INTRODUCTION
Economics is an essential language of social welfare policy and administration. To be successful, policy makers in areas such as public income transfers, health care and social service delivery, and economic development must understand fundamental principles of economic theory including markets, incentives, margins, supply and demand, and market failures. Social Work and Economics explores these issues and relates them to the work of social workers, social service managers, and social policy analysts.

These issues make up the core of microeconomics, and are relevant to understanding economic and social problems faced by all societies, regardless of their formal political and economic systems. Economists contend that markets exist no matter the political context. Microeconomics analyzes the behavior of people, households and firms and the dynamics and outcomes of product and labor markets in which these actors interact. Although microeconomics is often viewed as an apologia for free markets, much of it explores market failures: ways that unregulated competition fails to achieve efficient or equitable outcomes.

Partly in response to market failures, the U.S. economy is not a pure market economy. Rather, it is a “mixed” economy; a politically-determined blend of markets and public interventions meant to either support market activities or to correct problems that markets create (although these interventions sometimes end up aggravating problems or creating new problems). Social Work and Economics will prepare students to engage in normative and positive analyses of the role of the public and nonprofit sector in a mixed economy.¹

The course will be divided into two parts. The first part will consist of an economics “mini-course.” Students will learn the fundamental principles of microeconomics and apply this knowledge in a problem set. The second part will consist of an exploration of the application of these principles to areas of special interest to social workers, such as anti-poverty transfer programs, early childhood intervention, health care reform.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
Students are expected to:
- Master the fundamental concepts and tools of microeconomics

¹ Language from the introduction section is made up of some unknown mixture of writing by Luke Shaefer and Harold Pollack at the University of Chicago, with whom I first taught a course like this. Thanks Harold.
Understand the basic nature of markets, and understand the consequences of market failures
Apply these concepts to issues of importance to social workers
Discuss the relationship between economics and social work

TEXTS
  - Any mainstream microeconomics textbook from the past decade will be fine. I have a few copies of this one. If you have no familiarity with economics, it’s probably worth it to do these readings.
  - I have bought a number of copies of this fun text to share

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation
Students are expected to attend classes, to read assignments with care, and to be prepared to answer questions about the readings. For many students, adequate preparation may take 8+ hours each week. Participation in a Great Debate will be counted toward students’ participation grades.

The Great Debates
Together we will use this class as a forum to discuss and debate some of the most important issues facing social policy analysts and social service administrators. For these debates, the class will be turned into a legislative body, and will vote on the issue in question after hearing compelling arguments from both sides. All students will research and present one side of a debate topic. These presentations will draw from a few outside sources and will be approximately 10-15 minutes long, followed by 10-15 minutes of debate by the class. A sign-up sheet for the great debate will be distributed during the first few weeks.

Problem Set
One problem will be collected and evaluated. This will display and expand your mastery of course materials. Problem solving is central to SW875. Some problems are intuitive and graphical, designed to sharpen your intuition and qualitative understanding. Others are specific and numeric. Both kinds are important. The problem set can be done collaboratively with other students in the course.

Final Paper
During the second half of the course, students will select a paper topic that is relevant to the course material and complete a 10-page paper on it. Students should have their paper topic approved by the
instructor by week 10. Topics should focus on the intersection of social work and economics. They can include a deeper exploration of a topic discussed in class, or an exploration of a relevant topic not included in the course content.

**Final Exam**
An open book, time-limited examination will be given at the end of the semester. This exam will take much the same form as the problem set + questions coming from the course readings. It must be completed independently.

**GRADING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem set</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**CLASSES**

Class meetings are used to pose and to answer questions, to review, elaborate on and extend text materials, and to apply analysis to practical issues. Students’ questions are highly important and useful. **Questions that reflect misunderstanding and confusion contribute as much or more to the class as questions that reflect mastery of the material.** Consequently if you find something confusing, bring it up! Other students likely share your confusion, and will be grateful for your bravery.

**SCHEDULE**

**Session 1: January 7**

**Introduction**

- Go over Class Syllabus
- Introduction to the Fundamental Tenants of Economics
  - Thinking like an economist
  - Introduction to markets
  - Opportunity costs
  - Budget constraints (Examples: food stamps block grants)
  - Economic models
  - Gains from trade (comparative advantage), with a normative discussion
- Graphing in Economics

**Assignments for the next class**

1. Read *Naked Economics*, Introduction, Chapters 1 & 2
2. Read Krugman & Wells, Chapter 1-3
Session 2: January 14

- Discuss *Naked Economics*
- Supply and Demand Analysis
  - Examining demand curves
  - Examining supply curves
  - Labor market equilibriums
  - The equilibrium price or market price
  - Shifts in the supply and demand curves
- Applications of Supply and Demand
  - Reaching the market equilibrium
  - Economic efficiency (good)
  - Surpluses and shortages
  - The effects of the War on Drugs on drug supply
  - Intro: The minimum wage and living wage laws

Assignments for the next class
1. Read *Naked Economics*, Chapters 3 & 4
2. Read Krugman & Wells, Chapters 4 & 5

Session 3: January 21

- The Market Strikes Back
  - Economic inefficiency (bad)
  - Price controls (Floors and ceilings)
  - Shortages and surpluses
  - The deadweight loss of taxes
- Elasticity
  - Price elasticity of demand/ Price elasticity of supply
  - Income elasticity of demand
  - Substitutes and complements
  - Taxes and market equilibrium
  - Application: Who bears the burden of the tax?

Assignments for the next class
1. Read *Naked Economics*, Chapter 6
2. Read Krugman & Wells, Chapters 6-9

Session 4: January 28

- Exploring Producer Behavior: Costs and decision making
  - Opportunity costs revisited
  - Sunk costs
  - Producer costs (marginal, fixed, variable)
  - Introduction to marginal analysis
- Perfect competition (Where do firms produce?)
- **Great Debate:** Sin Taxes—Efficient ways to reduce undesirable behaviors, or regressive punishment of the poor?

**Assignments for the next class**
1. Read Krugman & Well, Chapters 13, 14, 19-21

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**Session 5: February 4**
- Market Failures- Introduction
  - Monopoly, monopsony
  - Price discrimination
  - Oligopoly
- Public goods
- Externalities (positive and negative)
- Social Insurance
  - Moral hazard
  - Adverse selection

**Assignments for the next class**
1. Read *Legacies of the War on Poverty* (Bailey and Danziger), Introduction, Chapter 5, Chapter 6 and Chapter 8 (available on Canvas)

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**Session 6: February 11**
- What was the War on Poverty?
- Why has it been so hard to rigorously evaluate its success?
- Can you imagine the United States embarking on a second War on Poverty? Why or Why Not?

**Assignments for the next class**
1. Read *Poor Support* (Ellwood)
2. Optional: Edin and Shaefer’s “Welfare is Dead” (Chapter in forthcoming book, $2 a Day)

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**Session 7: February 18**
- What was “wrong” with the old welfare system, and by that I mean cash assistance (Aid to Families with Dependent Children)?
- What did we know about it?
- What types of analyses did Ellwood conduct?
- What did Ellwood propose?
- **Great Debate:** The Federal Government Should Institute a $12.50/hour Minimum Wage

**Assignments for the next class**
1. Complete the problem set
2. Read *Development as Freedom* (Amartya Sen)
Session 8: February 25

- The problem set is due at the beginning of class
- How should we measure poverty? What is it, really?
- Should poverty be an absolute or relative measure?
- What would be in your measure of poverty?
- How should we think about development?

Assignments for the next class
1. Read Capitalism and Freedom (Friedman), introduction, chapters 1, 2, 5-7, 9-12

NO CLASS ON MARCH 4, ENJOY SPRING BREAK

Session 9: March 11

- Freedom versus equality—which should win?
  - Government—friend or enemy to the poor?
  - Occupational licensure
- Government and education
- Capitalism and discrimination
- Great Debate: The Federal Government Should Implement a Negative Income Tax

Assignments for the next class
1. Read The Affluent Society, (Galbraith), Chapters 1-10, 22-24.
2. Read Krueger, “Inequality, Too Much of a Good Thing?” (Canvas)

Session 10: March 18

- Has there been a seismic shift in how the American/ global economy works, starting in the mid-20th century
- What do you see as the primary economic/social work challenges of the 21st Century
- Inequality, good or bad? (Can I even put that on a social work syllabus?)

Assignments for the next class (all on Canvas)

Session 11: March 25

- Early childhood interventions: A popular choice among economists
- Cognitive versus non-cognitive gains
- Randomized trials—something is having a causal effect, we’re just not 100% sure what it is…
- Still, a randomized trial remains the gold standard! How come?
- Why does the Harlem Children’s Zone work?

Assignments for the next class
1. Prepare a 20 minute presentation on your final paper topic

Session 12: April 1
- Student presentations on paper topics
- 15 minute presentations on topics
- 15 minutes of feedback from students and the instructor, to be incorporated into the final draft

Assignments for the next class
1. Read Scarcity, (Mullainathan & Shafir)

Session 13: April 8
- Is poverty just an extreme form of “scarcity”?

FINAL PAPER DUE FRIDAY, APRIL 10 BY 5PM

Assignments for the next class
1. Cook, T.D. An Alien parachutes into economic research on low-income populations. (Canvas)
2. Oster, S.M., Gray, C.M. & Weinberg, C. Pricing in the Nonprofit Sector. (Canvas)

Session 14: April 15
- Social work and economics? What relationship for the two?
- To charge or not to charge?
- Other wrap-up questions

FINAL EXAMINATION WILL BE HELD THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 10:30 AM-12:30 PM
PROBLEM SET

1. In chapter one of *Naked Economics*, Wheelan contends that “Economics starts with one very important assumption.” In one paragraph, describe what that assumption is, and how compelling you find it. Pay attention to the different examples Wheelan gives.

2. In chapter two of *Naked Economics*, Wheelan says that incentives matter. Again, in one short paragraph, describe one case in your own work (field placement or otherwise) when that has or has not been the case.

3. Governments often adopt policies in order to promote desired behavior among their citizens. For each of the following policies, determine 1) what the incentive is and 2) what behavior the government wishes to promote or limit. Be clear which is which.
   a. The federal government offers individual development accounts to low-wage workers and matches dollar-for-dollar any deposits participants make.
   b. The federal government implements a matching grant program that matches every dollar spent by major cities on homeless prevention programs, up to $10 million.
   c. The federal government reduces block grant funding for TANF, but increases funding for the Earned Income Tax Credit.

4. School social work researchers are analyzing the results of a specific counseling intervention on troubled teens. The intervention is meant to decrease the number of aggressive encounters the students have with their peers. The intervention is limited to students that have 5 or more such events each month, with an average of 10. They find that from 1 to 3 session/month, there is a linear and negative relationship on the total number of aggressive encounters, with an average slope of 2. However, after 3 sessions, extra sessions seem to have no effect on the number of aggressive encounters. Plot this relationship on a graph for the average student.

14. The Minimum Wage (10 points)
   Your instructor is fascinated by the minimum wage. It seems to be an issue that keeps him up at night.

   A. Think back to when the federal government was considering a hike in the minimum wage. Suppose the aggregate demand for minimum-wage workers by employers in the U.S. is \( D_{mw\ workers} = [500,000 \times (2 + (10.30/MW))] \). Suppose further that the aggregate supply of minimum wage workers in the U.S. is \( S_{mw\ workers} = [200,000 \times (9.5 + (MW - 4.65))] \). At the rate of $5.15, how many minimum wage workers are demanded? How many are supplied? Where is $5.15 in relation to the market equilibrium? Draw a (rough) labor supply and demand curve that shows this.

   B. Suppose that Congress acts to raise the minimum wage to $7.15. Now how many minimum wage workers would be demanded (round? What would the new supply of labor be? Draw labor market supply and demand curves that represents this. Who are the winners in this scenario? Who are the losers?

   C. Now suppose that instead of the above scenario, raising the minimum wage has a positive effect on worker productivity, resulting in a lowering of the costs of firms that demand minimum wage labor. Therefore, this shifts the labor demand curve so that \( D_{mw\ workers} = [500,000 \times (2 + (14.30/MW))] \). How does this change the contours of the policy? Show this on a
supply and demand curve.

D. While economists and other social policy researchers often argue about the effects of the minimum wage on labor demand, most agree it is a fairly blunt anti-poverty tool. Why do you think this might be so? What other policies do you think economists might suggest are more efficient at fighting poverty?
SOCIAL WORK AND ECONOMICS PROBLEM SET 2
Winter 2011

(Krugman and Wells questions worth 5 points)
1. Krugman & Wells: problem 11 on page 108
2. Krugman & Wells: problem 8 on page 133
3. Krugman & Wells: problem 13 on page 133
4. Krugman & Wells: problem 16 on page 134
5. Krugman & Wells: problem 12 on page 159
7. Krugman & Wells: problem 11 on page 180
8. Krugman & Wells: problem 11 on page 229

9. Famine Relief (10 points)
Traditional famine relief efforts bring free food to a region afflicted by famine. In the short-run this feeds people. Yet, by shifting out the supply curve, such policies drive down equilibrium food prices and may hurt local farmers. Most real-world famines are not due to a physical shortage. Instead famines are caused by complex changes in relative wages and prices in which either (1) local incomes drop and so unskilled laborers can’t afford to buy food, or (2) the demand for food outside the affected area has some upward shock and so food prices rise to unaffordable levels. This problem uses supply and demand analysis to illustrate this general point. It is based on the Bengal famine in India that occurred during the Second World War.

Assume that a food market exists in a country that includes 2,000,000 relatively affluent city-dwellers and 1,000,000 rural citizens. Wages in the city are some value $W_{\text{city}}$; while wages in the rural areas are some value $W_{\text{rural}}$. Food is portable at low cost; so food prices are uniform throughout the country. If the price of food is $P$ in both urban and rural areas, food demand among city-dwellers is $(2,000,000)*(W_{\text{city}}-0.75P)$. Rural food demand is $(1,000,000)*(W_{\text{rural}}-0.75P)$. The idea here is that higher wages lead people to consume more food. Thus, the total food demand is given by

$$Q_d(P)=2,000,000(W_{\text{city}} -0.75P) + 1,000,000(W_{\text{rural}}-0.75P).$$

Food is produced and sold in one common national market with an aggregate supply curve of (say) $Q_s(P)=1,000,000P$. In market equilibrium, food is sold for some common price $P$ so that the total food supply equals total food demand in both urban and rural areas.

A. If wages are initially equal to $1.00 in both urban and rural areas, how much food is produced, and how much is consumed in each area?
B. Calculate the price elasticity of demand for food among urban and rural citizens. Also calculate the income elasticity of demand for food among urban and rural citizens.
C. Suppose now that city-dwellers get lucky. Foreign demand for products manufactured in cities sharply rises, and urban wages therefore rise to $1.50. What happens to food consumption in each area?
D. Identify at least one critical assumption in the above setup that suggests this model is a better model of a short-term crisis than of an unfolding problem over many years.
E. Neo classical economics emphasizes that trade leads to mutual gain. Yet in this case, rural people seem to be hurt by the increased wages and consumption of city-dwellers. Explain why my initial course comments need to be modified in this example. Do such examples indicate shortcoming of the standard economic arguments for the benefits of free trade and market activities?

F. How would your answer to (E)—and in fact to (C)—be different if food were available with a completely elastic supply curve at the $0.25 world market price?

10. Tobacco Taxes and Infant Health (10 points)

Smoking by pregnant women is a serious health concern. In the United States, roughly 500,000 women smoke during pregnancy every year. Infants born to smokers have higher incidence of many bad outcomes. In particular, the incidence of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is about 2.2 per 1000 among infants born to smokers, and about 0.7 per 1000 among infants born to nonsmokers. Because pregnant women are somewhat price-elastic in their tobacco use, some people have advocated a tobacco tax increase to prevent adverse birth outcomes. Suppose that a 10% increase in the price of tobacco would induce 5 percent of pregnant smokers to quit. (Economists would say that the “participation elasticity of demand” is -0.5.) Assume that nonsmokers and former smokers face identical health risks. Also assume—stupidly—that pregnant smokers and nonsmokers are alike in all other respects.

A. Suppose that the supply curve for cigarettes is perfectly elastic, and that the consumer price is about $4.00 per-pack. Undersecretary of Health and Human Services Amanda Tillotson proposes a $0.80 excise tax hike on each cigarette pack. How many pregnant women in America would stop smoking after such a policy takes effect?

B. How many cases of SIDS would be averted across America by such a tax?

C. Suppose that the supply curve for cigarettes is actually somewhat inelastic. Would this mean that the tax increase would prevent more or fewer SIDS cases than you estimated in part (B)?

11. Running a Shelter’s Free Lunch Program (10 points)

Rick R. runs the Victoria Park Shelter’s lunch program, which serves hot meals to clients seven days a week. The Shelter receives $3.50 reimbursement from the State of Michigan for every meal served, and brings in roughly $2,000 a week in donations. These are the Shelter’s only funding streams for this breakfast. The Shelter has been running a deficit and the executive director wants Rick to calibrate the number of meals served, so they can continue to exist over the long run. They ask Rick to determine the target number of meals that should be served each week. He must pay himself ($700/week), his cook ($700/week) and his server ($600/week). He also must pay for his kitchen appliances, ($200/week). Other than that, for each meal served, he has to pay some costs for perishable goods (canned goods are donated). The costs are as follows (he must buy in bulk, so these are her only choices):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity of Meals</th>
<th>Costs for perishable goods for these meals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>$400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250</td>
<td>$600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>$750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>350</td>
<td>$900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
a. Calculate the average total cost and average revenue per meal for each quantity. Calculate the marginal cost and marginal revenue per meal for each level. How many meals will the Shelter provide each week, if it wants to serve the most clients possible over the long-term? If the Shelter was a profit-maximizing firm, how many meals would it provide?

b. The target number of meals is somewhat smaller than weekly demand. Rick gathers his staff together to talk about how they will allocate the meals. Ashley (the server) suggests that it be on a first-come-first serve basis. Dasha (the cook) suggests that clients be given a certain number of coupons each week, and each coupon is redeemable for one meal. Then, the Shelter adjusts the number of coupons over time to stay at the target weekly amount. Discuss the merits and drawbacks to both recommendations. What would you recommend to Rick?
1. Krugman & Wells: problem 3 on page 359

2. Supply and Demand Analysis Application (5 points)
In its War on Drugs, the United States has focused on keeping illegal drugs out of the country and prosecuting those who sell drugs in the U.S. Using supply and demand analysis, consider what the end result has been. Be sure to address in your answer:

1) Which curve (supply or demand) shifts;
2) What we know conceptually about the price elasticity of demand for drugs;
3) The impact of the War on Drugs on the equilibrium price for drugs;
4) The impact of the War on Drugs on the equilibrium quantity of drugs sold in the U.S.; and
5) Identify the real winners and losers of the policy
Make sure to include a graph to visually represent your analysis.

3. Price Elasticity of Demand & Income Elasticity of Demand (10 points)
Below is a table showing the price and yearly quantity of store bought muffins for Serenity House’s catering training & homeless breakfast program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price of Muffins</th>
<th>Quantity of Muffins demanded when Serenity House’s yearly budget is $200,000</th>
<th>Quantity of Muffins demanded when Serenity House’s yearly budget is $300,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$8</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$12</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$14</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. Calculate the price elasticity of demand when the price of muffins rises from $10 to $12, when Serenity House’s yearly budget is $200,000. Is this demand elastic or inelastic?

A. Calculate the price elasticity of demand when the price of muffins rises from $12 to $14, when Serenity House’s yearly budget is $300,000. Is this elastic or inelastic?

B. Calculate the income elasticity of demand when Serenity House’s budget increases from $200,000 to $300,000, when the price of muffins is at $8.
4. Consumer & Producer Surplus, & Deadweight Loss

The market for bottled water at UM-SSW has been in equilibrium for quite some time. The market price is $1.50 per bottle, and the equilibrium quantity is 400 bottles. This equilibrium generates consumer surplus of $200 and producer surplus of $200.

This month, UM-SSW decides to go green by paying for additional recycling. To pay for this, Dean Lein decides to impose a tax of 50 cents per bottle. After this, the new market quantity drops to 300 bottles, as some students substitute away from the good.

Suppose that demand and supply are equally elastic and that after Dean Marsh’s action, total surplus in the market is $375.

A) What is the new price paid by consumers?

B) What is the revenue generated by the school from this new tax?

C) What is the dead weight loss from the tax?

D) What is the new consumer surplus generated by the market after the tax?

5. Covering the costs (10 points)

Chauncey publishes social work textbooks. He has numerous competitors. His variable costs are as follows. Because of technological restrictions, Chauncey can only print books in the following amounts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quan of Textbooks</th>
<th>Variable Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>160</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>220</td>
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<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>290</td>
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<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>1,480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. If the market price for textbooks is $33.00, how many books will Chauncey produce? (At least in the near term.)
B. If the market price is $12.00, what is the maximum total dollar amount of fixed costs that Chauncey could sustain and remain in the social work textbook industry in the long term?

C. If the market price for textbooks is $7.00, how may textbooks will Chauncey produce?

6. Externalities
There are three prominent ways that governments attempt to correct for market failures caused by negative externalities. Describe each one. Pick one of the three and describe a set of circumstances in which economists would prefer this approach to one or both of the others.

7. Competitive Markets verses Monopoly (10 points)
Historically, Chicago social service agencies had many suppliers from which to purchase client log forms. Myriad producers made them, and all log form producers face a constant marginal cost of $10 per pack (with 500 forms in a pack). Recently however, the R. Wallace Company has come to dominate, driving all other firms out of business and working with its elected officials to bar any new firms from entry into the market. Below is a graphical representation of the industry demand curve and the R. Wallace Company’s marginal revenue curve. As much as they would like to, the company is unable to price discriminate.

A. Show on this graph the area representing the R. Wallace Co’s profit.
B. Show on this graph the area representing consumer surplus when R. Wallace Co is the only producer. Is this area bigger or smaller than consumer surplus when there were myriad firms?

C. Show the area representing deadweight loss.

D. Briefly explain why the R. Wallace Co’s marginal revenue curve is downward sloping.

8. Essay Question: The Food Crisis (10 points)
Researchers have cited a number of causes of the current food crisis, such as 1) recent unprecedented economic growth in India and China, 2) Heavy subsidization and expansion of the market for biofuels, and 3) recent bad harvests in some parts of the world.

Using what we have learned about supply and demand, separately explain what effect each of these three factors is having on the world market for food. Illustrate with graphs. Senator Bridget Shaefer proposes an international subsidy for farmers to produce rice, stating that we need to provide a clear incentive to farmers to grow more food. In one paragraph, explain whether you would or would not support this policy.
In your final paper, you have wide latitude on topic and execution. The paper could be entirely theoretical, or you could include an empirical analysis of some sort. If possible, I would like this paper to be useful to you outside of being just a course requirement, either in helping you become familiar with a literature that you are interested in, or giving you a base for something that you might publish down the road.

The main goal is for you to write a paper that connects with some of the material we discussed in class, and advances your (and my) understanding of your particular topic. I will look for multiple examples of you grappling with material we discussed in class or that was discussed in our readings (and for evidence that you have understood this material). And I will look for evidence that you have pushed beyond what was covered in class with your topic. If you have questions about a particular topic you are considering, please email me.

A few other instructions:

- I want you to take some sort of position on your paper topic. In could be a positive (“studies disagree about my topic, and I find this side more persuasive because…”) OR normative (“we should do it this way because…”—of course normative analysis has to be based firmly in positive analysis). What I do not want to see is a simple review of what other people think. I want you to take sides, or make your own side.
- In some form, I’d like your paper to grapple with how scholars in social work and economics might think similarly or differently about your paper topic. This could highlight a strength or weakness of one approach over the other, or just broad differences. If you can’t think of how to incorporate this into your paper, you could include a final section at the end that does this.
- I like well-edited papers that are well organized and minimize typos. For me, this would take at least 3 to 4 major revisions before submission.

**Due date:** Please submit a stapled paper copy to my office (under my door if I am not here) by 11:59pm on April 21, 2011.

Originally, I had asked that this assignment only have your UMID for identification purposes. However, as you will all be discussing you topic with me and the class at length, you can put either your name or your UMID on the paper, as you see fit.