1. Course Description:

This course will survey the policies and services that promote a civil society and enhance human rights in the framework of American democracy. Emphasis will be placed on those policies and services, which serve to enhance social participation, economic security, respect for diversity, voluntary action, and community and corporate responsibility. Programs provided by various units of government, nonprofit and social service organizations, and corporations will be reviewed, and the various partnerships and collaborations among funders and service providers will be considered.

2. Course Content:

Students will learn that community well being is enhanced when social problems are managed, human needs are met, and social opportunities and human rights are optimized. Both problems and needs are the outcome of interactions between individuals, collectivities, and the larger society. These interactions will be examined, with special attention given to those leading to policies and programs that enhance opportunities for social participation, economic security, respect for diversity, voluntary action, and community and corporate responsibility.

Selected public laws, programs, and structures that enhance citizen participation within diverse populations will be described and compared. Emphasis will be placed on those that address participation of diverse and discriminated against populations and on the social worker’s responsibility for facilitating such participation. Examples will include the use of mediating structures, such as citizen boards, advisory groups, commissions, and consumer involvement in promoting and guiding positive social change. In many of these, participation is intended to enhance citizen capacity to initiate and oversee action. However, participatory structures are also intended to assure the responsiveness of programs of a promotional, service, or preventive nature. These programs are designed to: (1) diminish poverty and economic insecurity; (2) address personal crises and community emergencies – such as those brought about by violence against persons and property, natural and environmental disasters, or economic dislocation; (3) resettle and integrate refugees and other immigrant populations; and (4) respond to the needs of groups seeking social justice (e.g., feminist, faith-based, ethnic, gay/lesbian/ bi-sexual/transgender, and other groups that endure discrimination). In addition, the participatory
opportunities provided via self-help, grass roots associations and informal networks, and congregate-based service providers will be considered.

3. Course Objectives:

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

1. Describe relevant public laws and programs that encourage social participation, community well being, human rights, and economic security.
2. Demonstrate familiarity with selected aspects of the structures, legal standing, and roles of the nonprofit sector in providing human services, advocating for human rights, and promoting well-being.
3. Locate and apply commonly used indicators of social, economic, and other measures of community well being.
4. Compare the levels and types of participation possible and desirable for members or representatives of discriminated against groups in mediating structures that are intended to promote well being.
5. Identify the factors that lead to or detract from such participation (from the perspectives of discriminated against groups and the social work practitioners who bear some responsibility for promoting participation).

4. Course Design:

In-class activities, readings, and course assignments will be coordinated to enhance course objectives. For example, simulations of real-work processes, films, and videos presented in the classroom will provide the context for student assignments in the community. Lectures by the instructor will be complemented by student presentations and by speakers representing consumers, providers, professionals, and volunteers involved in advocacy, community education, and service delivery.

5. Relationship of the Course to Curricular Themes:

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity** will be addressed in this course through the selection of and emphasis on populations and groups that have been discriminated against. The issues to be examined will include the motivations for, content, and impact of laws and regulations affecting human rights and nondiscrimination on the basis of race, gender, disability, age, and sexual orientation.

- **Social Justice and Social Change** underlie the creation of mediating structures, programs, and policies expressly designed to enhance community well being. Students will examine these issues as well as Social Work’s historic engagement in planned change and its underlying commitment to social justice.
• **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation** will be examined in terms of whether programs and policies are effective or ineffective in their promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation efforts. Sometimes, programs designed to express these themes complement each other, as when participation enhances promotion and prevention, and both are part of a comprehensive strategy of change. Participation can also be used to enhance treatment and rehabilitation. However, programmatic emphasis on one or more of these approaches may draw resources from another, as when a focus on treatment competes with prevention efforts. For these reasons, the extent to which these themes infuse programs and policies and how they interact with each other will receive critical analysis.

• **Behavioral and Social Science Research**: This course will be based on the twin assumptions that the programs and policies to be studied can be understood through social scientific methods and those scientific concepts can also be used in the design of effective programs and policies. However, even this assumption needs analysis. Scientific perspectives can lead to very different understandings and policies. For example, much of sociology can be divided into: 1) structuralist/functionalist perspectives which advocate for eliminating the cultural and behavioral skill differences between groups and the legal, economic, and other barriers to full participation, whereas 2) conflict perspectives assume that societies tend towards conflict because power and resources are inequitably distributed, and that conflict is, in the long run, positive because it increases the likelihood of expanding access to social goods. These perspectives infuse many of the readings and analyses presented in this course. Applying one or the other can lead to different interpretations of events and social processes and to very different social agendas and programs for social change. For this reason, even the social science knowledge base of this course will itself be subject to examination.

• **Social Work Ethics and Values**: This course will address ethical and value issues related to policies and services for social participation and community well being. The NASW Code of Ethics will be used to inform practice in this area. Special emphasis will be placed on the social worker’s responsibility to promote the general welfare of society by preventing and eliminating discrimination, ensuring equal access to resources, expanding choices and opportunities for all persons, encouraging respect for diversity, advocating for changes in social policies, and encouraging informed participation by the public. In addition, ethical issues related to working with various client systems will be reviewed, such as confidentiality, privacy, rights and prerogatives of clients, the client’s best interest, proper and improper relationships with clients, interruption of services, and termination.

6. **Required Reading**:  
• The Coursepack is available at Excel Text Preparation, 1117 South University Avenue.  
• Other required readings will be distributed in class along with a list of relevant websites. Students are also encouraged to read the *New York Times* and the *Detroit Free Press* daily.
7. **Assignments:**

**# 1: Journal.** Students in this class will submit a common journal online (via Coursetools, e-mail attachment, or hard copy) for both SW 647 and SW 697. These journal entries should be posted/written every week and should reflect upon and integrate the readings, field experiences, and classroom experiences for the previous week. Each entry should be approximately 2-3 pages, double-spaced and will be due on the Friday prior to class. Late assignments will not earn credit. The first entry will be due on Friday, January 12. The journal will make up 20% of your grade.

**# 2: Group Project (Two parts).** This is a small group effort requiring community–based research and participation. It will be integrated with a parallel assignment in SW 697. Each group of 3–4 students will take responsibility for identifying, analyzing, writing a report about, and presenting its findings to the class regarding the policies and processes that support and enable (or prevent) citizen participation in one component of the community’s subsystems (e.g., health, education, housing).

Groups will be required to submit a 6-8 page summary of their findings on March 5.
**Presentations will begin on March 12.** The presentations will take place during the class session dedicated to the topic of the group’s focus. The presentation and accompanying paper will be worth 30% of your grade.

**# 3: Analytic Paper.** This assignment requires students to analyze the effort covered by your group in Assignment 2 in terms of how effective it has been in enhancing community well being within its specific area of concern. The final product will be a written paper of 15-20 pages, documenting the effects of the policies, programs, and services in the area selected. This paper will be worth 30% of your grade. **Papers are due on April 9.**

**# 4: Class Participation.** Students are expected to attend every class session, come prepared by doing the required reading, and participate in group discussions and exercises. Class participation will be worth 20% of your grade and will be evaluated based on the self-assessment form distributed in the first class.

8. **Grading:**

Grades are earned by successfully completing the work on the assignments and by attending and participating in class. A 100 point system is used. At the end of the term, the numerical grades earned for each written assignment will be translated into letter grades according to the following formula:

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**Class Schedule and Readings**

**Note:** Readings for this course have been selected very carefully to reflect policies at the community and social systems level. Students should come to class having read the assigned readings and prepared to discuss and integrate them with classroom and field content. Some in-class exercises have been developed to synthesize and apply readings to practice situations.

**Recommended Background Readings:**

- *The Detroit Almanac*
- *Southwest Detroit Neighborhood Resource Guide* (to be distributed in class)
- The *New York Times*, the *Detroit Free Press* and the *Detroit News* (daily)

1. January 8  Introductions, Course Overview, and Coursetools Review

2. January 15  Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday – No Class

3. January 22  Concepts of Community Participation and Well Being

**Readings:**


**TOPIC FOR ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE & TASK GROUPS FORMED**
4. January 29  Promoting Economic Well Being at the Community Level 

Readings:


• M. Sherraden, et al, (January 2000), Saving Patterns in IDA Programs, St. Louis: Center for Social Development, Washington University (Excerpts – Class Handout).


5. February 5  Promoting Social Well Being at the Community Level 

Readings:


6. February 12

**Promoting Healthy Communities**

*Readings:*


7. February 19  

**Promoting Environmental Justice**

**Readings:**

8. February 26  

**NO CLASS MID-SEMESTER BREAK**

9. March 5  

**Welfare Reform, Policy Devolution, & Community Well Being**

**Readings:**


** SUMMARY PAPER FOR SMALL GROUP PROJECTS DUE **

10. March 12 Improving the Well Being of Children and Youth I

Readings:


** SMALL GROUP PRESENTATIONS BEGIN **

11. March 19 Improving the Well Being of Children and Youth II

Readings:


12. March 26        Creating Responsive Social Services

Readings:


• Northern California Community Services Council (1994), *Building Healthy and Safe Communities: Principles for Designing and Delivering Successful Community Programs*, San Francisco: NCCSC, 5-15.


13. April 2

Creating Affordable and Safe Housing

Readings:


14. April 9  Public Infrastructure, Cultural Activities, & Community Well Being

Readings:

A. Public Infrastructure


B. Cultural Activities

• M. McDonald, G. Antunez, and M. Gottemoeller, “Using the Arts and Literature in Health Education,” *International Quarterly of Community Health Education*.


• Southeastern Michigan Community Partnership for Cultural Participation (December 1999), *Southeastern Michigan Geodemographic and Database Analysis* (Executive Summary), Southfield, MI: Art Serve.


** FINAL PAPERS DUE **

15. April 16       Prospects for the Future. Course Review and Evaluation

Readings:


