Introduction to Social Welfare Policy and Services
Social Work 530, Section 007
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1. Course Description:

This course surveys the history of social welfare and the social work profession, a broad array of U.S. social welfare services, and the evolution of social work values and ethics. Emphasis is placed on major fields of social work service such as: income maintenance, health care, mental health, child welfare, corrections, and services to the elderly. Analytic frameworks with regard to social welfare policies and services will be presented. These frameworks identify strengths and weaknesses in the current social welfare system with respect to multiculturalism and diversity; social justice and social change; behavioral and social science theory/research; and social work relevant promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation programs and services.

2. Course Content:

There are four main content areas for the course.
1. The philosophic and practical basis for social welfare provisions, including consideration of the respective roles and relationships of:
   - the individual
   - the family
   - the community, groups, educational settings, churches, workplaces, and the nonprofit sector
   - the government at various geographic levels.
2. The history of the social work profession:
   - from the altruistic philanthropist to the development of professional practice
   - the emergence of distinct methods of practice in their historical context
   - the influence of religious values, ethics, and social and political climates on the profession’s development
   - the emergence of specific policies and programs within their historical, social and political contexts.
3. A critical analysis of current social welfare policies, procedures, and programs, nationally and cross-nationally with attention to:
   - the strengths and weaknesses of various policies, programs and procedures
   - evolving population needs
   - the ways in which current policies and programs address promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation issues, and social justice/social change perspectives.

4. Descriptions and analyses using recent social science theory/research knowledge of major areas of social welfare provision and patterns of their delivery, including, but not limited to:
   - services for families, children, adolescents, adults, and the aging (including income maintenance, foster care, protective services, and school social work)
   - mental and physical health services including those targeted toward promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation
   - community service programs
   - correctional services and criminal justice.

3. Course Objectives:

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

1. Describe the historical basis for the current U.S. social welfare system, including the history and role of the social work profession.
2. Describe and critically analyze current social welfare policies, procedures, and programs including the role of behavioral and social science research and theory in their evolution.
3. Discuss the strengths and limitations of the current social welfare system in terms of the functions of the provision of basic needs, protection of the vulnerable, prevention, promotion, treatment, rehabilitation, protection of society, and provision of social control. This discussion will incorporate state, national, and cross-national analyses.
4. Describe and critically analyze major fields of social welfare service provision from a multicultural perspective, including but not limited to income security, health and mental health services, child welfare, social work practice in school settings, services to the elderly, and corrections.
5. Discuss and critically analyze current debates, trends, and ethical issues in each specific field of service presented in the course including the implications for social work practice and promoting social justice and social change.

4. Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:

   - *Multiculturalism and Diversity*. Specific fields of service are critically analyzed from multicultural, historical, and/or cross-national perspectives.
   - *Social Justice and Social Change*. The course critically analyzes current trends and ethical issues and their implications for promoting social justice and social change.
   - *Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation*. The course gives attention to the ways in which current policies and programs address promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.
Behavioral and Social Science Research. Analytic frameworks drawn from behavioral and social science literature and research are presented for each field of service.

5. Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:

The historical overview in this course includes an analysis of the value base of the profession. Ethical responsibilities of social workers within fields of service will be reviewed. Differences among codes of ethics for several social work professional organizations will also be explored.

6. Course Requirements

Required Textbooks


Books may be purchased at Ulrich’s, MBS and Michigan Union bookstores.

In order to complete the final assignment you will need to pay attention and collect information from multiple media sources on a social problem you will identify within the first few weeks of class. You will need to utilize the following sources:

  (NY times online: <http://www.nytimes.com>)
- A public television station newscast (NewsHour with Jim Lehrer) (online
  <http://www.pbs.org/newshour>)
- Public Radio discussions
- Local and network news shows
- Local newspapers

You will find useful resources for your papers on the Internet. I will periodically recommend additional reading for class sessions and links to those readings will have a link on the class Coursertools website, https://coursertools.urnmu.umich.edu. I will post a page built by the SSW library with useful links to other websites.

You should generally use peer-reviewed materials for your papers. You may also use Government web sites. If you use research published by research institutions (non-governmental “think tanks”), you should be aware and acknowledge any known group biases. You should also try and balance their analyses with reports from other institutions holding different political or ideological perspectives. When you use a website please cite the entire website address.
Attendance and participation 5 points
You are expected to attend class and participate in discussions during class sessions. Class participation will count for 5% (5 points) of your total grade in the course. Points can be deducted for excessive absences (noticeable) or unsatisfactory participation. It is your responsibility to get copies of material handed out in class on days you are unable to attend.

In class exercises 15 points
There will be three in-class exercises conducted over the course of the semester. Each will be worth a possible total of 5 points. If you are not present in class on the day an in-class assignment is conducted you may complete the assignment on your own with a 50% reduction in points.

Written assignments 80 points
You will be required to complete four written assignments over the course of the semester, each worth 20 points.

Social problem identification paper due 10/9 20 points
In this 5 - 7 page paper, you will identify a current policy (Federal, State, or local legislative, administrative or judicial policy) that interests you. You will identify the social problem on which the social policy is based and the ideological assumptions, values and beliefs inherent in the policy.

Historical policy analysis due 11/6 20 points
Using the same social problem you identified in your first paper, you will trace the historical responses to the problem in an 8—10 page paper. You will pay particular attention to how the problem was framed from one policy iteration to another, the domain in which the policy was institutionalized, the way in which the policy was implemented and the groups or individualized who were effected by it (in both good and “bad” ways).

Comparative policy analysis due 11/27 20 points
Using the same social problem you identified in your first paper, you will identify and compare legislation EITHER across two fields of service that address the same social problem, OR legislation across two countries (within the same fields of services). The legislation you examine may be federal, state, local or a combination. However, the two responses must come from two different policy domains (e.g. health, education, criminal or juvenile justice, economic or tax policy, agriculture [food and nutrition], defense, welfare, etc.), or from the same policy domains, but two different countries. The paper should be 8 - 10 pages in length and discuss possible reasons for differences in how each domain (or country) handles the social problem.

Ideological policy analysis due before 12/17 20 points
Using a variety of media sources that you will need to follow throughout the semester (newspapers, public radio, TV newscasts, web sources), you will examine a current debate about some aspect of the social problem you have examined all semester (or something new if you are feeling brave and have a lot of time on your hands). You will present and identify
the various ideological viewpoints, explain how the present proposals fit into the ideological constructs of the various protagonists, what the impact of the proposals might have on disempowered groups or individuals, and how the enactment of the proposals may entrench or disrupt current beliefs and/or values. This paper should be 8 - 10 pages in length.

7. Grading

I grade all papers anonymously. With each paper submission, please include a title page without your name on it and a separate title paper (not attached to the paper) that includes your name.

All papers must be typewritten and double-spaced using a 12 point font and one inch margins. You must use APA style for your papers. Pages should be numbered.

Please refer to page 50 of your Student Guide to the Master’s in Social Work Degree Program 2001-2002 for a discussion of the School of Social Work’s (and my) position on plagiarism. Also refer to the NASW editorial policy on scholarly conduct.

Each assignment will be given a letter grade, which will then be translated into points reflective of the weight the assignment plays in your overall grade.

A or A- Mastery of subject content, demonstration of critical analysis, creativity and/or complexity in completion of assignment. The difference between A and A- is based on the degree to which these skills are demonstrated.

B+ Mastery of subject content beyond expected competency, but has not demonstrated additional critical analysis, creativity or complexity in the completion of the assignment.

B Mastery of subject content at level of expected competency - meets course expectations.

B- Less than adequate competency, but demonstrates student learning and potential for mastery of subject content.

C or C- Demonstrates a minimal understanding of subject content. Significant areas needing improvement to meet course requirements.

E Student has failed to demonstrate minimal understanding of subject content.

I will give you verbal feedback on all of your work and if you have any questions on your grade please see me. If you wish to challenge a grade, you must submit the challenge in writing, be specific in nature and have a substantive argument.

Course Outline

September 11 Introduction to the course
Course expectations, overview, grading, and assignments
What is social welfare policy and why do you need to understand it?
September 18 Social welfare policy development
Policy is evolutionary—an overview of U.S. social policy and government involvement. From regulation to expenditure.

Readings: Midgely et al: chapters 1-6
Jansson: chapters 1-2

Additional reading:

September 25 The role of power in social welfare policy development
The social construction of public policy—sometimes it is about power!

Readings: Midgely et al: Chapters 24—28
Jansson: Chapters 13—14

Additional readings:

October 2. Welfare simulation
This session is sponsored by the U of M School of Social Work and will be conducted by Inter-Faith Council on Peace and Justice—Racial and Economic Justice Task Force; and by the Welfare Rights Union. Please be on time.

Note Room Location: Whitney Room 1309 SEB

Readings: Midgely et al. Chapter 13

October 9 U.S. Social Policy Historical overview—the early years
U.S. Social policy—Colonial era through the nineteenth century. The birth of the settlement era.

Readings: Midgely et al. Chapter 7
Jansson: Chapters 3—5

Additional readings:
Elizabethan Poor Laws (on coursetools)
**October 16 U.S. Social Policy Historical overview— the Progressive Era**
The first social movement era—child welfare, public health, mental health and the emergence of social work as a profession.
Readings: Midgely et al. Chapter 8
Jansson Chapter 6
Additional readings:

**October 23 U.S. Social Policy Historical overview— The Depression, New Deal and the Social Security Act.**
The creation of the “welfare state” in the U.S.
Readings: Midgely et al. Chapter 9
Jansson Chapters 7—8
Additional readings:

**October 30 U.S. Social Policy Historical overview— Post World War II, The Great Society, the War on Poverty and Social movements**
The second social movement era. Civil Rights, Women’s Liberation, Gay Rights, Children’s Rights, etc.
Readings: Midgely et al. Chapters 10, 13, 28, 30
Jansson Chapter 9 -10
Additional Readings:
Social Work Speaks pp. 296-299

**November 6 U.S. Social Policy Historical overview— Reagan, Clinton and the Bushes**
The “new” conservatism and a brush with federalism. Newt, Bill and the search for the middle.
Readings: Midgely et al. 11, 25
Jansson 11—12
Additional readings:

**November 13 Poverty—who’s fault is it?**
The changing face of poverty over the years: causes, responses, who it affects, etc. The innocent victims (elderly and children; mentally ill; victims of discrimination). Monetary transfers and social justice fixes. The bootstrap theory of poverty reduction.
Readings: Midgely et al. Chapters 17, 21, 22 & 23 Additional readings:
Bernstein, J. (2001). Let the War on the Poverty Line Commence
(<www.ffdc.org/ourwork.htm>

**November 20 Social Service protections— children and the elderly**
**Help for vulnerable populations**  
abused and neglected children, poor elderly populations.

Readings: Midgely et al. Chapters 12, 14, 15, 22

Additional readings:

**November 27 Social policies to deal with mental and physical health, and physical disabilities**
Other vulnerable populations and social service interventions; universal health care coverage – why it didn’t fly in the U.S.

Readings: Midgely et al. Chapters 16, 18, 10

**December 4 The “Big Stick” policies that mold Correction and Juvenile Justice services in the U.S.**

Readings: Midgely et al. Chapter 20

**December 11 Wrapping it all up**
What is the future? Can you have an effect?