the poorest of the poor. Altman & Goldberg (2008). Rethinking social's role in public assistance Huntington (2004). The Hispanic challenge.
Week 6 2/24	Women's Health and Policy <u>Guest Lecture:</u> Victoria Camp, Texas Association of Sexual Assault DUE: Mini Assignment #2	DiNitto, Chapter 11
Week 7 3/3	The demographics of aging Social Security Drug and Alcohol <u>Guest Lecturer:</u> Diana DiNitto	DiNitto, Chapter 5 Cauthen, N. (2005). Whose security?
Week 8 3/10	Disability Policy: From public assistance to civil rights <u>Guest Lecturer:</u> Frank Fernandez	DiNitto, Chapter 6
Week 9 3/17	SPRING BREAK	
Week 10 3/24	The politics of healthcare Options for healthcare reform Video: Sick around the world, <i>Frontline</i>	DiNitto, Chapter 8 Schoen, C., Nicolsen, J.L., & Rustgi, S.D. (2009). Paying the price: How health insurance premiums are eating up middle class incomes. Graves, J, & Long, S. (2006). Why do people lack health insurance? Holahan, J. & Blumberg, L.J. (2008). An analysis of the Obama healthcare proposal.
Week 11 3/31	Education and Employment	DiNitto, Chapter 9
Week 12 4/7	Immigration <u>Guest Lecturer:</u> Krista Video: California: The Immigration	DiNitto, Chapter 12: pp. 480-491 TBA

	Dilemma, <i>Frontline</i>	
Week 13 4/14	International policies and Human Rights The role of the UN Non-governmental organizations	TBA
Week 14 4/21	International policies and Human Rights Global social policies and social change Working within culture	TBA
Week 15 4/27	Frameworks for evaluating good social policy DUE: Mini Assignment #3	Greider (2009). The future of the American dream Pollitt (2010). The decade for women Stoecker (2009). Community organizing and social change
Week 16 5/5	Final Project Presentations	