Course Syllabus

SW 825 Historical and Contemporary Issues in Social Work and Social Welfare
Fall Term 2013

Monday 9:00-noon
Location: International Institute 2609

Instructor: Karen M. Staller, Ph.D., J.D.
Office: 2702 Social Work Building
Phone and Voicemail: 763-5769
Office Hours: By appointment
Email: (kstaller@umich.edu)

“Progress in human affairs, whether in science or in history or in society, has come mainly through the bold readiness of human beings not to confine themselves to seeking piecemeal improvements in the way things are done, but to present fundamental challenges in the name of reason to the current way of doing things and to the avowed or hidden assumptions on which it rests. I look forward to a time when the historians and sociologists and political thinkers of the English-speaking world will regain their courage for that task.”

- Edward Hallett Carr, Historian

“Breaking rules entails risk. In my view, if social work is to carry out its responsibilities of providing leadership, raising important questions, addressing important issues, and encouraging knowledge development that will support social workers’ professional mission, it must not shy away from controversy.”

- Stanley Witkin, Social Worker Scholar

Preliminary Note:

The course was designed as a required course for the joint doctoral students in social work and social sciences. As such it has three major objectives: 1) to provide a sound grounding in the history of the profession of social work; 2) to provide an equally sound grounding in the history and philosophy of social welfare policy and services in the U.S.; and 3) to introduce and apply comparative frameworks for examining domestic, cross-national and/or global social work, social welfare policy, and/or program or service interventions.

Course Abstract

This course centers on the examination of the purposes of social welfare and social work and how they have reflected different philosophical and ideological positions, diverse class, racial, ethnic, and cultural perspectives, and the particular historical contexts in which they emerged. It covers long standing conflicts and tensions in the field such as the role of social responsibility vs. social control, how needs are recognized and determined, the nature of helping, perspectives on social justice and charity, the professional role of social workers, and organizational arrangements for social work and social welfare.
The focus of this course is on the development of U.S. social welfare and social work with a comparative, cross-national and multicultural lens.

**Course Objectives**

- Demonstrate an ability to explain and critique the emergence and transformation of the U.S. welfare state;
- Distinguish between different theoretical, philosophical, and practice assumptions throughout the history of U.S. social welfare. Critically apply these assumptions in comparative work;
- Demonstrate an ability to explain and critique the development of social services in the U.S. from a multicultural perspective assessing the influence of racial, gender, class, religious and cultural factors;
- Develop an understanding of the evolution of the social work profession in the U.S. and its relationship to the “scientific” and/or “research” enterprise (including the role of movements: scientific charity, empirical practice, the evidence-based practice movement and the historical roles of methods: such as case study, social surveys, intervention, single-subject design, etc);
- Develop a sense of your own place in the history and future development of social welfare, social work and knowledge production and/or scholarship;
- Demonstrate an ability to differentiate between the public, nonprofit, and for profit sectors and critique the relative benefits and limitations of their contributions to social welfare and social justice agendas;
- Demonstrate an ability to utilize historical research methods to analyze the emergence of professional social work, the generation of social work knowledge, and/or social welfare policies or programs;
- Demonstrate an understanding of how historical conflicts and tensions have shaped the development and contemporary landscape of social welfare policy and the profession of social work;
- Demonstrate an ability to identify and analyze various conceptual frameworks (including differing ideological positions, cultural norms and values, political tensions, economic systems, and social goals) and assess their impact on the evolving definitions of social problems and the range of alternatives (programs, services, and policies) proposed to address them. In particular be able to critically assess these frameworks in cross-national contexts;
- Demonstrate an ability to recognize and explain the recurring nature of themes, conflicts, and debates in U.S. social welfare and interpret the ways in which they were shaped by their historical context. Be prepared to evaluate these basic ideas in a global context;
- Demonstrate an ability to identify a variety of policies and strategies in global interventions (such as the world bank, micro enterprises, the role of non governmental agencies, disaster relief, private philanthropy, and world aid projects).

**Required Texts:**


**Recommended Text:**


**Required Media**

- *New York Times* (student subscriptions available)
- Michigan Public Radio
- PBS NewsHour. Frontline.
Course Organization/Assignments:

Course Organization: This course will be conducted as a seminar that combines lectures by the instructor and class discussions. To be successful, a seminar requires the full participation of all members. This includes active and critical engagement with the assigned readings, preparation for class, and thoughtful and respectful participation in class.

Assignments and Grading: There are two major assignments for this course. The first is an integrative take-home final examination. It is worth 35% of your final grade. The second is an original historical research paper and presentation. It is worth 65% of your final grade. Note that the work for this course is back-loaded. It is critical to start on the historical research paper early in the semester and keep up with the reading.

1) Original Historical Research Paper and Presentation (See separate handout).

2) Take-home Final Exam. There will be a take-home final exam. The exam will be based on assigned readings, seminar lectures, seminar discussion, documents, videos and other materials used during the semester. Questions will be short-answer and/or essay. Final exams distributed December 2nd. Due: December 9th.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Session 1 - Monday September 9th
Introductions: Why Historical and Why Comparative?

“But, we all know, the present has no more than a notional existence as an imaginary dividing line between the past and the future.”
Edward Hallett Carr

Abstract: Introductions. Course background, content, and expectations. Considering comparative structures (Historical, Economic, Constitutional/legal, Institutional). Introducing recurring themes. The first, of several comparative frameworks: generic concepts to consider through time and space. Freeing up the idea of historical associations. How do meanings change with different contexts? What are the implications? Social Welfare History: who owns it? What is historical evidence? How is it used? Narrator and reader: what are the implications? Interpretation and reinterpretation: should we view the past with a present-day lens? How will your work be read and interpreted 100 years from now? Social welfare history in the future: what evidence? Implications for your use of evidence and construction of scholarship.


• Jane Addams, Mary Rozet Smith and The Hull-House Alternative Labeling Project.
• The Kalamazoo Gals?

Reading Required:

C-Tools (Note: These readings are also listed next week).


**Reading, if interested**


**Recommended for Review and Future Reference:**


• Stuart, P. Appendix B: Chronologies.

**Session 2 - Monday September 16th**

**Paying for “Just” Societies: Who pays for what and why?**

*Charity is no substitute for justice withheld.*  
- St Augustine


Conceptual frameworks for comparative analysis: Federal and State budgets and Global interconnectedness. Implications for social work practice and service.

**Seminar Content:**

• *Staller Lecture:* Budget frameworks (comparative: Federal & State) and budgets in historical and comparative perspective

**Reading Session Two:**

**Textbooks:** No reading assigned

**C-Tools (some on syllabus from last week)**


Session 3 -- Monday September 23rd

Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless tempest-tost to me. I lift my lamp beside the golden door.


Conceptual frameworks for comparative analysis: Poverty, labor and need: English Poor Laws and the U.S. Social Security Act of 1935 (public assistance/social insurance). Private or Public? Charity or Entitlement?

Seminar Content:
• Staller Lecture: Development of British Poor Law and Comparison to the American Welfare State

Documents:
• Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601
• Law of Settlement
• Carnegie, Andrew (1899). The Gospel of Wealth (C-tools)

Readings Session Three:

Textbooks
• Stern & Axinn, Chapter 1: Introduction. Elizabethan Poor Law
• Hugman – Chapter 3 Social Work with International Issues

C-Tools
• Matthies, A. Chapter 15 “Participation and Citizenship.” In Gray & Webb (Eds). Ethics and Value Perspectives in Social Work. Palgrave. (NOTE: 2 chapters were scanned as one document. Go to the second scanned chapter for this reading).

Recommended C-Tools:
  o “Introduction: What is poverty?”
  o Chapter 1 “The Middle Ages: is poverty necessary?”

Session 4 - Monday September 30th
Public Sector: Constitutional Comparisons and Dix/Pierce Veto
War Responses to Social Welfare Needs / Wealth and Philanthropy


Conceptual frameworks for comparative analysis: Constitutional frameworks and political, social, religious rights and responsibilities.


Seminar Content:

• Staller Lecture: Constitution Framework and Comparative Issues in Historical Perspective (States Rights/Federalism, Voting Rights and gaining access, General Welfare: Public/Private)

Documents:

• United States Constitution
• Constitutions of Afghanistan, India, China, Germany, Iraq of 2005 (See: http://www.constitution.org/cons/natlcons.htm)
• Dix, Memorial to the Honorable The Senate and the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey
• Franklin Pierce Veto Message, An Act Making a Grant of Public Lands to the Several States for the Benefit of Indigent Insane Persons, 1854.

Readings Session Four:

Textbooks
• Stern & Axinn: Chapter 2 The Colonial Period
• Stern & Axinn: Chapters 3 and 4 – Pre-to-Post Civil War

C-Tools

• Withy, Arthur (1907). The problem of wealth, the problem of poverty: ‘my partners, the people’ an open letter to Mr. Andrew Carnegie, in reply to his ‘Gospel of wealth, no 2; Justice a better solution than charitable doles and confiscatory taxation.
• International Constitutions (See http://www.constitution.org/cons/natlcons.htm)
• Abramowitz, M. “Women and the Poor Law in Colonial America.”

**Recommended:**


**Session 5 - Monday October 7th**

**Introduction to Applied Philanthropy and the Birth of Social Work Education in the Progressive Era**

**Abstract:** Overview of the history of social work education; education for what purpose? Training schools or academic endeavor? Early roots of social work; the role of class, gender, race and religion; paternalism, social control, benevolence, philanthropy charity and corrections. What are the implications? The professionalization project; Is social work a profession? Was it a profession? Should it be a profession? Is it a social science? Can it be a profession and a social science? Social Work’s relationship to sociology, psychology and other social sciences. Professional organizations, scholarship and journals, practice. The implications of “social” in social work.

**Seminar Content:**

• *Staller Lecture: Early Social Work Education and Comparative Current Practices*

**Readings Session Six:**

**Textbooks**

• Leighninger:
  o Chapter 1: *A call for action*
  o Chapter 2: *The first training schools in social work*
  o Chapter 3 *Parallel paths*
  o Chapter 4 *The relationships between social work training and the development of a profession*
  o Chapter 5 *The shape of the emerging profession of education for social work*

**C-Tools**


**Recommended Reading, C-Tools:**


**Monday Oct 14th FALL BREAK – NO CLASSES**

**Session 6 -- Monday Oct 21st**

**Progressive Era: Service Delivery Models and Methods**

_The only thing to be dreaded in the Settlement is that it lose its flexibility, its power of quick adaptation, its readiness to change its methods as its environment may demand. It must be open to conviction and must have a deep and abiding sense of tolerance._ - Jane Addams

**Abstract:** Social services in the progressive era. Social needs in the progressive era. Immigration, Industrialization, Urbanization. The role of the state in social welfare? Charitable organization societies (COS), Settlement House, Mutual Aid, Public or private responsibility? The role of philanthropy. Role of science in “applied philanthropy”: Case work and social welfare societies. Surveys, community-based social indicators, and case investigation. Role of race, gender and social class in social work development Mothers Pensions. Maternalist movement.

**Seminar Content:**

• *Staller Lecture:* Early Social Work Practice: Charitable Organization Societies (COS) and Settlement Houses: Methods, Models and Comparative Threads (Hull House and Children’s Aid Society)

**Readings Session Seven:**

• Stern & Axinn:
  - Chapter 5: Progress and Reform

**C-Tools**

• Wenocur, Stanley & Reisch, Michael (1989). Chapter 4 “Fashioning social work into casework”.

**Recommended, C-Tools**

- Brandeis Brief (1908) from *Muller v. State of Oregon*. In its entirety.
  - Chapter 2 “The new experts and the ‘girl problem’”

**Session 7 -- Monday Oct 28th**

**Progressive Era Legacy: Social Work Enduring Controversies and Critiques**

“True meaning becomes synonymous with authoritative interpretations, and authoritative interpretations are based on conferred power within particular contexts.”
- Stanley Witkin

**Abstract:** The relationship of social work to “science” and/or knowledge development. For what and whom? Tensions among micro, mezzo and macro practices. Science, social science, practice wisdom, scholarship, research, knowledge. What informs social work practice? What is social work research? Who conducts it? Who utilizes it? How is it conveyed and to whom? What is the relationship of social work knowledge to that of the disciplines? How does a joint doctoral student at the University of Michigan make sense of this?

**Seminar Content:**

Readings Session Eight:

C-Tools (Please read a selection of these. You might take note of the year of publication and think about the evolution of some of these conversations).

- Shaw, Ian F. (DRAFT). Discourses of Methodology: An archaeology of a social work case.

Session 8 -- Monday Nov 4th
The Great Depression and The Great Recession:
Economic Crises and Responses to Social Needs

Seminar Content:


Readings Session Nine:

**Textbooks**
- Stern & Axinn:
  - Chapter 6: The Depression and New Deal

**C-Tools**
- Nancy Rose, Discrimination Against Women in New Deal Work.
- Social Security Act of 1935.

**Session 9 -- Monday Nov 11th**

The Great Society, War on Poverty and Expansion of the Welfare State, Social Movements & Retraction and Retreat


Seminar Content:

- **Staller Lecture**: Social Movements: Seeking “rights” and Political Rhetoric; The arc of reform and reaction; Reforming welfare as we knew it (political and rhetorical themes).

Readings Session Ten:

**Textbooks**
- Stern & Axinn:
  - Chapter 7 – War and Prosperity
  - Chapter 8 - Conservative Resurgence and Social Change

**Required C-Tools**

Recommended Reading C-Tools

• Simpson “The Cloward-Piven Strategy” Discover the Network.

Session 10 -- Monday Nov 18th
U.S. Health Care Policy and Global Health


Seminar Content:
• Staller Lecture: U.S. Health Care Basics: An overview of the health insurance system

Readings Session Twelve:

• Stern & Axinn:
  o Chapter 9- Social Welfare in the Information Society

C-Tools


**Session 11 -- Monday Nov 25th**

CLASS PRESENTATIONS ON HISTORICAL RESEARCH

**Readings:** Students will suggest based on their historical research.

**Session 12 -- Monday Dec 2nd**

CLASS PRESENTATIONS ON HISTORICAL RESEARCH

**Readings:** Students will suggest based on their historical research.

**FINAL EXAM DISTRIBUTED**

**Session 13-- Monday Dec 9th**

CLASS PRESENTATIONS ON HISTORICAL RESEARCH

**Readings:** Students will suggest based on their historical research

**FINAL EXAM DUE**

**HAVE A GREAT BREAK!**

**NOTE ON ALTERNATIVE TOPICS DEPENDING ON NUMBER OF PRESENTATIONS**

**Session 11**  
**Human Rights and Social Justice Frameworks: Global Social Work Conventions and Controversies**


**Seminar Content:**

• *Staller Lecture:* Children’s rights in a global context: The politics of the CRC

**Reading Session Eleven**

**Textbooks:**

• Stern & Axinn: None
• Hugman – Chapter 4 Social Work and UN Millennium Development Goals; Chapter 8 The Possibility of an International Social Work Ethics; Chapter 9 Professional Imperialism; Chapter 9 International Social Work Issues for the Future

**C-Tools:**
• Convention on the Rights of the Child

**Recommended Reading (not on C-Tools):**

• Easterly, William (2006). *The white man’s burden: Why the West’s efforts to aid the rest have done so much ill and so little good*. NY: Penguin Books.