# Course Syllabus

**SW 530-007 Introduction to Social Welfare Policy and Services**  
**Fall 2013**  
**Section 007 – Wednesday 9am-12pm**  
**Room B760 SSWB**

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<tr>
<th>Instructor:</th>
<th>Abigail Williams, MSW, MS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Office:</td>
<td>SSW 3764</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office Hours:</td>
<td>By Appointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone:</td>
<td>(734) 763-8058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:abigwill@umich.edu">abigwill@umich.edu</a></td>
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1. **Course Description**  
   This course surveys the history of social welfare policy, services, and the social work profession. 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 are 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 and research; and social work relevant promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation programs and services in relations to the diverse dimensions (including ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation).

2. **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, and workplaces; the nonprofit sector; the government at various geographic levels.

   2. The history of 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, and programs, nationally and cross-nationally with attention to: the strengths and weaknesses of various policies and programs;
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 using recent social science theory/research knowledge 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, protective services, health and mental health, corrections and criminal justice, and education) including those targeted toward promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation; and, community service programs.

3. Course Competencies and Practice Behaviors
This course addresses the following competencies and practice behaviors:

COMPETENCY 3—Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.

Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information. Social workers 3.1 distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom

COMPETENCY 4—Engage diversity and difference in practice.

Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers 4.1 recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power

COMPETENCY 5—Advance human rights and social and economic justice.

Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice. Social workers 5.1 understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination
5.3 engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.

COMPETENCY 6—Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.

Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers

6.2 use research evidence to inform practice.

COMPETENCY 8—Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.

Social work practitioners understand that policy affects service delivery, and they actively engage in policy practice. Social workers know the history and current structures of social policies and services; the role of policy in service delivery; and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers

8.1 analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being

COMPETENCY 9—Respond to contexts that shape practice.

Social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively. Social workers

9.1 continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services

4. Course Objectives

Upon 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. (Practice Behaviors 4.1, 5.1, 9.1)

2. Describe and critically analyze current social welfare policies, procedures, and programs including the role of behavioral and social science research and theory in their evolution. (Practice Behaviors 3.1, 4.1, 5.3, 9.1)

3. Discuss the strengths and limitations of the current social welfare system in terms of the functions of the provision of basic needs, protection of the vulnerable, prevention, promotion, treatment, rehabilitation, protection of society, and provision of social control. This discussion will incorporate state, national, and cross-national analyses. (Practice Behaviors 4.1, 5.1, 6.2, 9.1)
4. Describe and critically analyze major fields of social welfare service provision from a multicultural perspective, including but not limited to income security, health and mental health services, child welfare, educational practices, services to the elderly, and corrections. (Practice Behaviors 3.1, 4.1, 5.1, 6.2, 8.1, 9.1)

5. 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. (Practice Behaviors 4.1, 5.1, 5.3, 6.2, 8.1, 9.1)

5. **Course Design:**
It is anticipated that the multiple sections of this course will be coordinated and lectures, assignments, readings, class exercises, and examinations will be shared across instructors. Various classroom teaching strategies may be used, including lecture, multimedia presentations, video documentaries, small and large group discussion, and presentations by students and guest lecturers.

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<tr>
<th>Theme Relation to Multiculturalism &amp; Diversity:</th>
<th>The course examines how the diverse dimensions (such as ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation) of individuals and groups influence their perspectives of and experiences with social welfare policies and practices. Specific fields of service are critically analyzed from multicultural, historical, and/or cross-national perspectives.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Theme Relation to Social Justice:</td>
<td>The course critically analyzes current trends and ethical issues and their implications for promoting social justice and social change.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment &amp; Rehabilitation:</td>
<td>The course gives attention to the ways in which current policies and programs address promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme Relation to Behavioral and Social Science Research:</td>
<td>Analytic frameworks drawn from behavioral and social science literature and research are presented for each field of service.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship to SW Ethics and Values:</td>
<td>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. Differences among codes of ethics for several social work professional organizations will also be explored.</td>
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5. **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. Differences among codes of ethics for several social work professional organizations will also be explored.

6. **Intensive Focus Statement on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity, and Social Justice (PODS):**

This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self-knowledge and self-awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

7. **Textbook, Ctools Readings, and Supplementary News Media Recommendations**

**Required Textbook**


Available locally at:
- Ulrich's Bookstore
  549 East University Avenue
  Ann Arbor, MI 48104
  books@ulrichs.com
- Barnes & Noble @ the University of Michigan Bookstore
  530 S. State Street, Michigan Union basement, south side of building
  Ann Arbor, MI 48109
  tm743@bncollege.com

Several copies of the book are also on reserve for SW 530 in Shapiro Library.

**Additional Required Readings:** Available through the course Ctools site (SW 530 007 F13) in the Resources section of Ctools, organized by each class session as listed in the syllabus.

**Students are required to read the textbook and all of the Ctools readings prior to each week’s class.**

**Important, Supplementary Media**

1. The best way to keep current on policy issues is to regularly read a major newspaper, such as the *New York Times* ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)) or *The Washington Post* ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)). *The Wall Street Journal*, although focused on business issues, often has very good feature articles on domestic policy. As with all newspapers,
one should be careful to distinguish between the news reports and the editorial commentary.

   a. The NYT also offers a student discount rate on student subscriptions to hard copy editions, and it’s also accessible (with a day delay) through the library.
   b. Articles in the WaPo can be freely accessed, and this paper covers the Congressional issues with great detail.

2. News reports and feature shows (such as on MSNBC, CNN or ABC Nightline) are another source of information about current policy issues. The PBS News Hour with Jim Lehrer on Public Television is an excellent source of more in-depth discussion of ongoing and emerging policy issues.

3. The Brookings Institute (www.brookings.edu) is an excellent source for breaking news and in-depth policy analyses of issues which will be discussed throughout the semester.

Additional Recommended Media
   • Local Newspapers (Ann Arbor, Detroit);
   • CNN News and Policy discussions;
   • “All Things Considered” and/or “Morning Edition” on National Public Radio. This can be accessed locally via WKAR-FM (90.5) or WUOM-FM (91.7).
   • Evening Network News - (CBS, ABC, NBC).

8. Assignments and Grading

   A) Class Participation – It is important that we work together to create and foster a learning environment that promotes professional socialization, respectfulness, and broadens our mutual awareness of human differences and diversity. Students will be encouraged in this class to examine how the structure of our current social welfare systems evolved and how they may still reflect biases and negative beliefs about certain populations. Questioning and disagreeing are all part of the learning process. I encourage all students to engage in these activities with thoughtfulness and respect.

   Student attendance is expected at every class session, and attendance will be taken. Students are responsible for securing lecture notes and handouts when circumstances require them to be absent.

   B) Hot Topic References & Annotated Bibliography - Each student will track news media stories on one of the policy domains to be selected by the instructor. Students should scan major international, national, or local news media for relevant reporting. Students will be expected to narrow his or her investigation and create a reference list of these resources and annotate several articles from this list based on their selected hot topic to be selected by the student. More details will be given as the semester progresses.
C) Historical Context Paper - The student will research and write a short academic paper that seeks to situate the current policy debate in its historical context. The goal is to see the linkages between past and present arguments about social welfare policy and/or social welfare services. More details will be given as the semester progresses.

D) Policy Memo – Students will be required to write a policy memo on the policy (or policy proposal) on the topic of their choice. The purpose of this assignment will be to inform NASW members of the official social work position on the policy (or proposal). More details will be given as the semester progresses.

E) Group Presentation – One 30-minute group presentation will be required of students to be selected from a list of hot topics. The goal of this presentation is to present both sides of a policy issue and to formulate possible policy solutions.

F) Final Take-home Exam - The final is a take-home exam in essay question format. The exam will be short answer essays, covering material in readings and emphasized in class lectures, handouts and discussion. It will review material from the whole semester and there will be choices in which essays you answer. **Distributed:** December 3rd. **Due Date:** Monday, December 15th by 11:59 PM submitted on C-tools.

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Grade Percentage</th>
<th>Length</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>10 %</td>
<td>On Going</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hot Topic Reference List &amp; Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>Oct 9th, 2014</td>
<td>5 %</td>
<td>List 12 Articles Annotate 4 Articles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Historical Context Paper</td>
<td>Oct 16th, 2014</td>
<td>15 %</td>
<td>4-5 Pages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Memo</td>
<td>Nov 13th, 2014</td>
<td>20 %</td>
<td>4-5 Pages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>Dec 10th, 2014</td>
<td>10 %</td>
<td>25-30 Minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take-Home Final Exam</td>
<td>Dec 15th, 2014</td>
<td>40 %</td>
<td>Short Answer</td>
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The criteria for each grade are as follows:

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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A+, A, A-</td>
<td>Superlative mastery of subject content, demonstration of critical analysis, creativity and/or complexity in completion of assignment. The difference between A and A- is based on the degree to which excellence in these skills are demonstrated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>Mastery of subject content beyond expected competency, but has not demonstrated additional critical analysis, creativity or complexity in the completion of the assignment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Mastery of subject content at level of expected competency – meets course expectations</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Less than adequate competency, but demonstrates student learning and potential for mastery of subject content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C or C-</td>
<td>Demonstrates a minimal understanding of subject content. Significant areas needing improvement to meet course requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Student has failed to demonstrate minimal understanding of subject content.</td>
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Notes on Grading:

1. Class attendance and class participation are considered essential for this course. Attendance will be taken at every course meeting. Therefore you are expected to attend, to be prepared, and to make reasonable contributions to enhance the class discussion. It is your responsibility to get materials, handouts, or class notes from one of your classmates if you are unable to be in class.

2. In general, I do accept challenges to grades. However, challenges must be in writing (not verbal); must be specific, and must be based on substantive arguments not on nebulous references to “fairness.” The instructor reserves the right to re-read, and re-grade, the work in its entirety in the case of a challenge. The grade may be adjusted up or down.

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 follow assignment instructions carefully and to read and 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.

Students are expected to avoid “language that might imply sexual, ethnic, or other kinds of discrimination, stereotyping, or bias.” (*Health and Social Work, 11:3, Summer 1986.*)
Writing Assistance

Sweetland Writing Center
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 feel 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

Plagiarism
Representing someone else’s words, statements, ideas or works as one’s own without proper acknowledgement or citation – is a serious violation of academic integrity and will be grounds for failure on an assignment and other disciplinary action as described under the School’s policies on academic and professional conduct:

http://ssw.umich.edu/studentGuide/2012/page.html?section=12&volume=1

Another helpful resource can be found at: http://www.lib.umich.edu/academic-integrity/resources-students

Note that using Web resources increases the risk of “accidental plagiarism.” Do not let that happen.

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. If you have a disability or condition that may interfere with your participation in this course, please schedule a private appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations for your specific needs. This information will be kept strictly confidential.

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 Nyshourn Price-Reed, LMSW (ndp@umich.edu) or Lauren Davis, MSW, LMSW (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 Nyshourn Price-Reed, listed above.
Schedule of Class Sessions & Assignments

September 3 (Session 1)
Course overview, assignments, grading, expectations, etc. Why should social workers care about social welfare policy and history? Definitions of poverty, inequality, and other related terms.

Course Syllabus Handed Out
In-class exercise on allocation

September 10 (Session 2)
What is social justice? What is social welfare? Definitions of social policy and theories of social justice. What does our constitution say about rights and justice and for whom?

Hot Topic Group Assignments Made
Hot Topic Reference List and Annotated Bibliography
Historical Context Paper
Policy Memo
Oral Presentation
Assignments Handed Out

Text Reading:
- Stern, Preface (pp. xv-xvii), Chapter 1 (pp. 1-22)

Ctools Readings:
- U.S. Constitution and Amendments

September 17 (Session 3):
Social welfare in historical context – From the poorhouse to Progressive eras

Hot Topic Group In-class Exercise
11-12pm Constitution Day Presentation:
Legal Director of the American Civil Liberties Union

Text Reading:
- Stern, Chapter 3 (pp. 53-72)

Ctools Readings:
**September 24: (Session 4)**


**Text Reading**
- Stein, Chapters 2: (pp. 23-52)

**Ctools Readings**
- Testimony of Jared Bernstein to the House Committee on Financial Services: [http://www.cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=4108](http://www.cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=4108)

**October 1 (Session 5):**

Historical Context: The New Deal, Civil Rights, and the Great Society

**Ctools Readings:**

**October 8 (Session 6):**

Poverty and Inequality

**Film: Inequality for All**

**Text Reading:**
- Stern, Chapter 4 (pp. 73-94)

**CTools Reading:**

October 15 (Session 7):
Employment, Public Assistance, and Job Training

**Hot Topic Group In-class Exercise**

Text Reading:
• Stern, Chapter 8 (pp. 177-204)

CTools Readings:

October 22 (Session 8):
Meeting Basic Needs through Policy and Practice: Nutrition & Housing

Text Reading:
• Stern, Chapter 5 (pp. 95-117) Chapter 6 (pp. 118-146)

CTools Reading:

October 29 (Session 9):
Health and Mental Health Services and Policy

**Hot Topic Group In-class Exercise**

Text Reading:
• Stern, Chapter 7 (pp. 152-176)
CTools Readings:
- Summary of the Affordable Care Act – Kaiser Family Foundation

**November 5 (Session 10):**
Polices and Services for Children

Text Reading
- Stern, Chapter 11 (pp. 255-285)

CTools Readings:

**November 12 (Session 11):**
Social Policy for Older Americans

**Hot Topic Group In-class Exercise**

Text Reading:
- Stern, Chapter 10 (pp.231-254)

Ctools Readings:

**November 19 (Session 12):**
Ongoing Social Justice Challenges, Part I: Mass Incarceration and Violence Against Women

Text Reading
- Stern, Chapter 9 (pp. 205-221)

CTools Reading
November 26 (Session 13): No Class Thanksgiving Break

December 3 (Session 14):
Ongoing Social Justice Challenges, Part II: Affirmative Action, Immigration, and Marriage Equality

Final Exams will be distributed
Social Welfare Policy Analysis Presentations

Text Reading
• Stern, Chapter 6 (pp. 147-151); Chapter 9 (pp. 221-230)

CTools Reading


December 10 (Session 15):
Course Summary and Discussion of papers

Social Welfare Policy Analysis Presentations

Text Reading
• Chapter 12 (pp. 286-302)

Reminder: Final Exams due 12/15 by 11:59pm on C-tools.