I. Course

A. Catalog Description
Provides skills of policy analysis for assessing the safety net and other U.S. social policies, the impact of policy on disadvantaged individuals and communities, and comparative social policies.

B. Purpose
This course is the required advanced social policy course. The course examines alternative models of policy development and applies them to current issues in social welfare. It emphasizes frameworks for policy research and secondary analysis of governmental data. It provides knowledge of social welfare systems and policies, the impact of policy on clients and communities, and the skills of policy analysis as a means to achieving social and economic justice for oppressed groups.

II. Course Objectives
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. Delineate skills in initiating, formulating, implementing and evaluating social policies and programs;
2. Demonstrate knowledge of several models of social policy and program analysis;
3. Contrast philosophies and approaches to social policy across distinct cultural contexts;
4. Describe how political and legislative processes influence social policy and program development;
5. Demonstrate ways in which social work professionals can use policy analysis to affect the formulation, implementation and modification of social policies and service delivery systems;
6. Demonstrate an understanding of how social policy formulation and program development may exclude oppressed groups from participation, and how full participation can be insured;
7. Demonstrate an understanding of how social policy may be used to advance or hinder the pursuit of social and economic justice;
8. Demonstrate the successful application of secondary data sources in the analysis of social policies and services; and
9. Demonstrate critical thinking skills in assessing social need, developing potential social policies and program options, and evaluating current social policies.

III. Course Content
This course will include the following topical (content) areas:
1. Overview of social policy;
2. Fields of policy practice; and
3. Frameworks for policy development and analysis

IV. Course Structure
The class will consist of lectures, group activities, at-home readings and written assignments.

V. Textbooks
There is no textbook required for this course.

VI. Course Requirements
The final grade for this course will be based on the following assignments:

1) **Attendance and Class Participation**  
20%

In order to stay abreast of current issues, students should come to class with at least one news story that reflects a potential policy issue. The following sources are suggested: The Texas Tribune, Houston Chronicle, The Washington Post, The New York Times, or The Wall Street Journal. The instructor will select a few students each class to share their articles. This is part of your participation grade and will start on the 2nd class of the semester.

Class attendance and participation is expected. Students are expected to come prepared to discuss the weekly readings, as well as broader themes and/or current events that arise around each session’s topic. Debate and discussion of different perspectives is expected; however, students are expected to demonstrate respectful conduct towards one another and the professors.

Your participation will be assessed using the following criteria:
1. Supporting flow of discussion (sharing appropriate and relevant content, reading and integrating weekly readings, integrating relevant field experiences, sharing relevant articles, and furthering classroom discussion of session topics);
2. Active listening; and being respectful in comments and action (including regular attendance and arriving on time).

2) Written Assignments (3 total)

**Social Problem Policy Paper**  
(DUE DATE: March 5 by 9am)

Each student is expected to identify a specific social problem policy of interest or concern to him/her. *This topic will serve as the basis for additional assignments throughout the semester.* In no more than 5 double-spaced pages, your social problem policy paper must:
1. Provide a clear definition of the problem;
2. Discuss the scope and magnitude of the problem;
3. Discuss what causes this problem to exist;
4. Describe how specific individuals, groups, communities, etc. may be affected by this problem;
5. Explain why this problem is worthy of policy attention; and
6. Identify a specific policy change needed to address the problem.

**Policy Analysis**  
(DUE DATE: April 2 by 9am)

This should be a completely different topic than your first assignment. You should select a current policy, one that is in process (not yet passed) or one that failed to become law.

- In your own words, what do you think this proposed policy change would do?
- What public, client and policymaker values are represented?
- What social problem do you think this proposed change is trying to address?
- What big picture issue does this fall under?
- What policy instrument is being used? For example, is it a mandate (perhaps indicated by the use of the word *should*)?
- Is the problem(s) the policy is/are addressing clear?
- How does the solution tie into the problem and do you think it is/will be effective or does another solution need to be considered?
- What people/groups might be in favor of this change? Who would be opposed?
- Is there an enforcement/accountability mechanism in the policy proposal?

**White Paper**  
(DUE DATE: April 16 by 9am)

Using one of the models provided by the instructors, each student must develop a one pager from his/her Social Problem Policy Paper (first
The focus of this exercise is to teach students how to develop materials to communicate with decision-makers on policy issues in a succinct yet informative manner. You do not have to use double spacing for this assignment and may use footnotes to ensure you meet the one page requirement.

3) **Policy Practice Presentation** 15%
(DUE DATE: April 30)

Presentations will be made on the last day of class. Each student will have a maximum of 5 minutes to present on the policy problem of interest or concern that the student has chosen for the semester. This presentation will be a culmination of the student’s research into the topic as well as his/her development of a proposed policy solution.

The presentation should include, but is not necessarily limited to, the following:
1. A thorough explanation of the policy problem of interest or concern;
2. A thorough explanation of the student’s proposed policy solution/intervention; and
3. An effective argument as to why the proposed policy solution/intervention will be successful and should be supported.

This exercise is meant to help prepare the student to take a complex issue from the point of identification of a problem to the point of developing and advocating/lobbying for policy solutions as professional social workers. In order to facilitate social policy changes in real-life settings, students should be prepared to efficiently and effectively state their cases and present themselves as subject matter experts who are able to proactively assist and collaborate with policy-makers.

**Grading Rubric-All written assignments will be graded on the following criteria:**
1. Adherence to the required elements of the assignment;
2. Quality of analysis and the depth of understanding of the topic that demonstrates the use of critical thinking skills;
3. Logical and well-organized presentation of arguments and conclusions that are clearly drawn from the arguments;
4. Use of appropriate research from a variety of reputable sources to support arguments and conclusions;
5. Use of appropriate references using a consistent style [i.e. either APA Citation Style (in-text citations and references page) or Chicago Citation Style (footnotes and bibliography page)];
6. Use of appropriate grammar, spelling, and syntax; and
7. The overall flow, clarity, and quality of the writing.
Late submissions will be accepted under very special circumstances; however, the grade value will be reduced by 10% for each day late, including turning in an assignment after the time deadline on the day it is due.

EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR THIS COURSE, NO EXCEPTIONS.

VII. Evaluation and Grading
The following standard grading scale has been adopted for all courses taught in the college.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>96-100% of the points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92-95.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88-91.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-87.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>76-79.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>72-75.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>68-71.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>64-67.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please seek assistance from the professor, other people and/or the writing center to ensure you meet the grammatical, syntax, spelling, flow and other details in the grading rubric so you have the greatest opportunity of earning a high grade.

VIII. Policy on grades of I (Incomplete):
The grade of "I" (Incomplete) is a conditional and temporary grade given when students are either (a) passing a course or (b) still have a reasonable chance of passing in the judgment of the instructor but, for non-academic reasons beyond their control have not completed a relatively small part of all requirements. Students are responsible for informing the instructor immediately of the reasons for not submitting an assignment on time or not taking an examination. Students must contact the instructor of the course in which they receive an "I" grade to make arrangements to complete the course requirements. Students should be instructed not to re-register for the same course in a following semester in order to complete the incomplete requirements.

The grade of "I" must be changed by fulfillment of course requirements within one year of the date awarded or it will be changed automatically to an "F" (or to a "U" [Unsatisfactory] in S/U graded courses). The instructor may require a time period of less than one year to fulfill course requirements, and the grade may be changed by the instructor at any time to reflect work completed in the course. The grade of "I" may not be changed to a grade of W.

IX. Policy on academic dishonesty and plagiarism
Please click the link below for the full explanation of the Academic Honesty policy and procedure
Definitions:

"Academic dishonesty" means employing a method or technique or engaging in conduct in an academic endeavor that contravenes the standards of ethical integrity
expected at the University of Houston or by a course instructor to fulfill any and all academic requirements. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to, the following:

**Plagiarism**
- Representing as one's own work the work of another without acknowledging the source (plagiarism). Plagiarism includes copying verbatim text from the literature, whether printed or electronic, in all assignments including field.

**Cheating and Unauthorized Group Work**
- Openly cheating in an examination, as copying from another’s paper; c. Being able to view during an examination, quiz or any in-class assignment an electronic device that allows communication with another person, access to unauthorized material, access to the internet, or the ability to capture an image, unless expressly permitted by the instructor;
- Using and/or possessing “crib notes,” as unauthorized use of notes or the like to aid in answering questions during an examination;
- Giving or receiving unauthorized aid during an examination, such as trading examinations, whispering answers, and passing notes, and using electronic devices to transmit or receive information;
- Securing another to take a test in the student's place. Both the student taking the test for another and the student registered in the course are at fault;

**Fabrication, Falsification, and Misrepresentation**
- Changing answers or grades on a test that has been returned to a student in an attempt to claim instructor error;
- Using another’s laboratory results as one’s own, whether with or without the permission of the owner;
- Falsifying results in laboratory experiments;
- Misrepresenting academic records or achievements as they pertain to course prerequisites or corequisites for the purpose of enrolling or remaining in a course for which one is not eligible;
- Representing oneself as a person who has earned a degree without having earned that particular degree

**Stealing and Abuse of Academic Materials**
- Stealing, as theft of tests or grade books, from faculty offices or elsewhere, or knowingly using stolen tests or materials in satisfaction of exams, papers, or other assignments; this includes the removal of items posted for use by the students;
- Mutilating or stealing library materials; improperly shelving materials with the intent to reduce accessibility to other students;

**Complicity in Academic Dishonesty**
- Failing to report to the instructor or departmental hearing officer an incident which the student believes to be a violation of the academic honesty policy;

**Academic Misconduct**
- Any other conduct which a reasonable person in the same or similar circumstances would recognize as dishonest or improper in an academic setting.
Process:
Students shall have the responsibility of reporting incidents of alleged academic dishonesty to the instructor of record involved or to the appropriate authority if the alleged act is not associated with a specific class within 5 class days of the incident. Faculty or instructor of record shall have the responsibility of reporting incidents of alleged academic dishonesty through their college hearing officer within 5 class days of the incident. The faculty should include the recommended sanction in the report. The college hearing officer will notify the student of the report and recommended sanction. The student can accept the sanction and waive a hearing or request a college hearing. A hearing shall be set within 10 days and would be consist of two faculty and three students chosen by the hearing officer.

X. Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

January 22  Value debates in social welfare policy: Social welfare in social, political, economic, cultural context

* Class Exercise: (please read the following in advance of class)
  • Boise’s Anti-Camping Ordinance – read 1st paragraph on 2nd page http://www.justice.gov/opa/file/643766/download

  • SB 11 (83-R) http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/83R/billtext/html/SB00011I.htm

  • HB 3859 (85-R) http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/85R/billtext/html/HB03859F.htm


Mankiw, G. and Beren, R. 2009. “Should All Americans Have the Right (be entitled) to Health Care?” Available at: http://healthcare.procon.org/view.answers.php?questionID=001602

January 29  Defining Social Problems

  Class Exercise – What’s a Social Problem?


Chapter on Problem Identification and Definition – provided by instructor


February 5 The Policy Process


February 12 Policy implementation & impact

Class Exercise: (please read in advance of class)

- **HB 674 (2017) – introduced**
  http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/85R/billtext/html/HB00674I.htm

- **HB 674 (2017) – enrolled**
  http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/85R/billtext/html/HB00674F.htm

- **SB 966 (2017)**
  http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/85R/billtext/html/SB00


**February 19**

**Understanding Policy at the Federal Level**

*Guest Speaker: Freddy Warner, Vice-President Government Affairs for Memorial Hermann Health System*


**February 26** Understanding Policy at the State Level


**March 5** *

CLASS EXERCISE: TX LEGISLATURE BILL DEVELOPMENT SOCIAL PROBLEM POLICY PAPER DUE

**March 12** Spring Break – no class

**March 19** Understanding Policy at the Local Level

*Guest Speaker: Katherine von Haefen, United Ways of Texas*

March 26  

**Health policies**

*Guest Speaker: Rosie McStay – Director of Government Relations and Community Benefits at Texas Children’s Hospital*

HIPPA at 20: A Bipartisan Achievement  
http://www.hhs.gov/blog/2016/08/19/hipaa-20-bipartisan-achievement.html


Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law (2004). *Get It Together: How to Integrate Physical and Mental Health Care for People with Serious Mental Disorders*. Accessed at:  
http://www.bazelon.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=FamA0HBvilA=. Read Executive Summary only.

April 2  

**Policies on Juvenile Justice**

*POLICY ANALYSIS PAPER DUE*

*Guest Speakers: Katya Dow, J.D., - Legal Program Director, Juvenile and Capital Advocacy Project; Kelly Opot – Executive Director, Harris County Youth Collective*

Shah, Riya and Lourdes Rosado. 2014. *Crim. Law Practitioner* 59 Overcoming Obstacles to Success: Notifying Youth of Their Juvenile Record Expungement Rights and Eligibility vol2 issue 2

Merfish, Brett and Dr. Yamanda Wright. “Raise the Age 17 year olds in the criminal justice system”  
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5728d34462cd94b84dc567e/d/t/58f649e21e5b6ce1b43d017d/1492535793830/Raise-the-Age+Report-2017.pdf


Administration
http://ssa.uchicago.edu/improving-multisystem-collaboration-crossover-youth


April 9

Education Policy

Guest Speaker: Andrea Turner – HISD Government Relations Director


April 16

Child Welfare Policy

Guest Speaker: Dimple Patel, Senior Policy Analyst at TexProtects

WHITE PAPER DUE


April 23

Roles of media, lobbyists, advocates, and other outside influences in policy making

Guest Speaker: Jim Grace, Greenberg Traurig, LLP


Casey, J. 2011. Understanding advocacy: A primer on the policy making role of non profit organizations. New York: Baruch College, University of New York. Available at:


April30 Official Last Day of Class - CLASS PRESENTATIONS

XI. Americans with Disabilities Statement
The University of Houston System complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for students with a disability. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, each University within the System strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an academic adjustments/auxiliary aid, please contact the UH Center for Disabilities at 713-743-5400.

XII. Counseling and Psychological Services
Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to college, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS (www.uh.edu/caps) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. Also, there is no appointment necessary for the “Let’s Talk” program, which is a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus. http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html.

XIII. Addenda – optional
To include any additional information the instructor wishes to provide to students, such as guidance regarding course expectations, use of Blackboard, use of electronic devices, classroom behavior, etc.