Introduction to Social Welfare Policy and Services
Social Work 530 (section 001) -- Fall, 2011
Tuesday, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Room 2228  School of Education Building

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Course Description

This course is an introduction to the history and analysis of social welfare policy and services. It explores current social welfare issues in the context of their history and the underlying rationale and values that support different approaches. 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.

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 social welfare provisions and 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 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.

Course Objectives

Upon successful 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 with an understanding of their evolution over time as a function of historical circumstances, scientific/research findings, and the role of values.
3. Describe and critically analyze social welfare policies/services from a multicultural perspective.
4. 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.

Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes

1. **Multiculturalism and Diversity.** This course will seek to identify how the cultural or experiential situation of individuals and groups impact their perspectives on and experience of social welfare policies and practices.
2. **Social Justice and Social Change.** The course critically analyzes current trends and ethical issues and their implications for social justice and social change.
3. **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation.** The course gives attention to the ways in which current policies and programs address promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.
4. **Behavioral and Social Science Research.** Analytic frameworks drawn from behavioral and social science literature and research are presented for each field of service.
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 as well as codes of ethical conduct and potential conflicts that can arise.

Student Support Services

Writing Assistance. One of the benefits of being a student at the University of Michigan is the range and depth of resources to which you have access. The Sweetland Writing Center is one such resource. For help with your paper, please free to consult them for writing support. They can help you develop your argument, improve your paper organization, correct grammar mistakes, and craft effective prose. SWC is located at 1310 North Quad (corner of W. Washington and State St.) You can register with them on line and schedule an appointment:

Website: http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/

Tutoring and writing assistance for social work courses is also available in Career Services. Contact micwoods@umich.edu

Another resource is the English Language Institute:  http:www.lsa.umich.edu/eli

Students with Disabilities. The School of Social Work has policies and services to provide equitable educational opportunities for students with documented disabilities in all programs and activities. Students with disabilities who require academic adjustments are encouraged to contact their instructors at the beginning of the semester to discuss their specific needs.

To find out more about services, register for services, or volunteer as a reader, note taker, or tutor, contact the University’s Services for Students with Disabilities, G664 Haven Hall, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1045, 734-763-3000. Hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Students with disabilities may also contact Nyshoun Price-Reed, LMSW (ndp@umich.edu) or Lauren Davis, LLMSW (laurdavi@umich.edu) at the School of Social Work, 734-936-0961.

Health and wellness services. Health and wellness situations or circumstances may impede student success within the program. Students should feel free to contact the School’s Health and Wellness Advocates, Lauren Davis or Nyshoun Price-Reed, listed above.

Course Requirements

The following are course requirements. If students have special needs or circumstances that would interfere with their ability to complete these requirements, they should contact the instructor so that suitable accommodations can be arranged.
Class attendance and preparation

Students are expected to attend and to be prepared to take part in each class session. Attendance is important to keep up with course work. It is the student’s responsibility to get materials, handouts, or class notes from one of your classmates if you are not in class. Late arrival to class is disruptive and should be avoided.

In addition to weekly attendance and readings, there may be occasional short assignments designed to develop concepts discussed in class.

Regular attention to news sources

The best way to sharpen your understanding of current policy issues is to be a critical consumer of news. The traditional way to keep current on policy issues is to regularly read a major national newspaper. The New York Times and Wall Street Journal both have delivery in southeast Michigan. Their news accounts are generally considered reliable, although their editorial or opinion pieces generally reflect a particular orientation. The online versions of these papers, and others, such as the Washington Post and the Los Angeles Times, provide good sources of traditional news coverage.

Broadcast news sources, such as daily news shows and specials, such as Washington Week in Review, Meet the Press, and Nightline, provide another useful source of information. The News Hour on Public Television, which covers top national stories, is an excellent weekday source of more in-depth discussion of emerging policy issues.

The proliferation of cable news/commentary, as well as the overwhelming number of online news shows, news aggregators, and blogs, reinforces the importance of critically assessing sources.

Library assignment

The Social Work Library has developed a tutorial specifically designed to help individuals obtain Web-based information relevant to social welfare policies and services. The tutorial, which is located at <http://guides.lib.umich.edu/policy-tutorial>, addresses a broad range of resources about primary sources (such as federal legislation, state and local laws, and statistics on programs) and secondary sources (such as analyses of the impacts of policies). The website also has a “quiz” to test how well you have mastered this material. You are expected to complete the quiz (with a score of 80% or better) by October 7.

Personal encounters with social policies

One or two paragraph description of the personal impact of a social welfare policy. This short assignment is ungraded, but required.
Midterm examination

There will be an in-class midterm covering the introduction to social policy and the historical section (Parts I and II). Students will be able to use their own class notes (not printouts from PowerPoint slides) and notes from the readings.

Presentation on a current policy issue

In Part III, students, working in small groups, will present a current policy issue. This is intended to simulate a short presentation to an interest group. The audience/context for the presentation will be specified by the instructor, based on the topic addressed and in consultation with each group. Although the format/content may vary with the specific topic, the typical presentation will: (1) identify the policy issue and the options facing policy makers; (2) describe the relevant arguments and evidence concerning the issue; and (3) seek a conclusion by the class of a decision concerning the policy issue.

Written policy analysis (“policy brief”)

The term “policy brief” is often used to describe a relatively short, targeted discussion of a policy issue. Typically, it lays out a policy issue, its goals, the pros and cons of the policy, and, when relevant, a conclusion in favor or opposed to the policy. For this assignment, you will be expected to use the “policy ecosystem” structure that we will be using during the semester.

This assignment also includes an integrative section in which you are asked to reflect on how aspects of the course are related to the competencies and practice behaviors you have developed with regard to the social policy process.

General expectations for written work

Written work will be evaluated in relation to how well it addresses the topic and the clarity of presentation. It is important to re-read work before turning it in. If possible, you should have someone who is unfamiliar with your subject read your paper before you submit it. Ask them to read for clarity of your writing, if you omitted a word or phrase, or if you used the wrong word. Spell checkers and grammar checkers are useful, but not as reliable as a human reader.

Plagiarism – presenting another’s words or ideas as your own – is a serious violation of academic integrity and can be grounds for failure on an assignment and other disciplinary action as described under the School’s policies on academic misconduct. More information about the School’s policy can be found at the website:


Grading

The criteria used for each letter grade are:
A Demonstration of a level of critical analysis, creativity and/or complexity in completion of the assignment that clearly exceeds expectations for the assignment or the course
B Mastery of subject content at level of expected competency at the graduate level – fully meeting course expectations
C Demonstrates some understanding of subject content, but improvement is needed to have mastery of the subject matter
E Student does not demonstrate sufficient understanding of course material to receive course credit

A plus (+) or minus (-) designation is used to indicate gradations above or below the level indicated by the grade.

All grading has a subjective element. If, after you read my feedback, you have questions about your grade, please feel free to see me about them.

All assignments are due on the date specified. If you have schedule conflicts with one of the due dates, please see me ahead of time. If you have any special needs with respect to religious observances, health, disability, or other concerns that may affect your fulfillment of any course requirements, please see me individually.

The final grade for the class will be determined taking into account the following:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class preparation and participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm examination</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class presentation of policy issue</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy brief (written assignment)</td>
<td>35%</td>
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**Course Materials**

There is one required text and electronic reserves of readings for this class. In addition to the text and reserve readings, Internet-based and other class resources may be suggested.


Additional readings are available online (“electronic reserves”) on Ctools course site. Those listed as optional (o) should be read according to your interest.

Internet: You will find many useful resources for researching papers on the internet. In general, use peer-reviewed materials or original historical materials for primary source material for your research. Government web sites may also be used as primary sources. If you use research published by research institutions (“think tanks”), try to balance their analyses with reports from other institutions with different political or ideological perspectives. When citing a website, be sure to fully spell out the website address (URL) and the download date so that the reader can find the page you used.

Cartoon by Peter Steiner, *New Yorker*, July 5, 1993

**Cartoon**

"On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog."

**Course Outline**

**Part I: Introduction and a framework addressing social welfare policy**

**Session 1--Sept. 6**  
Introduction to course and initial discussion of social policy frameworks

**Readings:**

Jansson  
Preface and “An Invitation to Students Using the Text” (pp. xii-xviii)

**Assignment for session 2: Personal encounters with social policies**

*Think about how a social welfare policy has impacted you, your family, or someone else with whom you are close. Submit a one-paragraph summary of the issue and how it affected the individual/family. If you would not like this example discussed in the class, please let me know.*

*This assignment should be submitted through the course Ctools site by the end of the day on Sunday, September 11.*
Session 2--Sept. 13  Overview of social welfare and social policy analysis  
Readings:  
  Jansson  
  Chapter 1: The Symbiotic and Uneasy Relationship: Clients, Social Workers and the Welfare State  
  Chapter 2: Making the American Welfare State more Humane—Past, Present, and Future  

Electronic Reserve:  
  United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)  

Part II: Historical focus—development of social welfare programs in the US  

Session 3--Sept. 20  Social Context and Policy in a New Land  
Readings:  
  Jansson  
  Chapter 3: Fashioning a New Society in the Wilderness  

Electronic Reserve:  

Session 4—Sept. 27  Social Welfare Policy through the Civil War and Reconstruction  
Readings:  
  Jansson  
  Chapter 4: Social Welfare Policy in the 19th Century, 1789-1902  

Electronic Reserve:  

Session 5—Oct. 4  The Progressive Era and the Basis of Modern Social Work
Readings:
  Jansson
  Ch. 5: Social Reform in the Progressive Era
Electronics Reserves:

Library assignment to be completed by October 7

Session 6—Oct. 11  The Great Depression, the New Deal and the Shaping of U.S. Social Welfare Policy
Readings:
  Jansson
  Ch. 6 Social Policy to Address the Worst Economic Catastrophe in U.S. History
Electronics Reserves:

[Oct. 18--No class meeting-Fall Break ]

Session 7—Oct. 25  Great Society Policy Changes in the 1960s
Readings:
  Jansson
  Ch. 7: The Era of Federal Social Services: The New Frontier and the Great Society
Electronics Reserves:
Session 8—Nov 1 Midterm

Part III: Social Policy with the Current Social Welfare Framework in Place

In this third section, we continue with looking at historical developments while also turning to specific targets for social work and social welfare policies. Student presentations will highlight particular current policy issues within these broad areas.

Session 9—Nov 8 The 1970s and 1980s—SSI, Roe v. Wade, the Reagan “Revolution”

Policy focus: Children and Child Welfare

Readings:
Jansson
Ch. 8: The Paradoxical Era: 1968-1980
Ch. 9: The Conservative Counterrevolution in the Era of Reagan and Bush, Sr.

Electronic Reserves:
“Kids Count” webpage: <http://www.aecf.org/kidscoun/>
Sessions 10 & 11—Nov. 15 & 22  Clinton—Moderate Democrat and Ending Welfare as We Know It  
+Policy focus: Health and Mental Health

Readings
Jansson
Ch. 10: Reluctance Illustrated: Policy Uncertainty during the Clinton Administration

Electronic Reserves: (select according to your specific interests)
TANF

Health

CDC, Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities <http://www.cdc.gov/omhd/About/about.htm>

Mental health


(o) CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services), The Mental Health Parity Act <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/healthinsreformforconsume/04_thementalhealthparityact.aspsummary>.
Session 12--Nov. 29  Bush Presidency—Tax Cuts, Medicare Drug Benefits, 9/11 Attack, War, and Recession
+Policy focus: Discrimination and Opportunity

Readings:
Jansson
Ch. 11: George W. Bush’s Quest for Realignment

Electronic Reserves:

Session 13--Dec. 6  Obama Administration—Social Policy in a Time of Continuing Recession
+Policy focus: Aging and Disabilities

Readings:
Jansson:
Ch. 12: Would President Barack Obama Reverse the Cycle of History?

Electronic Reserves:
Session 14--Dec. 13  American Exceptionalism and Social Activism

*Policy focus: Employment and Labor Standards*

Readings

Jansson:
Ch. 13: Why Has the American Welfare State Been Reluctant—And What Can We Do about It?

Electronic Reserves:


**Policy brief due December 13**