1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine social policies, problems, and trends in social programs and services for older people. It will focus major attention on the strengths and limitations of existing policies and programs related to health, mental health, income maintenance, income deficiency, long-term care, housing, transportation, nutrition, employment and unemployment. This course will provide a framework for an analysis of the services provided to older people. This analysis will include how adequately needs are met in various subgroups of the elderly population and across core diversity dimensions (including race/ethnicity, class, age, sex and sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, ability, culture, marital status, national origin, and religion/spirituality). It will also include proposals for change in policies, programs and services. Programs will be compared in terms of access to benefits and services provided to older people.

2. COURSE CONTENT

This course will familiarize students with social policies and programs for meeting the rapidly growing needs of the older population in our society. Policies, programs, and services for the elderly population will be examined from historical, observational, and analytical perspectives. This course will increase the student’s awareness of programs and services provided through the Older Americans Act, the Social Security Act, the Affordable Care Act and as a consequence of public and community initiatives. Students will be exposed to content areas that will enable them to understand aging programs dealing with social services, health care, housing, and other elements of community and institutional long-term care systems.

3. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the evolution and organization of policies and services for older people in
the context of the problems that give rise to the need for such policies and services.

2. Critique the strengths and weaknesses of the U.S. social service delivery system for older people.

3. Identify the problems facing the development of services for older people and suggest approaches to address these challenges.

4. Identify criteria for assessing the success of programs for older people.

5. Critically evaluate alternative policies and services for older people with a special emphasis on similarities and differences related to human diversity and dynamics of oppression and privilege.

6. Discuss typical ethical concerns related to policies and services for elderly people.

7. Use a political economy framework to critically evaluate policies and services provided to older people in terms of such issues as privilege, oppression, diversity and social justice.

4. ADVANCED PRACTICE BEHAVIORS

This course will utilize and build upon the following Advanced Practice Behaviors:

- Values & Ethics: Balance individual and community needs for appropriate and sustainable services, programs, and policies for older adults;

- Social & Economic Justice: Examine the extent to which current policies and services for older adults promote or hinder social and economic justice and recommend strategies for improvement;

- Social Policy and Context: Understand aging-related policies in historical, social, and political contexts; understand linkages between policy and practice; learn strategies for influencing policies at different levels (institutional, local, state, and national).

4. COURSE DESIGN

This course takes a learner-center approach with the belief that learning experiences have the greatest impact when they are relevant to the personal world of the learner. This belief is implemented through several ways. First, you can choose to do the activity assigned to each session. Most activities involve linking real people with programs and services. Students’ experience of doing the activity will be the basis of class discussion on the topic of the day. Second, you will participate in debates on topics that have been debated on the national stage and generated strong feelings in both sides. By engaging in the debates, it was hoped that students will gain a deeper understanding of the issue and can engage in the national conversation with confidence. Third, you select a problem/an issue that matters to you to conduct a policy analysis. This analysis is expected to have two deliverables. One is an academic-type paper, another is an Op-Ed essay. The Op-Ed piece is your opportunity to advocate for older people on an important issue.
Required readings assigned for each session include two types. One aims to provide background information about specific aging programs and services. Another is more analytical which aims to provide you with alternative perspectives and new ideas to think about an issue. Some readings may take time to digest while others are relatively easy to read. We will integrate the readings in class discussion. Supplemental readings are provided in case you want to learn more about the topic.

In sum, your active participation is needed in this class. For most class sessions, the instructor will give brief lectures laying out key issues related to the topic. Class discussion will be a major activity. So be ready to talk, listen and challenge each other.

5. RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO CURRICULAR THEMES

- *Multiculturalism and Diversity* will be addressed through analysis of differences in needs among subgroups of the elderly population within the U.S. society and the differential application and impact of policies and services.

- *Social Justice and Social Change* will be addressed by considering issues such as the distribution of social security and other benefits, varying standards for assessing the need for intervention (e.g., protective services and guardianship), and differing outcomes for behavior considered harmful to self or others.

- *Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation* will be addressed by considering the spectrum of policies and services ranging from promotion and prevention (e.g., pre-retirement programs and in-home services) to treatment and rehabilitation (e.g., income support for those with inadequate resources and nursing homes).

- *Behavioral and Social Science Research* will be addressed by the inclusion of theoretical frameworks for understanding social roles, social stratification, and societal functioning among older people. The findings of research studies and evidence based intervention relevant to the design and evaluation of policies and services for older adults will also be included.

6. RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO SOCIAL WORK ETHICS AND VALUES

This course will address social work values and ethics in terms of the extent to which policies and services adequately meet the needs of older people. Special emphasis will be given to ethics and values concerning policies and services that provide older people with autonomy.

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 develop 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. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Academic Conduct and Integrity

Please see the Student Code of Academic and Professional Conduct in the Student Guide to the Master’s in Social Work Degree Program (http://www.ssw.umich.edu/studentGuide/2010/) for a discussion of student responsibilities for academic conduct and integrity. In particular, please pay attention to issues related to plagiarism. Students who are found responsible for academic misconduct are subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the School of Social Work, revocation of degree, or any other sanction deemed appropriate to address the violation.

B. Attendance, Participation, Good Citizenship (5%)

Students are expected to attend, arrive on time and stay throughout all class sessions, participate actively in all class activities, and take initiation to create and promote a good learning environment. If you have to miss a class, please notify your instructor at your earliest convenience. Your participation points will be negatively affected by your absence as you cannot participate when you are not there. In consideration of your classmates, please turn off cell phones and all other potentially distracting devices during class. If you are on call, please set your device to vibrate. Likewise, unless instructed by the instructor, use of laptops and other electronic devices should be kept to the minimum so that we can all focus on what’s happening in the classroom.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you need accommodation for a disability or other special need, please let the instructor know as early as possible (by the third week of class) so that we can work out the necessary arrangements. Also note that Office of Student Services at the SSW offers support to students with disabilities, as well as students with other issues such as emotional, health, family, and financial problems.

Religious Observances

Please notify me (by the third week of class) if religious observances conflict with class or due dates for assignments so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

C. Assignments

This class has the following categories of assignments. Instruction for each is in separate handouts.

(1) Activity reports (20%, due on various dates)
(2) Debate (20%, due on various dates)
(3) Policy analysis (including three components total 55%)
   (3.1) Problem definition and reference list (10%, due Oct. 28)
   (3.2) Policy brief (25%, due Nov. 25)
   (3.3) Op-Ed essay (20%, due Dec. 2)
Writing Expectations

In general, written assignments should clearly communicate the student’s knowledge and thought, and be easily understood. A concise writing style that directly makes points and reflects a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter and critical thinking is preferred. Students are required to use appropriate referencing. APA style is a good choice but you can use other styles (this is a link to APA citation style: http://guides.lib.umich.edu/social-work. Click the APS style tab on top). All written assignments should be typed, double-spaced, 12-point font size and proofread before submission via Canvas.

D. Grading

Grades will be determined by adding the scores from all assignments. The minimum percentage required for each grade is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A+ (100)</th>
<th>B+ (87)</th>
<th>C+ (77)</th>
<th>D+ (67)</th>
<th>E (50 or lower)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (95)</td>
<td>B (83)</td>
<td>C (73)</td>
<td>D (63)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A- (90)</td>
<td>B- (80)</td>
<td>C- (70)</td>
<td>D- (60)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. READINGS

All required readings are available on our course Canvas site (under Files). Some but not all supplemental readings are also available on Canvas. Please ask the instructor if you have difficulties to access required or supplemental readings.
9. COURSE CALENDAR AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

The instructor reserves the right to revise the schedule and reading assignments. Any changes will be announced via Canvas at least 3 days prior to the corresponding session.

Week 1 September 18: Introduction & Context of Aging Policy
Course overview. How are aging policies related to quality of life of older adults? How’s policy made? How to analyze social policy? What is the uniqueness of aging policy in the realm of social policies? What are major challenges to aging policy?

Required:


Supplemental:

Week 2 September 25: The OAA and Aging Networks
What does the Older American Act contain? What is the Aging Network and why? What’s the organizational structure of the Aging Network? What does the Aging Network do? What functions does it perform? What are challenges the Network are facing?

Required:


Supplemental:
Useful websites:
1. Administration on Aging-- http://www.aoa.gov/
Week 3 Oct 2: Nutrition and Transportation

Do older people have nutrition problems? What types of problem? What programs address nutritional needs of older adults? How do the programs work? Are the programs effective? If yes, why are there still nutrition problems among older people? What changes are needed?

Why is it challenging to meet transportation needs of older people? What programs and services are available to meet their transportation needs? Who can use the services and how? What are some unique mobility challenges of ethnic minority older adults and rural elders? How to meet the mobility need of a growing number of older adults?

Required:


Thomas & Mor (2013). Providing more home-delivered meals is one way to keep older adults with low care needs out of nursing home. Health Affairs, 32(10), 1796-1802.


Supplemental:
Useful websites:
1. National Center on Senior Transportation-- http://www.seniortransportation.net/.
some best practice of addressing mobility needs of older adults--

2. AAA-1B in Michigan has a mobility management program
http://www.seniortransportation.net/ResourcesPublications/MyRide2.aspx

Accessed on September 7, 2015 from
http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/91979/102872.pdf?sequence=1

Week 4 Oct 9: Retirement security
What is economic (in)security? How should that be defined and measured? How does measurement affect understanding of the problem? What is the extent of income inequality among older people? Who’s most at risk of poverty and why? Can employment be the way to economic security? What employment programs are offered to older people? What are strengths and weaknesses of the employment programs? How to strengthen retirement security of Americans?

Required:
http://www.wowonline.org/ourprograms/eesi/documents/NatlEESIIndexFAQs.pdf


Supplemental:
Useful websites:
1. The Senior Community Service Employment Program--
http://www.doleta.gov/seniors/. See a more detailed description--


---

**Week 5 October 16: Social Security**


**Debate 1: Should individuals have control of their Social Security account?**

**Required:**


Required activity for everyone: The Academy of Actuaries has designed a game which asks you to ‘fix’ social security. Go to http://www.actuary.org/socialsecurity/game.html to play the game.

Supplemental:
Useful websites:
1. Social Security Administration--http://www.ssa.gov/

Social Security video: Just the facts (http://www.nasi.org) and read http://www.nasi.org/learn/social security.


---

**Week 6 October 23: Health Care**

*How did Medicare come about and what changes have been made to the program since the beginning? What are the different parts of Medicare? How to participate in each part? What benefits do Medicare provide? What are limitations of the Medicare program? How has Medicare changed after the Affordable Care Act (ACA)? Is Medicare not sustainable? What are some proposals to ‘save’ or ‘reform’ Medicare and how they may impact older people we work with? Who qualifies for Medicaid? Who are the dual eligible? Why are they a concern?*

**Debate 2: Should Medicare be a premium support program?**

Required:
Video: The Story of Medicare: A Timeline

Kaiser Family Foundation (2015). A primer on Medicare: Key facts about the Medicare program and the people it covers. Available from:

Kaplan (2012). Top ten myths about Medicare.


Supplemental:
Useful websites:


Cubanski et al. (2014). Health Care on a Budget: The Financial Burden of Health Spending by Medicare Households. KKF.


---

**Week 7 October 30:** Long-Term Care—Policy and Challenges

*Are most Americans prepared for long-term care? Is it something we need to prepared for? How much does long-term care cost? How has the US responded to the need for long-term support and services? Why the CLASS Act was repealed? How do other developed nations*
finance long-term care? What should be the role of the government in long-term support and services? How serious is the problem of long-term care workforce shortage? How to deal with the problem?

**Debate 3: Should Medicare be used to pay for long-term support and services?**

**Required:**


**Supplemental:**
Useful website: http://longtermcare.gov/


---

**Week 8 Nov. 6: LTC—Residential Services**

*Why do nursing homes have a poor reputation? How to ensure nursing home quality of care? How to protect the right of nursing home residents? Can nursing homes be more like ‘home’? What is the role of Assisted Living in long-term care? What are problems in current policy about Assisted Living?? What challenges do LGBT elders face in long-term support and services?*

**Debate 4: Should Medicaid be a block grant to states?**

**Required:**


**Supplemental:**
Nursing home alert: http://www.nursinghomealert.com/share-this-poem

Boccuti et al. (2015). Reading the Stars: Nursing Home Quality Star Ratings, Nationally and by State. KFF.


LGBT Older Adults in Long-Term Care Facilities: Stories in the Field. Available from http://www.lgbtlongtermcare.org

Week 9 November 13: LTC: Home and Community-Based Services

How much has been achieved to reduce the institutional bias in LTC? What are promising models to deliver home and community-based long-term support and services? How to take advantage of technology to provide HCBC? What are controversies in recent changes that privatize long-term support and services? How informal caregivers have been supported? What can we learn from other nations in supporting caregivers?

Debate 5: Should family members be paid to care for their elderly relatives?

Required:


Simon-Rusinowitz et al. (2010). The benefits of consumer-directed services for elders and their caregivers in the Cash and Counseling Demonstration and Evaluation.


Supplemental:


---

**Week 10**  Nov. 20 – Writing workshop with Betsy Williams

**Week 11**  Nov. 27 ---- No Class (Thanksgiving Break)

**Week 12**  Dec. 4: Mental Health Care & Elder Mistreatment

*How serious is under-treatment of mental health problems in older adults? Why? What mental health services are available to older adults? Why older people do not utilize mental health services? Do some groups of older people have more barriers to access mental health services? How does paying for mental v. physical health services differ? Has the implementation of the ACA improved mental health care for older adults?*

*What is elder mistreatment? How serious is the problem? What programs and services are available to respond to elder mistreatment and protect older adults from being mistreated? How well are they working?*

**Required:**


Supplemental:


---

**Week 13 Dec. 11: Housing & Fare Well**

*Is homelessness a problem in older adults? Who are the homeless older adults and why are they homeless? What housing programs help low-income older adults? What programs support older persons to age in place? What are problems with affordable and supportive housing for seniors? What are major unaddressed needs in housing? What are unique issues of GLBT elders in housing?*

**Required:**


**Supplemental:**


---End---