



COURSE TITLE/SECTION: SOCW 7367/18953 Advanced Social Policy Analysis

TIME: Mondays 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Room SW107A

FACULTY: Roberta M. Leal, MSW

OFFICE HOURS: Mon 1-2pm & Tue 4-5pm by appt.

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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 welfare policies.

B. Purpose

This course is the required advanced social welfare 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. A comparative perspective is included.

II. Course Objectives

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

1. delineate skills in initiating, formulating, implementing and evaluating social welfare policies and programs;
2. demonstrate a knowledge of cross-cultural comparative perspectives of social welfare systems and several models of social policy and program analysis;
3. describe how political and legislative processes influence social welfare policy and program development;
4. discuss how social work professionals can affect the formulation, implementation and modification of social policies and service delivery systems;
5. demonstrate an understanding of how social welfare policy formulation and program development may exclude oppressed groups from participation, and how full participation can be insured;
6. demonstrate an understanding of how social welfare policy analysis may

- be used to advance or hinder the pursuit of social and economic justice;
7. demonstrate the successful application of secondary data sources in the analysis of social welfare policies and services; and
 8. demonstrate critical thinking skills in assessing social need, developing potential social welfare policies and program options, and evaluating current social welfare policies.

III. Course Content

This course will include the following topical (content) areas:

1. overview of social policy;
2. governmental social insurance and income maintenance programs;
3. fields of policy practice;
4. alternative welfare programs;
5. the use and application of data sources to analyze policies; and
6. assessing need, developing policies and program options, and evaluating current policies.

IV. Course Structure

Class formats will vary from session to session, depending on session content. Interactive lectures and discussion will be the primary formats; however, in-class exercises, guest speakers, and peer presentations may play a role in class instruction. Students are expected to complete all readings as assigned, as they are a major source of learning in this course.

The professor reserves the right to alter readings, course topics, and assignments as needed to better accommodate learning goals and time constraints.

V. Textbooks

Readings are required as noted in the syllabus, and as assigned during the course of the semester. Readings will be available on Blackboard or distributed by the professor.

Please note that readings have been purposefully selected to strengthen students' critical thinking and encourage healthy classroom debate; it is not expected that students (or the professor) will agree with all perspectives presented.

To stay abreast of current issues, students should read at least one daily newspaper, reflecting diverse political viewpoints, such as: The Houston Chronicle, The Washington Post, The New York Times, and The Wall Street Journal; or international sources, such as BBC News. *Students are encouraged to bring articles to class that complement our class discussions or post them to Blackboard*

for online discussion.

VI. Course Requirements

The final grade for this course will be based on the following assignments:

1) **Class Participation – 10 points**

2) **In-Class Assignments**

Pop Essay Quizzes – 10 points

Library Exercise – 5 points

(DUE DATE: 2/16)

3) **Written Assignments**

Critical Analyses – 30 points

(DUE DATES: 2/16, 3/7 at 6:00 p.m., 4/13)

Policy Analysis Brief – 25

points (DUE DATE: 5/4, by

1:00 p.m.)

4) **Policy Advocacy Project and Presentation – 20 points (DUE DATE: 4/21)**

5) **Extra Credit: Current Policy Issues – up to 2 points**

Assignment details are provided at the end of this syllabus. All assignments are due by the dates specified above. **All assignments due on class meeting days are due before the start of the class session that day.** Late submissions will be accepted for all assignments except Pop Essay quizzes; 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. A Pop Essay quiz missed due to absence or lateness cannot be made up at a later date or time. The professor reserves the right to require any student to consult the Writing Center regarding assignments in this course.

VII. Evaluation and Grading

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

| | | | |
|------|-----------------------|------|----------|
| A = | 96-100% of the points | C+ = | 76-79.9% |
| A- = | 92-95.9% | C = | 72-75.9% |
| B+= | 88-91.9% | C- = | 68-71.9% |
| B = | 84-87.9% | D = | 64-67.9% |

B- = 80-83.9%

F = Below 64%

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

Students are expected to demonstrate and maintain a professional standard of writing in all courses, do one's own work, give credit for the ideas of others, and provide proper citation of source materials. Any student who plagiarizes any part of a paper or assignment or engages in any form of academic dishonesty will receive an "I" for the class with a recommendation that a grade of F be assigned, subsequent to a College hearing, in accordance with the University policy on academic dishonesty. Other actions may also be recommended and/or taken by the College to suspend or expel a student who engages in academic dishonesty.

All papers and written assignments must be fully and properly referenced using APA style format (or as approved by the instructor), with credit given to the authors whose ideas you have used. If you are using direct quotes from a specific author (or authors), you must set the quote in quotation marks or use an indented quotation form. For all direct quotes, you must include the page number(s) in your text or references. Any time that you use more than four or five consecutive words taken from another author, you must clearly indicate that this is a direct quotation. Please consult the current APA manual for further information.

Academic dishonesty includes using any other person's work and representing it as your own. This includes (but is not limited to) using graded papers from students who have previously taken this course as the basis for your work. It also includes, but is not limited to submitting the same paper to more than one class. If

you have any specific questions about plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please raise these questions in class or make an appointment to see instructor. This statement is consistent with the University Policy on Academic Dishonesty that can be found in your UH Student Handbook.

X. Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

Session 1. January 26 *Course overview*

Session 2. February 2 *Defining social problems*

Chambers (2000). Analyzing the social problem background of social policies and social programs, *Social Policy and Programs: A Method for the Practical Public Policy Analyst*, pp. 7-30 (Ch. 1). New York: Macmillan.

Stone, D. (1997). Symbols. In *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making* (pp. 138-162). New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Jordan-Zachery, J.S. (2001). Black womanhood and social welfare policy: The influence of her image on policy making. *Race Relations Abstracts*, 26, 3, 5-24.

Session 3. February 9 *Conducting policy research – MEET IN LIBRARY, ROOM 10-F*

Prior to class,
review:

<http://guides.lib.uh.edu/socialpolicy>

SELECT THE SOCIAL PROBLEM YOU WILL BE STUDYING PRIOR TO CLASS TODAY.

Session 4. February 16 *Social workers in the policy arena*

Stuart (1999). Linking clients and policy: Social work's distinctive contribution: *Social Work*, 44, 4, 335-347.

Freeman, I. C. (2004, Spring). Advocacy in aging policy: Working the bills on Capitol Hill(s). *Generations*, 28, 41-47.

Amidei, N. (2008). Public policy advocacy: Five steps, five

strategies, five things to remember, pp 1-8. Seattle, WA: Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

SOCIAL PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION PAPER AND LIBRARY EXERCISE DUE

Session 5. February 23

Frameworks for policy analysis

Moye, J. & Rinker. (2002). It's a hard knock life. *Harvard Journal on Legislation*, 39, 375-394.

Riordan, C. & Aguilar, J.P. (2009). What's missing from No Child Left Behind? A policy analysis from a social work perspective. *Children & Schools*, 31, 3, 135-144.

Suggested reading:

Roff, S. (2001). Analyzing end-of-life care legislation: A social work perspective. *Social Work in Health Care*, 33, 1, 51-68.

Session 6. March 2

Social welfare in historical perspective

Katz, M. (2010). The American welfare state and social contract in hard times. *Journal of Policy History*, 22, 508- 529.

Peterson, M.A. (2011). It was a different time: Obama and the unique opportunity for health care reform: *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*, 36, 3, 429-436.

Suggested reading:

Russell, A. (2007, Aug.) In-state tuition for undocumented immigrants: States' rights and educational opportunity. [A higher education policy brief]. American Association of State Colleges and Universities. pp. 1-3.

Session 7. March 10

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

Abramovitz, M. (2001). Everyone is still on welfare: The role of redistribution in social policy. *Social Work*, 46, 4, 297-308.

Thyer, B. A. (2010). Social justice: A conservative perspective, *Journal of Comparative Social Welfare*, 26, 2, 261 – 274.

Students will be assigned to one of the following groups, and will be expected to read a set of brief newspaper articles, op-eds, and policy briefs corresponding to the selected topic. Specific readings TBD:

1) *College Education Financing*

2) *Immigration Reform*

**COMPARATIVE POLICY ANALYSIS PART ONE
DUE FRIDAY, MARCH 7 AT 6:00 P.M.**

March 16

Spring Break – NO CLASS

Session 8. March 23

Policy implementation

McDonnell, L.M. & Elmore, R.F. (1987). Getting the job done: Alternative policy instruments. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 9, 2, 133-152.

Session 9. March 30

Understanding policy impacts; inclusion and exclusion in policy

Meyers, M., Glaser, B. & MacDonald, K. (1998). On the front lines of welfare delivery: Are workers implementing policy reforms? *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 17, 1-22.

Jaffe, P.G., Crooks, C.V., & Wolfe, D.A. (2003). Legal and policy responses to children exposed to domestic violence: The need to evaluate intended and unintended consequences. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 6, 3, 205-213.

Suggested Reading

O'Connor, D., Little, F., McManus, R. (2009). Elders with serious mental illness: lost opportunities and new policy options. *Journal of Aging Social Policy*, 21, 144-158.

Session 10. April 6

Addressing poverty: Public assistance, social insurance

and tax policy

All students read:

Center for Public Policy Priorities. (2011). Poverty 101.
http://www.cppp.org/files/8/2011_11_Poverty101.pdf

Students will also select one of the following three sets of articles to read prior to the class session:

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families

Lower-Basch, E. (2011). Cash assistance since welfare reform. [TANF Policy Brief]. Washington, D.C.: Center for Law and Social Policy. pp. 1-4.

Farrell, M., Rich, S., Turner, L., Seith, D., & Bloom, D. Welfare time limits: An update on state policies, implementation, and effects on families. Washington, D.C.: The Lewin Group and MDRC. [pp. ES1-ES10 only].

Mitchell, T. (2003). If I survive, it will be despite welfare reform: Reflections of a former welfare student. In V. Adair & S. Dahlberg, *Reclaiming class: Women, poverty, and the promise of Higher Education in America*. (pp. 113-118). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Social Security

Wald, M. (2012). Social Security: A brief overview. [Fact Sheet #253]. Washington, DC: AARP Public Policy Institute, pp. 1-7.

Gonyea, J. & Hooyman (2005). Reducing poverty among older women: Social security reform and gender equity. *Families in Society*, 86, 338-346.

Halliwell, P., Gassoumis, Z., & Wilber, KI. (2007). Social Security reform: Implications for Latino retirees. [Latinos Social Security Policy Brief] Los, Angeles, CA: UCLA Center for Policy Research on Aging, pp. 1-4.

Earned Income Tax Credit

Berlin, G. (2009). Transforming the EITC to reduce poverty and inequality. *Pathways*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality, pp. 1-5.

Finzel, R., Flores, Q., & Rossiter, C. (2012). Tax credits for working families: Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Denver, CO: National Conference of State Legislatures, pp.1-7.

Lim, Y., DeJohn, T.V., & Murray, D. (2012). Free Tax Assistance and the Earned Income Tax Credit: Vital resources for social workers and low-income families. *Social Work, 57*, 1-10.

Session 11. April 13

Social welfare: An international view

Gatenio Gabel, S. (2012). Social protection and children in developing countries. *Children and Youth Services Review, 34*, 537-545.

Gilbert, N. (2012). A comparative study of child welfare systems: Abstract orientations and concrete results. *Children and Youth Services Review, 34*, 532-536.

COMPARATIVE POLICY ANALYSIS PARTS TWO AND THREE DUE

Session 12. April 20

Health and mental health policy

Kaiser Family Foundation. (n.d.) Summary of new health reform law, 1-13.

Levey, N.N. (2012). Passing the buck-or empowering states? Who will define essential health benefits? *Health Affairs, 31*, 663-666.

Burnam, M., Meredith, L., Tanielian, T. & Jaycox, L. (2009). Mental health care for Iraq and Afghanistan War Veterans. *Health Affairs, 28*, 3, 771-782.

Suggested Readings

Shern, D., Beronio, K., Harbin, H. (2009). After parity – what’s next. *Health Affairs, 28*, 3, 660-662.

Laffer, A., Arduin, D., & Winegarden, W. (2009, Aug.) The prognosis of national health insurance: A Texas perspective [Snapshot]. Austin, TX: Texas Public Policy Foundation. pp. 1-3.

Session 13. April 27

Effectively advocating for policy change

POLICY ADVOCACY PRESENTATIONS

Session 14. May 4

Course wrap-up

POLICY ADVOCACY PRESENTATIONS

POLICY ANALYSIS BRIEF DUE BY 1:00 p.m.

XI. Americans with Disabilities Statement

Whenever possible, and in accordance with 504/ADA guidelines, the University of Houston will attempt to provide reasonable academic accommodations to students who request and require them. Please call 713-743-5400 for more assistance. Instructors may not provide accommodations without supporting documentation from the UH Center for Students with Disabilities.

XII. Addenda

Consultation. Scheduled office hours are indicated on page 1 of this syllabus and are posted outside of my office door. Other times may be arranged by appointment – please contact me by email to schedule alternative appointment times. I encourage students to meet with me to discuss assignment topics, questions related to course content, or other topics that arise as a result of course content, assignments, and discussions.

Course expectations. Regular, on-time attendance is expected; absences will be reflected in your class participation grade. If you cannot attend class, you are expected to inform me in advance. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to contact fellow students to obtain missed information.

Blackboard. The course information and readings are posted on this course's Blackboard site. Please use Blackboard to submit assignments and follow course announcements.

Students are encouraged to post and discuss links or articles relevant to course content in order to strengthen the course learning environment.

Electronic Devices. You are expected to conduct yourself as a professional in this class. Distractions should be kept to a minimum; cell phones should be turned off before class; no laptops should be utilized during class sessions, except as permitted by the professor.

Course Assignments

The final grade for this course will be based on the following assignments:

1) Class Participation

Participation and Preparedness – 10 points.

Active class participation is expected, and is necessary for optimal student learning. We learn from each other; thus, 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.

Your participation will be assessed using the following criteria:

- supporting flow of discussion (sharing appropriate and relevant content, reading and integrating weekly readings, integrating relevant field experiences, and furthering classroom discussion of session topics);
- active listening; and
- being respectful in comments and action (including regular attendance and arriving on time).

2) In-class Assignments

Pop Essay Quizzes – 10 points.

At times throughout the semester, the instructor will provide a prompt to the class based on that week's readings. Students will have approximately 10 minutes in class to write down your thoughts in response to the prompt, and then will turn your response in to the instructor. The assignment will be assessed based on students' comprehension and application of key concepts from the week's readings. *If the Pop Essay Quiz is missed due to absence or lateness, it cannot be made up at a later date or time.*

Library Exercise – 5 points.

A brief written exercise on conducting library research related to policy will be provided prior to Session 3. Students may complete this assignment during the library session, in conjunction with a librarian, or on your own time.

(DUE: 2/16, by 9:00 a.m.)

3) Written Assignments

All written assignments (the Critical Analyses and the Policy Analysis Brief) will focus on the same problem and policy, selected by the student. Assignments will be graded based on:

1. Adherence to the required elements of the assignment.
2. Quality of analysis and the depth of understanding of the topic.
3. Logical and well-organized presentation of your arguments, and conclusions that are clearly drawn from your arguments.
4. Appropriate use of references, using sources beyond those provided by the instructor. It is your responsibility to ensure all sources you cite are credible.
5. Appropriate grammar and spelling, and evidence the assignment has been proofread.

Students are expected to follow the 6th edition of the APA Publication Manual, use 12 pt. font and 1" margins, and indicate page numbers. ***Upload all written assignments to the course Blackboard site by the specified dates and times.***

Critical analyses– 30 points.

1) Social problem identification. Each student is expected to identify a social problem of interest or concern to you based on your social work practice experience. This problem will serve as the basis for all written assignments throughout the semester. In approximately 4 double-spaced pages, your paper must:

- a) provide a clear definition of the problem as you see it,
- b) *objectively* discuss the scope and magnitude of the problem (e.g., how extensive is the problem, how many people are affected, which demographic groups)
- c) discuss what causes this issue/problem to exist *in an objective manner*,
- d) *objectively* describe the specific positive and negative effects of this problem for individuals, families, groups, and society,
- e) explain why this problem is of interest to you based on your practice experience, and why you believe it is worthy of policy attention,
- f) discuss 1-2 examples of “symbols” (with references) commonly used by members of the public, the media, or politicians in discussing their own definition of this problem,
- g) identify a policy addressing this problem that you think you would like to study over the course of the semester.

This paper must be well-referenced, using appropriate resources to support your arguments.

*****I encourage anyone who is struggling to narrow down or define your problem to schedule a meeting with me, before completing your Social Problem Identification***

*assignment.***

(DUE: 2/16, by 9:00 a.m.)

2) Comparative policy analysis. If you are studying a state or local policy, identify a policy from another state or locality which addresses the same problem differently. If you are studying a national policy, identify a policy from a different country that addresses the same problem. The assignment includes both completion of a table and a narrative discussion:

Part One (DUE: Friday 3/7, by 6:00 p.m.)

- a) Fill out Part One of the table provided on Blackboard to compare the context and goals for each policy. The table can be completed using bullet points. *The content of the table must be written in your own words.*
- b) A preliminary reference list with resources for the policy of interest in both states/countries must be attached.

Parts Two and Three (DUE: 4/13 by 9:00 a.m.)

- c) Fill out Part Two of the table provided on Blackboard describing key elements of both policies. The table can be completed using bullet points. *The content of the table must be written in your own words.*
- d) Part Three consists of a narrative discussion, in 3-4 paragraphs:
 - a. Identify and discuss the similarities and differences between the two policies.
 - b. Explain why you think these similarities and differences exist.
 - c. Discuss what you have learned through your comparison of the two policies?

A minimum of 4-5 credible sources must be used in the Comparative Policy Analysis. All sources of information both in the table and in the narrative must be cited.

**** Identify your comparison policy as early as possible – if you are struggling to identify a comparison policy, please schedule a meeting with me or with Irene Ke, the Social Work Librarian.****

Policy analysis brief – 25 points.

During the course of the semester, each student will select one policy to examine through the critical analyses and a final policy analysis brief. The final brief will build off the critical analyses and feedback from the instructor, and will require modifying the style of how your information is presented in order to communicate effectively about your policy to a policymaker.

As the name suggests, policy briefs are short documents, *approximately* 2-3 single-spaced pages, focused on providing the most essential information about a policy and recommendations for policy change. Briefs provide important information on-demand for policy makers who are often too busy to read detailed lengthy documents. However, the best policy briefs entice readers to

want to find out more. Tips for the assignment will be provided in class.

The brief must include the following elements:

- a) specification of the problem the policy seeks to address and a *brief* summary of its scope and magnitude,
- b) description of the policy and its key elements,
- c) analysis of at least 2 strengths and 2 weaknesses of the policy, following a policy analysis framework of your choosing,
- d) identification and justification of at least 2 specific, actionable recommendations that a policymaker could work to implement into law that would improve the policy.

Relevant data and citations must be used to support your major points throughout the brief.

(DUE 5/4, by 1:00 p.m.)

3) Presentation

Policy Advocacy Project and Presentation – 20 points.

Students may complete this assignment individually or in groups of up to three students. Students will engage in at least 2-3 forms of *political action* outside of GCSW to advocate for policy change to promote social justice. These actions may be in the form of phone calls, letter-writing, campaign volunteering (phone calls, door-to-door canvassing, etc.), testimony presentation, rally attendance, meeting with a legislator, etc.

Students are strongly encouraged to meet with the professor to receive feedback prior to beginning the project.

Students will make 10-15 minute class presentations on the policy advocacy effort at the end of the semester. Presentations will be assessed both on the quality of the advocacy project and on the strength of the students' presentation of each of the following elements:

- a) the purpose of your advocacy effort,
- b) a clear description of each of the specific policy advocacy activities you engaged in and justification for why you chose these specific forms of advocacy action,
- c) a description of the target group for your advocacy, and other key participants in the effort,
- d) an analysis of the degree to which you feel your efforts were effective and why,
- e) knowing what you know now, an assessment of how you might have approached your

advocacy differently to achieve better advocacy outcomes, and

- f) an assessment of whether and how this experience impacted your feelings about engaging in policy advocacy.

(DUE: 4/21)

4) Extra Credit – up to 2 points

The first segment of most class sessions (not Sessions 3, 13, and 14) will be devoted to discussion of current policy issues and events. Students may be awarded up to 1 Extra Credit point for:

- a) bringing a newspaper or newsmagazine article or an audio or video clip (3 minutes or less in length only) relevant to current policy issues and events,
- b) providing your perspective on how the current policy issue may impact direct practice,
- c) linking the current policy issue to course content, and
- d) leading class discussion of the policy issue in the article/clip.

Each Extra Credit presentation and discussion will be limited to 10 minutes.

If you would like to present Extra Credit during a given class session, please notify the professor by email by 5 p.m. on the Friday before the class session during which you would like to present. So that I can have your audio/video clip up on the computer/projector, please include any clip you'd like to show in your email. If you share an article, please bring enough copies of the article for everyone in the class.

So that everyone who wants to has an opportunity to receive Extra Credit, students who have not yet shared an article or video clip at that point in the semester will have the first opportunity to share each week; otherwise, students will be selected to present on a first-come/first-serve basis.

Assignment Due Dates

| Assignment | Course Due Dates |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Pop Essay Quizzes | Occasionally throughout semester |
| Library Exercise | 2/16 |
| Critical Analysis 1: Social Problem Identification | 2/16 |
| Critical Analysis 2: Comparative Policy Analysis – Part One | 3/7 |
| Critical Analysis 3: Comparative Policy Analysis – Parts Two and Three | 4/13 |
| Policy Analysis Brief | 5/4 by 1:00 p.m. |
| Policy Advocacy Project and Presentation | Presentation: 4/27 & 5/4 |
| Extra Credit | |