Course Syllabus

SW 825 Historical and Contemporary Issues in Social Work and Social Welfare
Fall Term 2014

Tuesday 9:00-noon
Location: SSWB 1794

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“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 Hallet 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:**

- Articles. Required articles are posted on C-Tools in the “resources” folder, alphabetized by author’s last name.

**Recommended:**

- Articles. Recommended articles are posted on C-Tools.
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 student-led 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. For this reasons, we will have a “lightening round” minute during each class. Each student will have “a minute” to react to the reading assignment (or some aspect of it). This “lightening round” is designed to place an array of issues “on the table” for the purposes of subsequent group discussion.

Assignments and Grading: There are two assignments for this course. Detailed instructions for both assignments will be distributed under separate cover. In brief, they are:

1) Creating Historical Evidence: The Course Case Book (See separate handout). This assignment will require each student to take responsibility for one class session during the course of the semester. The student will lead and shape the class discussions, record the “lightening round” minutes and write a 4-5 page paper integrating the content plus supporting appendices. This record will contribute to the production of the Course Historical Case Book, Volume 1. This work will reflect 25% of your final grade.

2) Original Historical Research Paper and Presentation (See separate handout). The assignment will require researching and writing an original historical paper and presenting your findings. It is critical to start on the historical research paper early in the semester as identifying a topic and original sources often takes time. This will reflect 75% of your final grade.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Session 1 - Tuesday September 2nd
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.


Exercise: Historic Evidence and the Hull House: “Labeling Project”
• Jane Addams, Mary Rozet Smith and The Hull-House Alternative Labeling Project.

**Exercise:** What is social work?

**Reading Required:**

**C-Tools**

**Reading, if interested**

**Recommended for Review and Future Reference:**
- Stuart, P. Appendix B: Chronologies.

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**Session 2 - Tuesday September 9th**

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

*Wealth and Redistribution*

*Charity is no substitute for justice withheld.*

- St Augustine


**DVD:** Andrew Carnegie: 1835-1919. Askwith Media Library.

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
Required reading:


Recommended Reading:

- 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.

Session 3 -- Tuesday September 16th
Social Welfare frameworks

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). Charity or Entitlement?

Seminar Content:
- Staller Lecture: Development of British Poor Law and Comparison to the American Welfare State
- Guest Speaker: Stephanie Gray Chang

Documents:

- Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601
• Law of Settlement

Required Readings Session Three:

• Stern & Axinn, Chapter 1: Introduction. Elizabethan Poor Law

Recommended Reading:

• 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).
• Hugman – Chapter 3 Social Work with International Issues
  o “Introduction: What is poverty?”
  o Chapter 1 “The Middle Ages: is poverty necessary?”

Session 4 - Tuesday September 23rd
Public Sector: Constitutional Comparisons and Dix/Pierce Veto
War Responses to Social Welfare Needs


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. Compared with Johnson veto of Freedman’s Bureau legislation

Required readings Session Four:

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

Recommended Reading:

• International Constitutions (See http://www.constitution.org/cons/natlcons.htm)
• Abramowitz, M. “Women and the Poor Law in Colonial America.”

Session 5 - Tuesday September 30th
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
• Guest Lecture: Angie Perrone

Required readings Session Six:

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• 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*

• Costin, L. (1983). Edith Abbott and the Chicago influence on social work education. *Social Services Review*, 57 (1)

**Recommended Reading:**


**Session 6 -- Tuesday October 7th**

**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, it 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)
Required readings Session Seven:

- Stern & Axinn: Chapter 5: Progress and Reform

Recommended Readings:

- Wenocur, Stanley & Reisch, Michael (1989). Chapter 4 “Fashioning social work into casework”.
- Brandeis Brief (1908) from Muller v. State of Oregon.
  - Chapter 2 “The new experts and the ‘girl problem’”

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

**Session 7 -- Tuesday Oct 21st**

**Progressive Era Legacy: Social Work Knowledge--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:**


**Required Readings Session Eight (Read a selection of these):**


**Recommended Readings (You might take note of the year of publication and think about the evolution of some of these conversations).**


NOTE that a vibrant current “debate” is to be found in _Social Work Practice Special Issue_ (2012) 22 (5): Shaping a Science of Social Work. Guest editor: Haluk Soydan. Some of these articles are being assigned in other classes. If not, you might want to skim through some of the following articles:


Session 8 -- Tuesday Oct 28th

The Great Depression and The Great Recession: Economic Crises and Responses to Social Needs


Seminar Content:
• **Staller Lecture:** Déjà vu? Depressions, recessions, new deals, and federal responses: 1935 and 2008 and onward.

**Required Readings Session Nine:**

• Stern & Axinn: Chapter 6: The Depression and New Deal  

**Recommended Readings**

• Nancy Rose, Discrimination Against Women in New Deal Work.  
• Social Security Act of 1935.

**Session 9 -- Tuesday Nov 4th**

**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).

**Required Readings Session Ten:**

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


**Recommended Reading:**
Session 10 -- Tuesday Nov 11th
U.S. Health Care Policy and Global Health


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

**Required Readings Session Twelve:**

- Stern & Axinn: Chapter 9- Social Welfare in the Information Society
- Kaiser Foundation. Summary of the Affordable Care Act.

**Recommended Reading:**


**Session 11 -- Tuesday Nov 18th**  
**CLASS PRESENTATIONS ON HISTORICAL RESEARCH**

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

**Session 12 -- Tuesday Nov 25th**  
**CLASS PRESENTATIONS ON HISTORICAL RESEARCH**

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

**Session 13-– Tuesday Dec 2nd**  
**CLASS PRESENTATIONS ON HISTORICAL RESEARCH**

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

**Session 14-- Tuesday Dec 9th**  
**CLASS PRESENTATIONS ON HISTORICAL RESEARCH**

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

**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**
• 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
• Convention on the Rights of the Child

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

• The Guardian Social Care network: http://www.theguardian.com/social-care-network/international
• 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.