**Course Description**

This seminar provides a foundation and overview for students interested in understanding the intersection between social work and sociology. The readings bring together sociological theory and scholarship as they relate to contemporary social work and social welfare issues. Topics, chosen to illustrate the intersection of the two fields and to bring together expertise from both perspectives, may include poverty, social stratification, and health. Beyond the Joint Sociology/Social Work students, the course is expected to attract joint Social Work/social science students from other disciplines, as well as graduate students in economics, public policy, political science, psychology, and other fields. The course will include activities such as guest speakers, works in-progress discussions, readings, and presentations.

The seminar will focus in depth on such topics as:

- The sociological perspective on current U.S. society and issues pertinent to social welfare policy, services, and practice
- The divergence and convergence of sociological and social welfare/social work perspectives on social problems in the U.S. such as poverty & inequality, family demography, health & illness, immigration and ethnic identity, social service policy and organization
- Theoretical and methodological approaches in contemporary social work research and in sociology, how to apply sociological frameworks and perspectives to address dilemmas in social welfare and social work
- The need for sociological research and interdisciplinary influences for constructing the knowledge base of social welfare policy, services, and practice

**Prerequisites:** The course is open to doctoral students in all departments and programs. Master’s students in social work, urban planning, public policy, nursing, women’s studies, African American studies, and other related fields may also enroll with the permission of the instructor.
Required Readings *(to be read in syllabus order; still a work in progress, 1.12.2012)*


**Course Organization and Assignments**

The course will be conducted as a seminar that combines short lectures by the instructor, presentations by students, and semi-structured discussions of course topics and readings. To be successful, a seminar requires the full participation of all members. This requires active and critical engagement with the course material, including the assigned readings.

**Assignment 1: In-Class Facilitation of discussion (25%)**

Each student will briefly introduce and facilitate a discussion of parts of the book/special issue of the week. The student facilitators will kick off a discussion of the major issues in the readings and raise questions from a sociological and a social work/social welfare policy perspective. Further details and a schedule of presentations will be discussed in class. Each student is likely to choose 2 sessions to co-facilitate.

**Due: As scheduled in the seminar.**

**Assignment 2: Sociology and Social Work Review Essay (60%)**

Students will select two books or sets of articles to review in a comparative review essay, modeled on such essays published in *Contemporary Sociology, Social Service Review,*
*JPAM*, or other major journals in social work, sociology, or social policy. It should average 10 pp. double-spaced in length. The review should emphasize the contributions to the literature and knowledge building in sociology and/or social welfare policy & services. The ideal for practicing integrative thinking would be to review a sociological book (or set of 2-3 articles) and a social work/welfare book or set of articles together, pointing out their differences and similarities and how each draws from separate scholarly traditions, but together, they contribute in unique ways to the topic or field of inquiry. The review essay should include a critique of the research in these scholarly papers/books and identify missing gaps and next steps needed for research in this field. Time will be set aside in the seminar to discuss students’ progress and problems with their essays and to present to the class on your developing paper.

**Due: End of semester, April 19**

**Class Participation (15%)**
Since the success of a seminar depends on the participation and mutual responsibility of all its members, it is expected that students will prepare the readings assignments for each week, and participate regularly, fully, and in a manner that demonstrates respect for their colleagues.

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**Course Topics & Required Readings**

**Week 1: January 5**  Course introduction & getting organized

**Week 2: January 12** Jacob Avery presentation

**Week 3: January 19** Social Stratification in the U.S. according to Massey – critique from social welfare/social work perspective

Readings, facilitated by Sandy

Week 4: January 26 Jessica Wiederspan and Beth Rhodes presentation

Week 5: February 2 The New Culture of Poverty: policy and social welfare/social work implications

Readings, facilitated by Jacob


** Review Essay Topics Due **

Week 6: February 9 Jessi Streib presentation

Week 7: February 16 Social Policy and the American Family

Readings, facilitated by Sandy & Marilyn Sinkewicz


Week 8: February 23 Sociology of Immigration and Ethnicity, Part 1

Readings, facilitated by Martha Valadez


NO CLASS – Winter Break
Week 9: March 1  Immigration & ethnicity, Part 2

Readings

  o Kasinitz et al., Chapters 6-11

Week 10: March 8  Social policy topic: analysis of place-based social welfare

Readings, facilitated by Rick Rodems


(Sociology Professor University of North Carolina- Chapel Hill) details forthcoming

Week 12: March 22  A sociology of the war on public welfare

Readings, facilitated by Greg Hoffman


Week 13: March 29 Social Work/Social Welfare topic

Readings, facilitated by Charity Hoffman

Week 14: April 5
Student presentations of review essays

Week 15: April 12
Last Day of Class: Emily Bosk presentation

April 19: NO CLASS ** Review Essay Paper Due **