Course Description

Community-based policy advocacy will be presented as an empowering process that helps to strengthen intra-group and inter-group solidarity as it challenges and attempts to change oppressive structures, systems, and institutions. In contrast to viewing advocacy in the traditional sense -- as a means by which experts represent group interests in legislative, judicial, and executive settings -- this course will explore ways through which traditionally excluded groups advocate for themselves and, in so doing, help build organizations and develop communities. The course will also focus on the analytic and interpersonal skills required to mobilize groups and communities in order to effect policy change through legislative, judicial, and regulatory channels. It will include both contemporary and historical examples of local, state, national, and international advocacy efforts, with an emphasis on those involving low-income and low power communities.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. Understand the relationship between contemporary social and political issues and advocacy strategies and tactics;
2. Understand the role of intra-group, inter-group, and political dynamics in the policy advocacy process and their relationship to issues of power, privilege, social justice, and resource distribution;
3. Analyze alternative models, strategies, tactics, and modes of advocacy in terms of their suitability to achieve specific policy goals;
4. Demonstrate skills in planning and conducting advocacy campaigns, mobilizing communities in policy advocacy, and evaluating the results of advocacy efforts;
5. Identify and incorporate within advocacy campaigns attention to issues related to race, gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, and other dimensions which are associated with privilege, discrimination, domination, and oppression;
6. Identify and analyze value and ethical dilemmas that arise in the course of policy advocacy work;
7. Understand the process of policy development including the use of key terms;
8. Assess policy environments (e.g., bureaucratic, fiscal, legislative, community) and analyze complex systems (e.g., for issue identification and option generation);
9. Understand various advocacy roles (e.g., political, scientific, and ideological);
10. Prepare policy advocacy documents and demonstrate skill in developing written policies (e.g., drafting legislation, writing guidelines and administrative regulations);
11. Demonstrate skills in techniques of education and persuasion, such as media advocacy, lobbying, testifying, popular education and building advocacy coalitions;  
12. Understanding linkages between local, state, national and international advocacy;  
13. Contribute to the development of a climate in the classroom in which everyone can (a) experiment with new skills; (b) explore their own multicultural competence and the implications of one’s own background for developing and implementing social and political action strategies; (c) consult with each other on advocacy projects and assignments; & (d) generate plans and strategies for future learning and development.

**Course Design**
The course will revolve around the development, implementation, and evaluation of students’ group advocacy projects. The specific knowledge and skills required to engage in these projects will be presented through lectures, class discussion/analysis of assigned readings, class exercises and simulations, and group problem-solving activities. Speakers and videos will be used to augment other course materials where appropriate and feasible.

**Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes**

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity:** The course will focus on working for policy change in a multicultural society, including the problems and potential of engaging in successful advocacy campaigns with diverse populations. Case examples of successful advocacy efforts within multicultural communities will be used to illustrate strategic and tactical issues. Students will develop the capacity to identify ways in which gender, race, ethnicity, social class, age, and other forms of social stratification and disenfranchisement influence and are affected by the policy advocacy process. Issues of diversity will also be addressed through the discussion of the different client populations served by the systems discussed in the course; the means by which policies are designed in order that they will be responsive to the special circumstances of their clients; and the use of social policies that are targeted towards specific racial, ethnic, or cultural groups.

- **Social Justice and Social Change:** Since the emergence of the social work profession in the U.S., the pursuit of social justice through a variety of social and political strategies has been one of its fundamental tenets. This course reflects that heritage and applies those values in the analysis of contemporary policy advocacy efforts. The course also includes consideration of the social worker’s responsibility to promote the general welfare of society commonly confronted in social policy development and enactment, e.g., through the prevention and elimination of discrimination; the promotion of equal access to resources, services, and opportunities; and through advocacy on behalf of specific social policy changes.

- **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation:** Promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation activities are difficult to evaluate and, therefore, raise special challenges in social policy advocacy and implementation. These themes will be addressed by comparing and contrasting prevention theory and theories of advocacy and community participation, considering the promotion and prevention effects of empowerment strategies, and studying how community-
based advocacy can be used to help develop treatment and rehabilitation options for underserved populations through policy change. Students will learn that policies in human services are too often implemented in reaction to an issue, not proactively, due to changing social, economic, and political circumstances and influences. The course will also review the particular issues communities face as they pursue policies that will affect their community change and direct service (treatment and rehabilitation) goals.

- **Behavioral and Social Sciences Research:** This will be incorporated throughout the course in at least three ways: 1) through the study of past and contemporary efforts at community-based advocacy; 2) by studying research strategies for community assessment, action planning, and strategy implementation; and 3) by examining and critiquing relevant theories about policy change, social conflict, power, and social change, as well as research that supports these theories. Since policies in the human services are in a constant state of flux due to changing social, economic, and political circumstances, any review of existing policy advocacy strategies may be quickly outdated. Therefore, students will be provided with theoretical models theories to enable them to advocate on behalf of any policy issue encountered in the course of their professional activities.

**Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values**

The NASW *Code of Ethics* establishes an ethical imperative for social workers to engage in social and political action on behalf of social justice and in support of the needs of diverse and disadvantaged populations. This course covers a complex array of ethical dilemmas that arise in the process of developing and enacting social policies. It will examine the ways in which the NASW *Code of Ethics* may be used to guide and resolve value and ethical issues. It also discusses some of the ethical issues involved in pursuing social justice through policy advocacy work. In particular, the course will review such ethical issues as confidentiality, self-determination, respect for cultural and religious differences, allocation of scarce resources, and the promotion of social justice.

**Relationship of the Course to P.O.D.S. Content**

- **Privilege:** A critical, if often unacknowledged manifestation of social injustice is the difference in the degree of privilege experienced among individuals and groups in the U.S. on the basis of race, class, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, and physical ability in their efforts to advocate for social and political change. One goal of policy advocacy is to eliminate or reduce these disparities – through both ends and means. This course will explore how privilege, or its absence, influences the nature of policy advocacy at the community and societal levels and what can be done to overcome it. The course will focus on how certain populations are included or excluded from the policy development and enactment process, and on the consequences of that inclusion/exclusion for the distribution of societal resources, power, and opportunities. The course will also discuss how systems of policy development and enactment can be changed to overcome the effects of privilege.
• **Oppression:** Social workers have an ethical obligation to work to overcome oppression in society in all its forms. This course will examine how advocacy campaigns can contribute to this goal by altering societal institutions, structures, policies, and processes, and by empowering oppressed communities to work on their own behalf. The course will also examine how the processes by which social policies are developed and enacted in U.S. society serve to perpetuate or ameliorate conditions of economic, social, political, and cultural oppression. Students will assess strategies by which both the content and process of policy development and implementation can be altered to contribute to the elimination of oppression in U.S. society.

• **Diversity:** The course will focus on the issues involved in working for policy change in a multicultural society and in engaging in advocacy activities in and with multi-cultural communities. It will also address the problems and potential of engaging in successful advocacy campaigns with diverse populations. Case examples of successful advocacy efforts within multicultural communities will be used to illustrate strategic and tactical issues. Students will develop the capacity to identify ways in which gender, race, ethnicity, social class, age, and other forms of social stratification and disenfranchisement influence and are affected by the social policy development and enactment process. Issues of diversity will also be addressed through the discussion of the different client populations served by the systems discussed in the course; the means by which policies are designed in order that they will be responsive to the special circumstances of their clients; and the use of social policies that are targeted towards specific racial, ethnic, or cultural groups.

• **Social Justice:** An underlying assumption of the course is that the goals of community-based policy advocacy are to promote social justice and produce progressive social and political change. The course will explore the different meanings of social justice and social and political change, and their implications for the development of advocacy strategies and tactics. Historical and contemporary illustrations will be used to analyze these concepts. Students will learn about the role social policy can play in creating a more equitable distribution of resources, power, status, and opportunities in U.S. society. Particular attention will be given in the course to the differential impact of policies and programs, and the processes that shape them, on low income persons, racial and ethnic minorities, women, LGBT populations, the aged, and the disabled.

**Required Texts**

- A course pack of required readings. Available for purchase at Excel Coursepacks, 1117 South University Avenue.
- Periodic handouts and web-based reading assignments (TBA).
- A daily newspaper (print or online), such as the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Detroit Free Press*, or the *Lansing Journal*. 
Recommended Journals (partial list)

Administration in Social Work
Affilia
American Behavioral Scientist
American Journal of Political Science
Child Welfare
Chronicle of Philanthropy
Families in Society
Journal of Applied Social Sciences
Journal of Community Practice
Journal of Policy Analysis & Management
Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare
Journal of Urban Affairs
Nonprofit Management & Leadership Quarterly
Policy Sciences
Political Science Quarterly
Politics and Society
Policy Studies Journal
Public Welfare
Social Policy
Social Problems
Social Security Bulletin
Social Service Review
Social Work

Course Assignments/Semester Project.
In small groups, students will develop or become involved in an existing policy advocacy project at the local, state, national or international level. The components of this project and their relative weight in determining students’ grades will vary depending on the nature of the policy advocacy project. These assignments, their relative weights, and their due dates will be determined early in the semester through discussions between each group and the instructor. These assignments will total 90% of students’ grades. Possible assignments within each project include (but are not limited to):

1. **Participatory Policy Analysis Research.** This would involve the identification of an issue or issues by the community with which you are working, the impact of this issue on a particular population, and the development of alternative policy approaches to creating structural change(s) regarding this issue. In addition to the production of a policy analysis document, this assignment requires the dissemination of the results (or the development of a dissemination plan) and an analysis of the research’s impact.

2. **A Budget or Legislative Analysis.** This might involve the use of websites and printed sources from governmental, research, and advocacy organizations, and interviews (where feasible and appropriate) to identify a provision in either the proposed FY 2006 federal budget or the proposed FY 2006 budget for the state of Michigan that will have an impact on a policy issue of concern and to track this
provision throughout the semester. Such provisions might take the form of a new or revised expenditure or revenue provision, or new/revised legislation. Over the course of the semester, the group will track and attempt to influence the progress of this provision. Written components of this assignment may include regular updates, the development of advocacy strategies and written testimony, and a summary analysis.

3. **Development and Implementation of a Plan to Mobilize &/or Train Constituents.** This could include the creation of popular education approaches, & advocacy and leadership development/training programs for community members.

4. **Development and Implementation of a Media Advocacy Campaign.** This could include the creation of an overall media strategy, developing campaign materials, organizing and holding press conferences or press events, writing op-ed pieces, etc.

5. **Class Participation:** Student attendance is a critical aspect of class participation. Students’ participation grade will be based upon class attendance, and preparation for and participation in classroom discussions, exercises, and simulations. “Showing up,” however, is just the beginning of class participation. As part of class participation, students are expected to do all the assigned readings, reflect upon them, and be prepared to engage critically and constructively in the issues presented. Students will be evaluated on the quality, not the quantity, of participation (10%).

Note: All written assignments must list all sources used (print, electronic, and verbal). Students are bound by the University Honor Code in the preparation of all assignments.

**Course Outline and Readings**

*(All readings are in course pack unless indicated)*

1. **January 10:** Introductions: Course Requirements & Expectations

   **Reading** (to be distributed, read, and discussed in class):

2. **January 17** Setting an Advocacy Agenda: (a) Understanding the Policy Process; (b) Framing Your Message; (c) Advocacy Strategies

   **Reading:**


McCarthy, Michael. “The ethics of political advocacy and the democratic process,” Woodstock Project on Ethics & Public Policy, [www.georgetown.edu/centers/Woodstock](http://www.georgetown.edu/centers/Woodstock) principles.


**Recommended:**


**Group Projects & Assignments Finalized**

3. January 24 Community Participation & Mobilization

**Reading:**


**Recommended:**


4. January 31 Building & Sustaining Advocacy Coalitions

**Reading:**


**Recommended:**

5. February 7 Legislative Advocacy I: The Fiscal Process

Reading:


Recommended:

6. February 14 Legislative Advocacy II: Congress

Reading:


**Recommended:**


7. **February 21**

**Legislative Advocacy III: State Legislatures**

**Reading:**


**Recommended:**
8. February 28  Semester Break: No Class

9. March 7  Legislative Advocacy IV: Testifying & Lobbying
Reading:


10. March 14  Media Advocacy
Reading:


**Recommended:**

Center for Community Change (Spring 1997). How to tell and sell your story: A guide to developing effective messages and good stories about your work, Washington: Author.


**Wednesday, March 15: NASW Legislative Advocacy Day, Lansing**

11. March 21       Advocacy in the Electoral Arena

**Reading:**


**Recommended:**

12. March 28  Judicial Advocacy

**Reading:**


**Recommended:**


**Reading:**
Brown, Brett (September 2001). *Tracking the well-being of children and youth at the state and local levels using the federal statistical system*, Washington: Urban Institute.


Recommended:


14. April 11 Evaluation & Developing Follow-Up Strategies
Reading:


15. April 18 Reflections on the Advocacy Process
Reading: TBA
Selected Internet Websites
(To be augmented during the semester)

1. General Statistical Data
   U.S. Census Bureau:  www.census.gov

   Poverty Statistics at the Census Bureau:  www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty.html

   Statistical Abstract of the U.S.:  www.census.gov/stat_abstract


   Citynet:  www.city.net

   Research Engines for the Social Sciences:  www.carleton.ca/~cmckie/research.html

   General Social Survey:  www.icpsr.umich.edu/gss/

   Welfare Information Network:  www.welfareinfo.org

2. Policy Analysis and Evaluation
   Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation Research Department:
   www.aspe.os.dhhs.gov/hsp/cyp/cyplist.htm

   National Association for Welfare Research and Statistics:
   www.ucdata.berkeley.edu/NAWRS/index.html

   Urban Institute:  www.urban.org

   American Public Welfare Association:  www.apwa.org

   Economic Policy Institute:  www.epinet.org

   Center on Budget and Policy Priorities:  www.cbpp.org

   Center for Law and Social Policy:  www.epn.org/clasp.html

   Families USA:  www.epn.org/families

   Cato Institute:  www.cato.org

   Empower America:  www.empower.org

   Institute for Research on Poverty:  www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp
Brookings Institution: www.brook.edu
National Conference of State Legislators: www.ncsl.org
Agency for Health Care Policy and Research: www.ahcpr.gov
National Center for Children in Poverty: www.cait.cpmc.columbia.edu/dept/nccp
National Child Care Information Center: www.ericpos.ed.uiuc.edu/nccic/nccichome.html
Dept of HHS Central Database: www.os.dhhs.gov
Progressive Policy Institute: www.dlcppi.org

3. Legislative Information and Updates

National Association of Counties: www.naco.org
National Association of State Budget Officers: www.nasbo.org
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: www.cbpp.org
Center for Law and Social Policy: www.epn.org/clasp.html
National Conference of State Legislatures: www.ncsl.org
Children’s Defense Fund: www.childrensdefense.org
Child Welfare League of America: www.cwla.org
The Library of Congress (Thomas): www.thomas.loc.gov
Department of HHS: www.os.dhhs.gov
Administration for Children and Families: www.acf.dhhs.gov

4. Organizations of State and Local Officials

Council of State Governments: www.csg.org
National Association of Counties: www.naco.org
National Conference of State Legislatures: www.ncsl.org
National League of Cities: www.nlc.org
5. National Research and Policy Organizations
Cato Institute: www.cato.org
Institute for Research on Poverty: www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp
Joint Center for Poverty Research: www/spc.uchicago.edu/PovertyCenter/
Brookings Institutes: www.brook.edu
Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation: www.mdrc.org
Urban Institute: www.urban.org
Hudson Institute: www.hudson.org/hudson
Heritage Foundation: www.heritage.org
American Enterprise Institute: www.aei.org
Alliance for Justice: www.afj.org/fai/nonprof.html
National Academy of Sciences: www.nas/edu/news.nsf

6. Selected Federal Agencies
Department of Health and Human Services: www.os.dhhs.gov
Administration for Children and Families: www.acf.dhhs.gov
Agency for Health Care Policy and Research: www.ahcpr.gov
National Child Care Information Center: www.ericps.ed.uiuc.edu/nccichome.html
Department of Labor: www.dol.gov
US Department of Labor Employment & Training Administration: www.doleta.gov
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning & Evaluation: www.aspe.os.dhhs.gov
Department of HHS Database: www.os.dhhs.gov
General Accounting Office: www.gao.gov
Administration for Children and Families Fact Sheet: www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/opa/facts

Centers for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov

Department of Justice: www.usdoj.gov

Department of Housing & Urban Development: www.hud.gov

HUD Library Page: www.hud.gov/toolkit.html

HUD Research Site: www.huduser.org

Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community Program: www.ezec.gov

7. Newspapers

8. Generic Search Sites
Yahoo: www.yahoo.com

Altavista: www.altavista.digital.com

Google: www.google.com

Northern Light: www.nlsearch.com

9. Social Policy and Social Services Networks
Linking the Human Services Community Online: www.handsnet.org

Electronic Policy Network: www.epn.org

The Policy Community On-Line: www.policy.com

Townhall: www.townhall.com

Contacting the Congress: www.visi.com/juan/congress

Action without Borders (volunteering): www.idealista.org

List of Nonprofits: www.nonprofits.org

Children, Youth, and Family Consortium: www.cyfc.umn.edu

AIDS Clearinghouse: www.cdcnac.org
Social Work Access Network (SWAN): [www.csd.sc.edu/swan](http://www.csd.sc.edu/swan)

Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Information: [www.health.org](http://www.health.org)

Child Prevention Network: [www.child.cornell.edu](http://www.child.cornell.edu)

Violence and Abuse Clearinghouse: [www.umn.edu/mincava](http://www.umn.edu/mincava)

World Wide Web Resources for Social Workers: [www.nyu.edu/socialwork/wwwrsrw](http://www.nyu.edu/socialwork/wwwrsrw)

National Association of Social Workers: [www.naswdc.org](http://www.naswdc.org)

Council on Social Work Education: [www.cswe.org](http://www.cswe.org)

League of Women Voters: [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)

Michigan League of Women Voters: [www.mi.lwv.org](http://www.mi.lwv.org)

Research Engine for the Social Sciences: [www.carleton.ca/~cmckie/research.html](http://www.carleton.ca/~cmckie/research.html)

PRAXIS: [www.ssw.upenn.edu/oth.html](http://www.ssw.upenn.edu/oth.html)

Influencing State Policy (based at Virginia Commonwealth University): [www.statepolicy.org/](http://www.statepolicy.org/)

Center for Child and Youth Policy, University of California-Berkeley: [www.cssr.berkeley.edu/CCYP](http://www.cssr.berkeley.edu/CCYP)

### 10. Community Network Resources

From the UM School of Information & Library Sciences: [www.sils.umich.edu/Community/Community.html](http://www.sils.umich.edu/Community/Community.html)

From the WWW Virtual Library: [www.rmsd.com/comnet/wwwvl_comnet.html](http://www.rmsd.com/comnet/wwwvl_comnet.html)


Freenets & Community Networks from Peter Scott: [www.duke.usask.ca/~scottp/free.html](http://www.duke.usask.ca/~scottp/free.html)


### 11. Social Security and Elderly Information Sites

Social Security Administration: [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare: [www.spry.org/nc.html](http://www.spry.org/nc.html)
Benefits: www.benefitscheckup.org

National Council of Senior Citizens: www.ncsinc.org

12. Political Parties
Democratic Party: www.democrats.org/index.html

Republican Party: www.rnc.org

Green Party: www.greens.org

Libertarian Party: www.lp.org

Natural Law Party: www.natural-law.org

Socialist Party: www.sp-usa.org

Democratic Socialist Party: www.dwsusa.org/dsa.html

Social Democrats: www.idsonline.org/sdus

Reform Party: www.reformparty.org

Communist Party: www.hartford-hwp.com/cp-usa/

13. General Voting Relating Sites
Project Vote Smart: www.vote-smart.org

E-The People: www.e-thepeople.com

Democracy Net: www.dnet.org

League of Women Voters: www.lwv.org

Rock the Vote: www.rockthevote.org

14. Other Health Issues
Initiative to Eliminate Racial & Ethnic Disparities in Health: www.raceandhealth.hhs.gov

15. Criminal Justice
FBI Crime Reports: www.fbi.gov/ucrpress.htm

16. Political Commentary
TomPaine.Com: www.tompaine.com

The Progressive: www.progressive.org
Eat the State: www.earthstate.org

Grassroots.com: www.grassroots.com

The Nation: www.thenation.com

Gallup Poll: www.gallup.com

17. Reproductive Rights
Planned Parenthood Affiliates of Michigan: www.miplannedparenthood.org

Planned Parenthood Federation of America: www.plannedparenthood.org

The Alan Guttmacher Institute: www.agi-usa.org

18. Legal Cases
Jenkins: www.jenkinslaw.org

19. Comprehensive Sites

How to Effectively Locate Federal Government Information:
www.library.ucsb.edu/universe/dedecker.html

FedWorld: www.fedworld.gov

FedStats: www.fedstats.gov

U.S. Census Bureau: www.venus.census.gov/cdrom/lookup

20. Regulations
National Archives and Records Administration: www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/cfr-table-search.html

National Center for Children in Poverty:
www.cpmenet.columbia.edu/dept/nccp/roleCDC.html

21. State of Michigan Sites
State of Michigan: www.michigan.gov/

Michigan House of Representatives: www.house.state.mi.us/

Michigan Senate: www.senate.state.mi.us/

Michigan Legislature: www.michiganlegislature.org/
Michigan Legislative Council: www.milegislativecouncil.org/

Library of Michigan: www.libofmich.lib.mi.us/

22. General U.S. Government Sites

The White House: www.whitehouse.gov/

U.S. Senate: www senate.gov

U.S. House of Representatives: www.house.gov/

Library of Congress: www.loc.gov/