

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
STEVE HICKS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

Course Number: SW 382R **Instructor: Shetal Vohra-Gupta**
Unique Number: 61020 **Email: sgupta@austin.utexas.edu**
Semester: Spring 2025 **Office Phone: 512-232-2701**
Meeting Time/Place: **Office: WWH 4.**
Wed, 2:30-5:30pm MEZ 1.212
Office Hours: By appt

SOCIAL POLICY ANALYSIS AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Catalog Description

Historical perspective on the development of social welfare institutions, programs, and policies. Students study methods of current policy analysis, evaluation of social problems, and advocacy for policy change. Three lecture hours a week for one semester. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in social work, or graduate standing and consent of instructor or the graduate adviser.

I. STANDARDIZED COURSE DESCRIPTION

Using anti-oppressive and antiracist lenses, this course critically examines, from both historical and current perspectives, the overall structure of the American social welfare system. The course also considers the parallel historical development of the social work profession, including the ways in which it has responded to social problems through social welfare policy, advocacy, policy practice, and policy evaluation. Emphasis is placed on the disparate social, economic, environmental, and political barriers experienced by marginalized populations and strategies to address them. A variety of theories and frameworks with an anti-oppressive and antiracist focus will anchor student learning. Students will develop knowledge, values, and skills needed to critically evaluate social policy and advocate for change. Course content also emphasizes the disproportionate impact of policy on individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities who hold intersecting marginalized social identities and how to engage them in the policy process.

II. STANDARDIZED COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify, analyze, and critique social policies, policy decision-making, and implementation at the local, state, federal, and global levels that affect individual and community well-being, emphasizing the impact on marginalized populations and relationship to structural barriers that impede access to social services;
2. Develop policy analysis and advocacy skills, such as creation of a policy campaign and a policy brief, that incorporate antiracist and anti-oppressive strategies including collaboration with

individual, group, organization, and community stakeholders disproportionately impacted by these policies and systems;

3. Critically evaluate the links between historical and current contexts of power, privilege, racism, and oppression within institutions and the intergenerational impact on marginalized groups with emphasis on social, racial, cultural, economic, technological, organizational, and environmental influences that impact social policy;
4. Analyze, formulate, and advocate for social welfare policies that advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice;
5. Through comparison of U.S. social policies and practices to those of other countries using resources such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, assess the relative impact of global human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice;
6. Apply the NASW Code of Ethics and frameworks of ethical decision-making, including reflection on one's own positionality, in policy practice including policy analysis and advocacy.

EPAS Competencies

The Steve Hicks 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, the UT SHSSW engages in ongoing curriculum assessment to demonstrate compliance with CSWE's Education Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS).

Using a common evaluation instrument, this course measures the implementation of knowledge, skills, values, and/or cognitive and affective processes to assess the following competencies:

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Behavior 5a: Use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services.

Behavior 5b: Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

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 TEXT AND MATERIALS

- Segal, Elizabeth. (2016). Social welfare policy and social programs: A values perspective (4th edition). Boston, MA: Brooks-Cole Cengage Learning
- Warde, B. (2022). Inequality in U.S. Social Policy: An historical analysis. New York, NY: Taylor and Francis.

Supplemental readings provided through canvas from the following books:

- Stone, D. (2012). Policy Paradox. New York, NY: W.W Norton and Company.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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

Assignment	Due date(s)	Points
Class Participation	Ongoing	20 points
Discussion questions	Every week starting 1/22 to 4/16	18 points
Infographic/talking points	2/26	20 points
Written Testimony	3/12	12 points
Op-ed	4/16	20 points
Oral presentation of written testimony	4/16 or 4/23	10 points

- 1) Class Participation (20 total points)
- 2) Discussion Questions : (12 questions at 1.5 points = 18 points)

Discussion Questions: Each student must submit one well thought out question or point for discussion related to a required reading (or podcast or video if an option) for **each** week with the first to be submitted on 01/22 for Week 2 and the last to be submitted on 4/16 for Week 11. You will be submitting a total of 10 questions worth 1.5 points each. They will be used to help generate our weekly class discussions. Although your question or point of discussion may not be selected for a particular class discussion you are still required to submit one. Your question must relate to a specific reading, website, or podcast for the week – it should not be a general question that simply focuses on broader issues discussed in the class.

- 3) Talking points and Infographic (20 points)

The talking points handout and infographic or policy brief should provide a well-informed presentation of the policy issue/bill(s) you have chosen and a clearly articulated and defensible solution(s) for addressing the issue intended to increase social, economic, environmental, or other forms of justice. We will discuss how to develop and present these products in class so that they are informative, well organized, accessible, and appealing to intended audiences. Your project must include at least 10 scholarly references and three interviews cited. You may ALSO include references from the popular literature (newspaper, magazines) but they cannot be substituted for the minimum of 10 scholarly references. (Be careful about sources here—no unsubstantiated references from unknown sources)

- 4) Mock Legislative Testimony (12 written/10 presentation = 22 points)

Make a 7 minute presentation to the class in the form of mock legislative testimony. Instructions for developing and presenting legislative testimony will be discussed in class. For class purposes, begin by explaining the issue, the bill(s) you have followed, and your position on the bills, and what you believe you should be done and why. If you are working with a partner, you will each

have 7 minutes to present. Coordinate your testimony so as to limit repetition of the same points. Mock testimony will be given in class at the end of the semester—Weeks 13 and 14.

5) Opinion Editorial (Op-ed) (20 points)

Each group/pair will write an opinion editorial related to their policy. Opinion editorials, or "op-eds," are short commentary pieces. An op-ed is an excellent way to communicate your message and advocate directly to a broad audience. Op-eds appear each day in almost every newspaper and address current issues, express a viewpoint, and frequently offer policy or other solutions to social problems. If printed in newspapers, elected officials and other decision makers, opinion leaders, and a wide range of community members may read them.

Your op-ed should do the following as articulated in the Council on Social Work Education's 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), competency 5: "Engage in policy practice": Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice 1) Use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services. 2) Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

Be sure to offer viable policy alternatives to improve human well being and suggest actions that policymakers and/or members of the public should take.

Class time will be dedicated to teaching you how to write a traditional op-ed piece, and you will be provided resources to assist in the process. Examples will also be provided of editorials and commentaries in electronic formats. You may submit your editorial in traditional, written form or in video or other electronic format. If you chose to write a traditional op-ed, it should be 500 to 750 words, single spaced. If you chose an electronic format, the number of words you use in written or spoken form should probably be similar and the op-ed should not exceed 3 or 4 minutes (depending on factors such as your use of graphics). Be sure your op-ed is based on solid evidence and sources and that you cite sources in a manner appropriate to an editorial.

VI. CLASS POLICIES

- Professional conduct: Your attendance, attention, and participation are expected for all class sessions. Attendance includes arriving on time and remaining for the entire class session. Participation includes reading all assigned materials prior to the class session and engaging in class discussions and exercises. Respectful communication is necessary to the learning environment.
- Scholastic dishonesty: Scholastic dishonesty in any of its forms may result in a report to the Assistant Dean for Master's Programs in the School of Social Work, the Dean of the School of Social Work, the Dean of the Graduate School, and/or Student Judicial Services.
- Reading of materials should be done prior to each class meeting;
- The university honor code is to be used;
- Be on time for each class and remain for the full period;
- Changes in the course schedule or assignments may be necessary;
- Opinions expressed by all students will be heard and respected;

- Offer and use feedback to strengthen skills;
- Maintain professional standards in all phases of the course;
- Independent thinking, creativity, and intellectual risk taking are encouraged;
- Students with a disability who require reasonable accommodations to insure their participation should contact the instructors at the beginning of the course;

VII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Grading Scale

[No A+]		87.0 to 89.999	B+	77.0 to 79.999	C+	67.0 to 69.999	D+
94.0 and Above	A	84.0 to 86.999	B	74.0 to 76.999	C*	64.0 to 66.999	D
90.0 to 93.999	A-	80.0 to 83.999	B-	70.0 to 73.999	C-	60.0 to 63.999	D-
				<i>*minimum to pass course</i>		Below 60.0	F

Attendance and Academic Behavior. At the University of Texas at Austin, regular attendance at all class meetings is expected. Instructors are responsible for implementing an attendance policy and must notify students of any special attendance requirements. See more information at <https://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/academic-policies-and-procedures/attendance/>. Furthermore, students are expected to abide by the Standards for Social Work Education (available at <https://socialwork.utexas.edu/student-resources/bsw/policies-and-procedures/>). The student shows potential for responsible and accountable behavior by being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, attending class regularly, observing deadlines, completing assignments on time, and keeping appointments or making appropriate arrangements.

Religious Holy Days. A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable period after the absence. A reasonable accommodation does not include substantial modification to academic standards, or adjustments of requirements essential to any program of instruction. Students and instructors who have questions or concerns about academic accommodations for religious observance or religious beliefs may contact the Center for Access and Restorative Engagement at <https://community.utexas.edu/care/>. The University does not maintain a list of religious holy days.

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.

Policy on Academic Integrity. Students who violate University rules on academic 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 academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct>.

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.

University Electronic Mail Student Notification. Electronic mail (email), like postal mail, is a mechanism for official University communication to students. The University will exercise the right to send email communications to all students, and the University will expect that email communications will be received and read in a timely manner. Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <https://it.utexas.edu/policies/university-electronic-mail-student-notification-policy>.

Steve Hicks School of Social Work Policies

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.

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.

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 and Mental Health 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.

Resources, Prevention of Discrimination, and Safety

Disability Accommodation Statement. If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations please contact Disability and Access (D&A). You may refer to D&A's website for contact and more information: <https://disability.utexas.edu/>. If you are already registered with D&A, please deliver your Accommodation Letter to me as early as possible in the semester so we can discuss your approved accommodations and how they apply in my class.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL). 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 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>.

Covid-19 Related Information. The University's policies and practices related to the pandemic may be accessed at: <https://protect.utexas.edu/>

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/>.

Title IX Accommodations for Those Pregnant, Nursing and Parenting. Pregnant, nursing and parenting students, faculty, and staff are eligible for accommodations through the Title IX Office that support equal access to education and work and prevent discrimination. Students may reach out to the Title IX Office for help with accommodations to make up missed classes, complete missed coursework, keep them safe in the classroom, apply for leaves of absence, receive priority registration and other related support. Faculty and staff, including undergraduate students who work on campus and graduate student employees, may reach out for assistance with job or schedule restructuring and obtaining modified or additional work equipment. Visit the [Title IX pregnancy and parenting resource page](#) for more information or contact the [Title IX Support and Resources team](#) connect with a Case Manager.

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.

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.

VIII. COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Assignment Due	Readings
1/15	Introductions		

	What is social policy?		
1/22	<p>Overview of Course</p> <p>What is social welfare policy?</p> <p>Why study social welfare policy?</p> <p>Key populations: Race, ethnicity, gender</p> <p>Policy dilemmas</p> <p>Key concepts and terms</p>	<i>Discussion question 1 due</i>	<p>Segal, Ch 1</p> <p>Warde, Ch 1</p>
1/29	<p>History of social policy development?</p> <p>Historical Foundation of social welfare</p> <p>Examining race and gender in the development of social policy</p>	<i>Discussion question 2</i>	<p>Segal, Ch 2</p> <p>Warde, Ch 2</p>
2/5	<p>Conceptual Foundations of social welfare policy</p> <p>Forms of social welfare assistance</p> <p>Social Inequality</p> <p>Examining role of race/ethnicity in policy development</p>	<i>Discussion question 3 due</i>	<p>Warde, Ch 3</p> <p>Segal, Ch 3</p> <p>Cheryl Harris article: "Whiteness as property"</p>
2/12	<p>Delivery of Social Welfare Policy</p> <p>The policy process</p>	<i>Discussion question 4 due</i>	<p>Segal, Ch 4</p> <p>Stone, Ch 1</p>

	<p>Motivation for racial equity?</p> <p>How to write an OpEd?</p>		
2/19	<p>Social Justice and civil rights policies</p> <p>What is policy analysis? Purpose and benefit of policy analysis</p> <p>How to write a problem statement?</p>	<p><i>Discussion question 5 due</i></p>	<p>Segal, Ch 5</p> <p>Segal, Ch 6</p> <p>Warde, Ch 4</p>
2/26	<p>Policy Analysis Models</p>	<p><i>Discussion question 6 due</i></p> <p>Infographic/Talking points due</p>	
3/5	<p>Social Insurance</p> <p>Education Policy and Inequality</p> <p>Analyzing social welfare policies</p> <p>Models for policy analysis</p>	<p><i>Discussion question 7 due</i></p>	<p>Segal, Ch 7</p> <p>Warde, Ch 4</p> <p>Derrick Bell article: “Brown vs Board of Education and Interest Convergence”</p> <p>McPhail Article</p>
3/12	<p>Poverty and Economic Inequality</p> <p>Anti-poverty policies,</p> <p>Conflicting values and beliefs</p> <p>Labor Market and workforce policies</p>	<p><i>Discussion question 8</i></p> <p>Written Testimony due</p>	<p>Segal, Ch 8 and 9</p> <p>Warde, Ch 8</p> <p>Stone, Ch 3</p>

3/19	SPRING BREAK		
3/26	Criminal Justice	<i>Discussion question 9 due</i> \ 	Stone chapter, Liberty Warde, Ch 10
4/2	Social Welfare policies and programs affecting children and families	<i>Discussion question 10</i>	Segal, Ch 10 Warde, Ch 6 and 12
4/9	Healthcare policy and programs	<i>Discussion question 11</i> \ 	Segal, Ch 11 Warde, Ch 9
4/16	Immigration Oral Testimonies	<i>Discussion question 12</i> Op-ed due	Warde, Ch 5 Stone Ch 6: Security
4/23	Wrap Up Oral Testimonies		

IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY

A) Online sources for locating policies

<http://academic.udayton.edu/vernelliarandall/>
<http://thomas.loc.gov/home/thomas.php>
<http://www.law.cornell.edu/search/index.html>
http://statelaws.findlaw.com/texas-law/?DCMP=GOO-LAW_General-StatesPhrase&HBX_PK=Texas+Constitution

<http://www.legis.state.tx.us/billlookup/billnumber.aspx>

Legislation (previous laws):

<http://thomas.loc.gov/home/bdquery.html>

Executive Office of the President: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/www.govtrack.us/congress/bills>

<http://www.senate.gov/>

<http://www.house.gov/>

<http://www.loc.gov/law/help/guide/federal.php>

Legislation(copies of historical laws):

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/help/constRedir.html>

http://racism.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=306:aspi0201&catid=64:asian-and-pacific-americans&Itemid=235

B) Examples of Policies

Americans with Disabilities Act

Affordable Care Act

Breast Cancer Treatment Act

Chinese Exclusion Act 1870

Civil Rights Act of 1964

Death Penalty

Defense of Marriage Act

Don't Ask Don't Tell

Dream Act

Equal Rights Act

Execution of Mentally Disabled

Fair Labor Standards Act 1938

Fairness in Drug Sentencing Act

Fetal Life Act 2013 – Texas

Fugitive Slave Act

Genetic Information Disclosure Act 2008

Hyde Amendment on Abortion

Immigration Reform Act

Indian Child Welfare Act

Indian Removal Act

Japanese Internment Executive Order

Lilly Ledbetter Act

Matthew Shepherd Act

McKinney Homeless Assistance Act

McKinney Housing Act

Minimum Sentencing Act

National Labor Relations Act 1935

Native American Health Act

Naturalization Act 1790

New Mexico Abortion in Rape Act

Parity Act

Public Housing Act

Racial Integrity Act – Virginia
Stand Your Ground - Florida
Stop and Frisk – New York City

TANF

TANF Drug Testing [Texas]

Title IV E – Sports Equality

Truman’s Executive Order on Desegregation

The Trust Act

Unemployment Insurance

Violence Against Women Act

Voting Rights Act 1965

Women in the Armed Services Act

Women’s’ Right to Vote 1922 – Constitutional Amendment

C) Important Court Cases

Plessy v Ferguson

Brown v Board of Ed

Minor v. Happersett

US v. Wong Kim Ark

US v. Brignoni-Ponce

Loving v Virginia

Buck v. Bell

Shelby v. Holder

National Federation v. Sebelius

Floyd v. City of New York

Citizens United

United States v. Windsor

Ledbetter v. Goodyear