THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
STEVE HICKS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Course Number: SW 393T23
Unique Number: 61810
Semester: Fall 2021
Meeting time: W, 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm
Classroom: On-line course

Course instructor: Robert Ambrosino, Ph.D.
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Phone: (210) 268-9043
Office Location: On-line course
Office hours: TTH 11:30 am to 12:30 pm and
by appointment via Zoom

NOTE - this class will be conducted using a combination of synchronous (group learning via
Zoom) and asynchronous (independent learning on one's own) formats. All Zoom classes will
occur during the regularly-scheduled class time (W, 2:30pm – 5:30 pm).

Advanced Policy Practice

I. STANDARDIZED COURSE DESCRIPTION

Policy practice involves the design, analysis, implementation, and evaluation of social welfare
policies by governmental and non-governmental entities. Building on the policy analysis skills that
students learned in previous courses, the goal of this course is to provide advanced content in the
theory and skills of policy practice in the context of professional social work values and ethics. The
theoretical aspects of the course address power, decision-making, and social and economic justice.
A wide range of practice skills will be covered, including policy development, comparative policy
analysis, policy research, and strategies of political participation (e.g., advocacy, negotiation,
coalition building, lobbying, campaigning, and community organizing). Students will also learn
other skills relevant to policy practice, including public speaking, media management, testifying,
serving as an expert witness, the use of technology, and report writing. Prerequisites for students
taking this course are SW382R (Social Policy Analysis and Social Problems) and SW392R (Topics
in Policy Analysis) or permission from the instructor.

II. STANDARDIZED COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students are expected to build their capacity to:

- Explain and apply major theories underlying the professional social work approach
  to policy practice at local, state, and national levels (legislative, executive, and
  judicial) and to compare them to approaches in related fields (such as public affairs
  and urban planning).
- Engage in policy practice tasks across the main stages of policy development
  (problem definition, agenda setting, implementation, service delivery, and
  evaluation) in governmental and non- governmental settings with the goal of
  promoting social and economic justice.
- Select practice strategies and demonstrate skills appropriate to specific policy
  issues, accounting for the interests of a varied range of stakeholders.

- Utilize conceptual frameworks for policy development, drawing on the most recent evidence- and research-based findings on effective interventions.
- Utilize technology to enhance policy practice.
- Integrate social action approaches in policy practice to ensure the involvement of traditionally underrepresented and other vulnerable populations.
- Identify the global impacts of policy practice to promote social and economic justice for world populations.

III. TEACHING METHODS

Three primary teaching/learning approaches will be used in this course: presentations and discussion by the instructor, students, and guest speakers; experiential learning (each student will be involved with individuals and/or groups or use other methods to gain first-hand experience in policy practice); and assignments designed to link theory and practice and enhance policy practice skills. Class sessions will be devoted to discussing major theories or models of the policy process, their relationship to real world policy practice, and their relevance for social workers; learning about critical policy practice skills; and discussing students' experiential learning and the relationship of these experiences to the course material. Designated "lab days" will serve as protected time for students to work exclusively on the signature class assignment (policy practice project).

Canvas will serve as the learning platform for this course, including communication between students and the course instructor. The course Canvas site can be accessed at http://courses.utexas.edu or the Social Work web page (requires Internet connection and computer UT EID and password). The Help Desk available through the UT home page (www.utexas.edu/its/help) or at 475-9400 is available to assist students with Canvas-related questions.

IV. REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

Textbooks

Libby, P. (2021). *The lobbying strategy handbook: 10 steps to advancing any cause effectively* (3rd edition). Oxford University Press.

Weible, C. M., & Sabatier, P. A. (Eds.). (2018). *Theories of the policy process* (4th edition). Routledge.

Students must obtain the latest edition of each text for this class.

Additional Readings

Additional readings will be posted on the course Canvas site throughout the semester.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The course assignments described below focus on developing policy practice skills and consideration of how theories of the policy process may be used to inform policy practice.

SW393T23
Fall 2021
Assignment #1 - Policy Practice Project **(**70% of course grade)
This assignment is the signature assignment for the course and as such contributes the most
toward the final course grade. The assignment involves creating an exemplary policy project
that focuses on a social policy issue of significance to one or more target groups. Students
will work <u>in teams</u> to complete this assignment. Team membership will be determined by
the course instructor.

Each team will work collaboratively to choose the specific policy issue and target group(s)
that serves as the focus of its policy practice project. Consistent with principles of adult
learning, each team will develop a policy practice project that reflects the interests of
members of the group as well as enhances policy practice knowledge and skills. Policy
projects can include developing or assisting an already existing organization in creating a
policy advocacy campaign to increase public awareness about an issue; working to introduce
a new policy or modify or eliminate an existing policy at the local, state, or federal level; or
working as part of a political campaign. <u>Note that this course focuses on policy
identification and development, so the focus should not be on program design,
implementation, or evaluation</u>.

Once a team identifies an area of interest and conducts preliminary research about relevant
policy issues and how they might best be addressed, the team will develop a policy project
plan that will be submitted to the course instructor for approval, delineating the steps/actions
required to complete the project and the products that will be developed as part of project.

Projects must include EACH of the following elements:
- Either a <u>policy brief</u> OR a <u>white paper</u> about the policy issue.
- A plan for implementing the proposed project (actual implementation not required).
- A Logic Model.
- Identification of and engagement with relevant stakeholders and documentation of
  same.
- A distinct and compelling brand.
- An opinion editorial AND talking points that could be used to publicize and generate
  support for the project.

<u>NOTE</u>: Teams are to be creative in identifying the format of their proposed project. For
example, the project might take the form of a feature length documentary, a public awareness
campaign that includes a significant social media component, or a major community event
such as a music festival.

Each team is to negotiate its plan with the course instructor to ensure that it meets
expectations for the assignment. Each team will also give brief updates on the group's
progress in completing its project at various points during the semester. Although groups will
have three "lab periods" during the semester to work on this project and meet with the
instructor for guidance and support as needed, the project will require the investment of
considerable time outside of class for successful completion.

At the end of the semester, each team will submit a professional project portfolio that includes each of the products noted above. In addition to documenting the work of each team, the portfolio is to serve as a guide for implementing the proposed project.

Finally, each team will make a brief presentation at the end of the semester highlighting its policy project, including a demonstration of products developed. A panel of invited guests from the policy advocacy community will be on hand to provide feedback on each presentation.

Additional guidance for completing this assignment will be posted on the course Canvas site.

Assignment # 2 - Application of Policy Process Theories/Frameworks (25% of course grade)
Students will submit individually a brief paper (about one page in length) on each of the five main theories/frameworks that can be used to understand the policy process covered during the semester. Additional guidance for completing this assignment will be posted on the course Canvas site.

Assignment #3 - Reflection Paper (5% of course grade)
Students will respond individually to a series of questions that require them reflect on the content covered in the course and assess knowledge and skills learned. As part of this reflection, students will also determine which of the theories or approaches covered in the course fit best with their personal and professional interests and goals and why. Additional guidance for completing this assignment will be posted on the course Canvas site.

The table below contains a summary of the assignments for this course.

Assignment	Due Dates	Percent of Course Grade
Theory papers		25%
• Institutional analysis	9/15	5%
• Multiple streams	9/29	5%
• Advocacy coalition	10/20	5%
• Punctuated equilibrium	10/27	5%
• Policy feedback	11/17	5%
Policy project		70%
• Proposed plan	9/8	-
• Logic model	9/22	5%
• Policy brief or white paper	10/13	20%
• Project brand	11/10	20%
• Elevator speech/talking points	11/17	5%
• Portfolio	Last day of class	10%
• Final presentations	Last day of class	10%
Reflection paper	Last day of class	5%

VI. EVALUATING AND GRADING
Overall criteria for evaluating student assignments

The course assignments focus on developing policy practice skills and require consideration of how theories of the policy process may be used to inform policy practice. The policy practice assignments are designed to comprise a portfolio that may be used as evidence of your work and abilities as you apply for your advanced field placement or a professional position upon graduation.

Your work should be well-conceptualized and researched, clearly organized, supported by examples and details, and professional. It also should show evidence of your own creative and thoughtful analysis. Papers must follow APA style formatting. Additional criteria and evaluation guidelines are provided at the end of the syllabus for all assignments. Please note that you will not earn credit for MSSW courses if your final grade falls below a 'C. You must earn a 'C' or above for credit to be given for the course.

Grading scale

94. 0 and Above	**A**
90.0 to 93.999	**A-**
87.0 to 89.999	**B+**
84.0 to 86.999	**B**
80.0 to 83.999	**B-**
77.0 to 79.999	**C+**
74.0 to 76.999	**C**
70.0 to 73.999	**C-**
67.0 to 69.999	**D+**
64.0 to 66.999	**D**
60.0 to 63.999	**D-**
Below 60.0	**F**

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

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

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

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

VII. CLASS POLICIES (some policies have been modified to reflect the fact that the class is being conducted on-line)

 Conduct and Civility: Social work students adhere to the Student Standards for Professional Conduct of the *NASW Code of Ethics* and assume responsibility for their conduct. Scholastic honesty and integrity are to be consistent social work values. The instructor will comply with university guidelines regarding scholastic dishonesty, including plagiarism. Social work practitioners respect others; therefore, differences in values, opinions, and feelings of class members and guest speakers will be respected. Students will help create and support a learning environment that does not interfere with the learning of fellow students. When students voice

an opinion with which you do not agree, feel free to voice opinions in a civil manner that can enhance the flow of ideas and dialog.

Readings and Preparatory Assignments: Students are expected to be active participants in the learning process by completing all assigned readings and viewing all Power Point presentations and related videos.

Professional Communication and Interactions: Disrespect toward the professor, students, or others is unacceptable and will be handled directly and in the context in which it occurs. Disrespectful behavior includes overt acts, such as talking over others or making derogatory remarks toward others, and covert acts, such as excluding class members from completing assigned tasks.

Class Attendance Policy: All students are expected to participate in <u>all synchronous on-line</u> <u>class</u> <u>sessions</u> (classes presented using Zoom).

Assignments and Grades: Assignments should be turned in via Canvas on the date they are due barring serious, unforeseen medical illness or family emergencies. Penalties for late assignments will factor into the grade achieved for the assignment.

Electronic Devices: All communication devices should be turned off or placed on silent mode and put away during on-line class sessions, unless otherwise required for the class.

Writing Style: The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association Seventh Edition* (APA) is the style manual to be used by all students in this course.
Use of Canvas: The professor will use Canvas Web-based course management /collective workspace for this class. An orientation will be given to the course Canvas site on the first day of class.

Course Modification: To ensure achievement for course objectives, the professor reserves the right to make modifications to any part of this syllabus related to schedule, assignment due dates, and links to documents and videos available through the Internet. Should any modifications be made, students will be notified both in class and by email and the modifications will be posted to Canvas.

VIII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES
COVID-19 RELATED INFORMATION. The University's policies and practices related to the pandemic may be accessed at: https://protect.utexas.edu/

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.

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

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND CIVILITY IN THE CLASSROOM. The professor expects students to act as professionals in class. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another's opinions. A course brings together a group of diverse individuals with various backgrounds. Students are influenced and shaped by such factors as race, 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. This atmosphere includes working intentionally to recognize and dismantle racism, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism in the classroom. Social Work also deals with complex and controversial issues. These issues may be challenging and uncomfortable, and it would be impossible to offer a substantive classroom experience that did not include potentially difficult conversations relating to challenging issues. In this environment, we will be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometimes we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. Nevertheless, the professor requires that students engage one another with civility, respect, and professionalism.

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

POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION. Public social networks are not private. Even when open only to approved or invited members, users cannot be certain that privacy will exist among the general membership of sites. If social work students choose to participate in such forums, please assume that anything posted can be seen, read, and critiqued. What is said, posted, linked to, commented on, uploaded, subscribed to, etc., can be accessed and archived, posing potential harm to professional reputations and prospective careers.

Social work students who use social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and other forms of electronic communication (e.g. blogs) must be mindful of how their communication may be perceived by clients, colleagues, faculty, and others. Social work students are expected to make every effort to minimize material which could be considered inappropriate for a professional social worker in training. Because of this, social work students are advised to manage security settings at their most private levels and avoid posting information/photos or using any language that could jeopardize their professional image.

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

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

POLICY ON SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the

course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/.

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

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

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

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

TITLE IX REPORTING. In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the University of Texas at Austin is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from discriminatory conduct on the basis of sex https://titleix.utexas.edu/. Faculty, field instructors, staff, and/or teaching assistants in their supervisory roles are mandated reporters of incidents of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, stalking, dating violence, or any other forms of sexual misconduct. Students who report such incidents will be informed of University resources. Incidents will be reported to the University's Title IX Coordinator. Further information, including student resources related to Title IX, may also be found at https://titleix.utexas.edu/.

CAMPUS CARRY POLICY. The University's policy on campus carry may be found here: https://campuscarry.utexas.edu.

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

BEHAVIOR CONCERNS and COVID-19 ADVICE LINE (BCCAL). If students have concerns about their behavioral health, or if they are concerned about the behavioral health of someone else, students may use the Behavior Concerns and COVID-19 Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns. This service is provided through a partnership between the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit https://safety.utexas.edu/behavior-concerns-advice-line. The Behavior Concerns and COVID-19 Advice Line has been expanded to support The University of Texas at Austin community during the COVID-19 pandemic. By calling 512-232-5050 - Option 2 for COVID-19, students, faculty and staff can be assisted in English and Spanish with COVID-19 support.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY. Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:
·   Familiarize yourself with all exit doors in the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
·   If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
·   In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor's instructions.
·   Do not re-enter a building unless you are given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

IX. COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments
Aug			
25	First day of class • Welcome • Overview of course • Framing policy practice • What it takes to be an effective policy practitioner • Policy practice and advocacy toolbox • First meeting of policy practice project teams	Course syllabus	No assignments due
Sep			
1	• Lobbying is not a dirty word! • Politics and rationalism in social welfare policy • In search of evidence about policy processes and	• Preface and Chapter 6 of W & S • Chapter 1 of Libby Additional readings posted to course Canvas site	No assignments due

Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments

	policy
	  practice
	• Theory: Institutional analysis
	  and development (IAD) frame
	• Using the logic model in
	  policy practice		

8	• Steps 1 to 3 to advancing any
	cause
	  effectively
	• The mosh pit of government
	  budgeting
	• The art of lawmaking
	• Becoming a policy entrepreneur
	• Influencing policy in Texas (or
	  anywhere for that matter)
		• Chapters 2 and 5 of
		  Libby
		• Pages 84 and 90 – 93 of
		  Libby
		• Pages
		
		Additional readings posted to
		course Canvas site
			**Policy
			project
			proposed
			plan due**

15	**Lab day** – protected time to work on policy project	No readings	**Institutional analysis and development framework paper due**

22	• Theory: Multiple streams policy
	  framework
	• Writing policy briefs and white
	  papers
	• How to frame/reframe issues
	  using healthcare reform as an
	  example
	• Steps 4 to 7 to advancing
	  any cause effectively
		• Chapters 1 and 5 of
		  W & S
		• Chapter 6 of Libby
		
		Additional readings posted to
		course Canvas site
			**Project Logic
			Model due**

29	• Theory: Advocacy coalition
	policy
	  framework
	• Building and maintaining
	coalitions
	• Advancing policy solutions with
	  unlikely allies or strange
	bedfellows
		• Chapter 4 of W & S
		
		Additional readings posted to
		course Canvas site
			**Multiple
			streams
			policy
			framework
			paper due**

Oct			
6	• Brief project overviews by each policy project team • Evaluating policy change efforts	Additional readings posted to course Canvas site	
13	• Theory: Punctuated equilibrium policy framework	• Chapter 7 of W & S • Chapter 12 of Libby	**Policy brief or white paper due**

Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments

	• Branding and issue identity
	• Using media as a tool of advocacy
	• Writing opinion editorials/letters to
	  the editor
	• Creating public awareness about a
	  policy issue
		Additional readings posted to course Canvas site	

20	**Lab day** – protected time to work on policy project	No readings	**Advocacy coalition policy framework paper due**
27	• Steps 8 to 10 to advancing any cause effectively	• Chapter 7 of Libby Additional readings posted to course Canvas site	**Punctuated equilibrium policy framework paper due**
Nov			
3	• Theory: Policy feedback framework • Developing a professional portfolio and careers in policy practice • Brief project overviews by each policy project team	• Chapter 3 of W & S Additional readings posted to course Canvas site	
10	• Comparison of theories of the policy process • Demonstrations, boycotts, and radical action	Chapter 8 of W & S Additional readings posted to course Canvas site	**Project branding plan due**
17	**Lab day** – Protected time to work on policy project	No readings	**Policy feedback framework paper due** **Elevator speech/talking points due**
24	**No class** – Thanksgiving holidays		
Dec			
1	Last day of class • Class presentations • My greatest takeaway	No readings	**Policy project portfolio due**

X. ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

Additional references are updated on a regular basis. All such references, including those used directly for class activity, will be posted to the course canvas site.