THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Course Syllabus

SW 530 Introduction to Social Policy and Services
Section 004 Room 3816 SSWB
Fall 2001 - Monday 1:00-4:00 am

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“The moral test of a society is how it treats those in the dawn of life—its children; those in the
twilight—the elderly; and those in the shadow of life—the sick, the needy and the handicapped”
- Hubert Humphrey, 1977

“If you are poor your main problem isn’t lack of money,
it’s all the people who know what’s best for you.”
- Kay McDonald, NY County Family Court

I. 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 will 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 and research; and social
work-relevant promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation programs and services.
II. 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 case, 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.
III. Course Objectives

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

- Describe the historical basis for the current U.S. social welfare system, including the history and role of the social work profession.

- 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.

- Discuss the strengths and limitations of the current U.S. social welfare system in terms of the functions of 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.

- 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 correctional systems.

- 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.

IV. Relationship SW530 to School’s Four Curricular Themes

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity.** Specific field of service is critically analyzed from multicultural, historical, 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.
V. Textbooks and News Media Requirements

Required Textbooks


3. Other Material as noted in syllabus and on reserve in the library.

Required texts may be purchased at Ulrich’s, Michigan Book and Supply and Michigan Union Bookstore.

Required Media

1. The *New York Times* (or Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, etc.) The NYT is available online at <http://www.nytimes.com>

2. The *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer* (Mon-Fri, on Public TV) The NewsHour is online at <http://www.pbs.org/newshour>

Recommended Media

1. Local Newspaper (Ann Arbor News, Detroit);
2. CNN News and Policy discussions;
3. National Public Radio (news, Morning Edition);
5. West Wing (Wednesday 10-11 pm)

VI. Written Assignments and Grading

1. Legislative Policy Project: Definitions and Responses -20% of final grade
2. Hot Topic Project - 20% of final grade
3. Judicial Analysis – 20% of final grade
4. Final Exam –35% of final grade
5. Citizenship – 5% of final grade

**Legislative Policy Project** – requires student to identify two (2) legislative responses in different domains addressing a single general social problem or condition. *(See separate assignment handout).*
Hot Topic Project – requires student to track a current policy issue, write a 2-4 page synthesis of the current debate, and submit a completed project. (See separate assignment handout).

Judicial Analysis – requires student to select one US Supreme Court case on discrimination (race, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other factor) and write a substantial analysis of the decision, its implications, its historical context and its relationship to social work. (See separate assignment handout).

Final Exam - The final exam is take-home essay question. Questions will be inspired by current news accounts from The New York Times and other news sources. The exam is NOT a current events quiz but rather will involve placing current events in political, cultural and/or historical context in light of material covered, (and emphasized), in class and/or in reading assignments. It is comprehensive.

Before you begin working on class assignments, please read the section in your Student Guide to the Master’s in Social Work Degree Program 2001-2002 titled Writing Term Papers and Research Papers at the University of Michigan by Professor Sherrie A. Kossoudji (pp. 54 – 67). For further assistance with writing, you may go to the Writing Workshop, 1139 Angell Hall, (734) 764-0429.

The criteria for each grade are as follows:

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 is 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.

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

Four Notes on Grading:

1. Class attendance and class participation are considered essential for this course. Therefore you are expected to attend, to be prepared, and to make reasonable contributions. Good citizenship points will be deducted for excessive (noticeable) absences or unsatisfactory participation. It is your responsibility to get materials, handouts, or class notes from one of your classmates if you are unable to be in class.

2. I grade all papers anonymously. With each paper and exam submission, include a title page without your name on it, and provide a separate duplicate title page with your name. Only after I have read and graded all the papers, will I determine which paper belongs to whom.
3. It is best not to assume you will receive an “A” in this course. The instructor grades on a relative, not absolute, grading scale. In short, your work will be evaluated as it compares to that of your classmates and not on some allegedly objective external scale. Since virtually all of you were “A” students as undergraduates there will be a natural and necessary redistribution at the graduate level.

4. In general, I do accept challenges to grades. However, challenges must be in writing (not verbal); must be specific, and must be based on substantive arguments (or mathematical errors) not on nebulous reference to “fairness.” The instructor reserves the right to re-read, and re-grade, the work in its entirety in the case of the challenge. The grade may be adjusted up or down.

**Academic Misconduct:** Please acquaint yourself with University of Michigan, UM School of Social Work, and NASW policies on scholarly integrity. All academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and misrepresentation, will be treated seriously. You will find a discussion of plagiarism on page 50 of your Student Guide to the Master’s in Social Work Degree Program 2001-2002. Note that using Web resources increases the risk of “accidental plagiarism.” Do not let that happen.

**VII. Schedule of Classes & Assignments**

**September 10 - Course Expectations and Introduction to Social Policy**

Course Overview, assignments, grading, expectations etc.
What is social welfare policy? Why should social workers care?

**READING:**

Jansson – Preface, Chapters 1-2

**September 17 Social Welfare Expenditures: Paying for a Civilized Society**


**READING:**

Midgley et. al. – Preface, Introduction, Chapters 1-3

**Other Materials - Social Welfare Expenditures**
The Constitution of the United States particularly: Article 1 § 3; XIV Amendment § 4; XVI Amendment
The Bill of Rights (Amendments 1-10)
September 24  Social Construction of Problems, Policy Responses and Policy Analysis


READING:
Janssson – Chapters 13-14
Midgley et. al. – Chapters, 4-6; 24-28

Selected Additional Reading on Social Problem Construction
(for those interested):


October 1 - British Historical Roots, Social Welfare Values and Framework, Colonial America


READING:
Janssson – Chapters 3-4
Midgley et. al. – Chapter 7

Other Materials:
An Act to Relieve the Poor (1598)
Elizabethan Poor Law (1601)
Act Amending the Poor Laws (1662)
October 8 – Historical Roots of Social Welfare Policy: Civil War to Progressive Era, Development of the Social Work Profession


READING:
Jansson – Chapters 5-6
Midgley et. al. – Chapter 8

Other Materials:
Dix, Memorial to the Honorable The Senate and the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey
Pierce, Veto Message (1854)
Johnson, Veto Message (1866)
Freedman Bureau Records, Alabama

Video: The Heart of Basset Place: W. Gertrude Brown and the Wheatley House

October 15 – 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 & Justice – Racial and Economic Justice Task Force; and by the Welfare Rights Union. It will provide you with a simulated experience as a welfare recipient and give you some inkling of the challenges faced by public assistance recipients.

NOTE ROOM LOCATION: Whitney Room 1309 SEB. PLEASE BE ON TIME.

READING:
Midgley et. al. – Chapter 13

Other Materials:
Moss, “Campus measure for women”
Rector, “America has the world’s richest poor people.”
Kozol, excerpt from “Amazing grace.”
Felton, “Two worlds in a small city.”


The raise of the social work profession. Professional Ethics. The Great Depression. Roosevelt's New Deal. Harry Hopkins. The role of the federal government in social welfare. The structure of the social security act and its importance as a conceptual blueprint. Revisiting the notion of “worthy” and “unworthy” poor and Elizabethan Poor Law.

READING:

Jansssson – Chapter 7-8
Midgley et. al. – Chapter 9, 14

Other Materials:

McCrea, “The Professional School for Social Workers, Its Aims and Methods” (1911)
Haynes, “Co-Operation with Colleges in Securing and Training Negro Social Workers for Urban Centers” (1911)
Codes of Ethics Handouts

Recommended Reading:

Lathrop, “Hull House as a Sociological Laboratory” (1894)
Jarrett, “Psychiatric Social Work” (1918)
Richmond, “Some next Steps in Social Treatment” (1920)
Taft, “The Social Worker’s Opportunity” (1922)


READING:

Janssson – Chapters 9-12
Midgley et. al. – Chapters 10, 25, 30

Other Materials:
King, ML - I Have a Dream (1963)
Kennedy, JK - Nationally Televised Speech (1963)
Wallace, GC - The Civil Rights Movement: Fraud, Sham and Hoax (1964)
Johnson, LB - Inaugural Address (1965)
Johnson, LB - We Shall Overcome (1965)

Videotape: Segment on George Wallace Stand on the Schoolhouse Steps

November 5 - Historical Roots: Reagan, Clinton, Bushes both: Retrenchment of the Welfare State


READING:

Janssson – Chapters 10-12
Midgley et. al. – Chapters 11, 13 (review), 25, 30

Other Materials:
Contract with America
Personal Responsibility Act of 1996

November 12 – Poverty Debates: Welfare State Expansion, Retrenchment and Current research

Poverty: causes (structural, personal, cultural) and political perspectives (liberals vs conservatives). Special populations (urban, rural, working poor, children, women, persons of color, elderly) Strategies and policy responses (means-tested, social insurance, services, work, investment in human capital); Feminization of poverty and the urban underclass. Racism and Sexism.

READING:

Midgley et. al. – Chapters 17, 21, 23

Other Materials:
Demographic and poverty trends
November 19 – Supreme Court and Discrimination Issues; Social Security Act: Structure, Impact, Issues, Current Debates and Research

U.S. Supreme Court and Issues of Race, Gender, Sexual Orientation and Other Discrimination (Class discussion based on Assignment). Social Insurance (Old Age, Survivor and Disability Insurance (OASDI). Unemployment Insurance. Public Education. Labor market approaches to social welfare. DISCUSSION ON PAPERS

Reading:

Greenhouse, Linda (July 15, 2001). Divided They Stand: The High Court and the Triumph of Discord. NYT, IV 1:1; 4:1.

November 26 – Social Service Approaches: Emphasis on child welfare services and services to the elderly.


Videotape: Orphan Trains

READING:
Midgley et. al. – Chapters 12,15, 22

December 3 – - Health Care; Categorical Approaches and Programs, Block Grants.

Income transfer. Categorical or targeted programs. Cash transfers (AFDC, TANF, SSI, VA pensions). In-kind transfers: Food (food stamps, subsidized food programs, school lunches); Housing (public housing, Section 8); Medical Insurance (Medicaid); Investment in human capital (job corps, student loans, etc.).

READING:
Midgley et. al. – Chapters 16, 18, 19, 20

December 10 - Catch Up & Wind Down

READING:
Janssson – Review chapters 13-14 - Midgley et. al. – Chapters 32, 33