# Course Syllabus

**SW 671 Social Policy Development and Enactment**  
**Fall 2015**  
**Thursday 9am-12pm**  
**Room B684 SSWB**

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**Office Hours:** By appointment  
**Email:** doylekg@umich.edu  
When you email me, please include **SW 671** in your subject line.

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Course Description
This course will review the overall design of human service systems, how to plan for and design such systems, how to develop the legislative mandates and regulations that operationalize these designs, and how to facilitate their formal enactment. Students will learn both the analytic and interactional skills associated with the development and enactment of policies that give specification to human service systems.

Course Content
Policy, both legislative and otherwise, provides the framework in which human service systems operate. “Human service systems” here refers not to individual programs, but to the collection of programs, agencies, etc. that seek to address a social issue. Policy creates systems, defines the problems these systems seek to address, and sets the boundaries for actors within the systems.

The content and processes of policy are therefore important to social workers in all practice modalities, including clinical practice. This course will present beginning level skills associated with social policy development and enactment. Development requires tools such as problem assessment, policy idea creation, and coalition building. Enactment, in turn, involves advocacy for (a major focus of this course) and management of policy. While the class will generally consider government policy, such as legislation, policy is also produced by organizations. The applicability of policy skills to organizational practice will also be considered.

In addition to examining the tasks associated with policy development and enactment, more general skills for policy practice will be discussed. Clear and concise communication of complex information is a prerequisite for effective practice. A heavy emphasis will therefore be placed on both written and oral presentation. Written assignments are designed to mimic documents that a policy practitioner might produce. Class discussion and presentation assignments will be structured to develop effective oral communication. Finally, meetings are to policy practice what clinical sessions are to individual practice; they are the milieu in which much of the most important work is done. We will therefore cover skills for facilitating effective meetings.

Evidence-based practice need not be limited to clinical settings, and a wealth of scholarship from academic fields such as political science and sociology and from applied fields such as social work and management can guide policy practice. Social science is infused throughout the course, being a focus of the readings, lectures, and class discussions. We will discuss social work values and ethics in the context of policy practice and we will likewise identify and evaluate ethical dilemmas in policy practice.

Course Objectives
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Apply beginning level skills in the use of the major analytic tools most commonly used to assess and evaluate complex (policy) systems of human and social services
- Apply beginning level skills in the use of interactional tools and techniques for facilitating group process and decision-making
- Design a procedure for reviewing and assessing a social service (policy) system that encompasses a wide variety of separately mandated programs
- Develop and evaluate a reasonable set of options and policy recommendations for changing a particular system
Course Design & Expectations

We will use a variety of activities, including lectures, discussions, case studies, short written assignments, papers, and student presentations to understand the material and apply it to social work practice. We are all both teachers and learners, and your peers depend on your contribution. I therefore expect you to attend class, be prepared to discuss the material, and to actively participate in in-class discussions and assignments. Written work should be submitted by the date it is due. Late assignments will be penalized as discussed below.

Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes

Behavioral and Social Science Research
The course will make extensive use of social science research. All policy analysis and implementation begins with an assessment of where we are. Students will, in assignments, consider academic literature on, for example, the changing demographics that affect demand for services and the impact of particular types of services on clients. Social science research on the policy process will be a focal point of the course. Finally, evaluation of policy change efforts—essentially applied social science—will be discussed.

Multiculturalism and Diversity
The course examines how Social Policy affects—and in many cases disproportionately affects—the diverse and intersecting identities (such as ability, age, socioeconomic status, 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. We will critically examine specific policies from multicultural, historical, and/or cross-national perspectives.

Social Justice and Social Change
We will examine the differential impact of policies and programs on those experiencing poverty and those who traditionally have been marginalized. We will also discuss how these individuals and groups participate—or are prevented from participating—in the political process. Finally, policy design and implementation is fundamentally about social change—policy defines much of the social environment. Issues of Social Justice must be top of mind for social workers; your discussions and assignments must examine social justice.

Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation
Policies discussed in class are intended to alleviate social problems using any or several of these modalities. We will examine varying approaches to policy design in the context of these modalities.

Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values
The Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers explicitly calls on social workers to engage in policy and political activities to enhance well-being for all people. This course enhances skills and knowledge for conducting such efforts.

Just down the street from the School of Social Work is the world class Ford School of Public Policy, where influential scholarship is devoted to public policy. What differentiates this course is The NASW
*Code of Ethics*, which we will use to guide policy decisions, analysis and ethical dilemmas.

**Textbook & other readings**

The textbook for this course is Jansson’s (2013) textbook:


While I will be basing class activities on the 7th edition, a recent older version is acceptable. I have included chapter titles as well as numbers to harmonize across editions. If your edition is missing a given chapter, please obtain the required material from a classmate. A copy of the 7th edition is also on reserve at the library. Books are available at Ulrich’s, Barnes and Noble at the Michigan Union, and through online retailers such as Amazon (note that electronic editions and rentals are available online at a much-reduced cost).

I will place all other required readings on our course Canvas site. Note that some weeks list recommended readings. *You are not expected to read these for class.* They helpful resources should there be a topic you would like to learn more about or if you eventually pursue policy work and would like to get more depth on some aspect of the course.

**Assignments & Grading**

Final grades are based on 100 percentage points. Letter grades are assigned to point totals according to the following schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>97-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
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<td>94-96</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>90-93</td>
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<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>84-86</td>
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<td>80-83</td>
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<td>70-72</td>
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<td>65-67</td>
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<td>&lt;65</td>
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**Attendance** 10%
**Course Engagement (includes p/f policy article takeaways)** 10%
**Written assignments and p/f assignments (3 of 5 counted)** 30%
**Presentation** 20%
**Policy paper** 30%
**Total** 100%

A brief note about grading: I do not think it serves anyone well for every student in a course to earn an “A” grade, though I am familiar with this practice. Your grade will be a reflection of both your effort and the quality of your engagement and assignments.
**Attendance—10%**

Class attendance is imperative for both your own learning and in an active classroom, the learning of your peers—and me. Attendance is worth 10% of your final grade. I expect students to attend class. If you need to miss a class, please contact me in advance to let me know. Excessive absences (more than 1) will result in a lower grade. Routine tardiness will also reduce the attendance grade. If personal or professional circumstances require your absence from more than one class, please contact me as soon as possible. Note that, even if you are absent from a class, you are still responsible for submitting any assignments due that day. I will use a sign-in sheet to maintain a record of class attendance.

**Course Engagement—10%**

I expect you to be engaged in all in-class activities, including contributing comments and questions in class discussions. Some people naturally speak up in class more than others. Your engagement score is not predicated on the number of times you speak in class; rather I will focus on your participation in activities and whether it is obvious that you are paying attention during class. (Hint: using devices for anything other than classwork ≠ paying attention in class.) Misuse of electronic devices in class will be reflected in your engagement score.

Your participation grade also includes pulling out key takeaways from three (3) recent articles from a newspaper or news website (e.g., New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Detroit Free Press, The Bridge Magazine—The Center for Michigan...), radio news show (e.g. National Public Radio, Lucy Ann Lance), current affairs magazine (The Economist...), or Policy Advocacy Organization (CLASP, National Coalition for the Homeless, Economic Policy Institute, The Sentencing Project, National Center for Transgender Equity...) or an agency policy. These articles could be on a social work-relevant policy issue or the policy process. I have placed several examples on Canvas; if you want, you may use one of them, but the other two you should seek on your own. *These assignments are not meant to be time-consuming; the assignment will ask you for a few bullet point answers only.* I will describe and post the full assignment on Canvas. These are “graded” on a pass/fail basis.

These are due no later than: September 24, October 15, and November 5. However, if you want to turn all of them in before September 24th, that is fine.

**Written Assignments—30%**

You will submit five written assignments, and two additional pass/fail written assignments. They will be described in full on Canvas and posted at least a week before they are due.

For the five written assignments, I will count the grades of only the top three when calculating your final grade, though you should submit five. Even I will only count the top three, failure to submit any of the five assignments will result in a 100 point penalty.

There are also 2 pass/fail written assignments. I will not grade the assignments, but you will lose points if you fail to turn them in. They will be described in full on Canvas and posted at least a week before they are due.

Assignments are due at or before 9:00am on the due dates listed on the syllabus and on Canvas.

**Presentation—20%**

During one of the last two class sessions (I will assign dates in class), you will prepare a presentation of
approximately 10 minutes summarizing your policy analysis, proposal, and implementation strategy, with an accompanying PowerPoint, Prezi or similar. Note that you will give the presentation before your paper is due. The full assignment will be described and posted on Canvas. I will also provide a rubric for grading.

You will also provide feedback to each other on the presentation, and suggestions can be incorporated into your paper. Feedback forms will be posted on Canvas prior to your presentation.

**Policy Paper—30%**
You will choose a policy issue of interest to you and write a 10-12 page paper. This issue could emerge from your field placement or it could be a topic you want to know more about. Any level of policy—from agency rules to federal legislation—is an acceptable topic for this assignment. The full assignment will be described and posted on Canvas. I will also provide a rubric for grading. You should have a preliminary topic by class session 4.

The paper is due by 11:59pm on Sunday, December 13, 2015.

**Late Assignments**
Please submit all work on time. Late assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for the first day past the due date and time and a full letter grade for each additional day thereafter. I am not inclined to waive this policy, though I do understand there may be exceptional circumstances.

**Grade Dispute Process**
If you believe you have been graded unfairly on an assignment, I ask that you please wait 24 hours before contacting me. 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 (or mathematical errors) as opposed to nebulous references to “fairness.” I reserve the right to re-read, and re-grade, the work in its entirety in the case of a challenge. The grade may be adjusted upwards or downwards.

**Classroom Environment**
True learning involves risk and, therefore, vulnerability. I hope that all students will work with me to create and foster a learning environment that promotes social justice, inclusion and equity. Further, this is an opportunity for all of us to engage in professional socialization, respectfulness, and broadening our mutual development of cultural humility. We will examine how the structure of current policies have evolved from and still reflect biases and negative beliefs about certain populations or social identity groups. Questioning and disagreeing are part of the learning process, and I encourage all of us to engage in these activities with thoughtfulness and respect. I expect the classroom to be safe, though I am aware that learning and growth can sometimes be uncomfortable. There are a few times when I will engineer disagreements to foster learning, so please do not “freeze” your understanding of any of us after one or two interactions. Expect that we all have the capacity to grow and develop. Finally, if you are someone who likes to interact and engage verbally, consider “stepping back” occasionally in order to open the airwaves for others to speak. Similarly, if you are someone who is reticent to speak up in class, consider “stepping up” and taking a risk. Above all, this is a learning environment.

“The only thing worse than learning from our mistakes is not learning from our mistakes.”

I thought Eleanor Roosevelt said this, but I cannot find the source! Can you?
Expectations for Written Work

Development of professional writing is a goal of the course, and I will consider writing quality in grading. Proofread written work carefully; I strongly recommend that you have a colleague (not someone in this course, except in the case of the final paper) read your documents for clarity, typos, omitted words, etc.

Purdue University’s OWL website https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/ is an excellent resource for general writing and formatting advice.

The Sweetland Writing Center (SWC) is located at 1310 North Quad (corner of W. Washington and State St.). Graduate students are eligible for seven sessions per semester. For help with your paper, please 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. You can register with them on line and schedule an appointment: Website: http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/

In addition, social work students can receive individual writing assistance from Betsy Williams, Writing Skills and Study Skills Coordinator, through the UM SSW Career Services office. Students may schedule an appointment and bring a draft of their paper (at any stage) along with the text of the assignment and any questions or concerns they may have. Email ssw-cso@umich.edu or call 734-763-6259.

Finally, another resource is the English Language Institute: http://www.lsa.umich.edu/eli

Accommodations

Special Accommodations and volunteering to aid: 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 information and resources, to coordinate reasonable accommodations for documented disabilities or to volunteer as a reader, note taker, or tutor, contact Services for Students with Disabilities, G664 Haven Hall. (734) 763-3000; http://www.umich.edu/~sswd/ or email: sswaccessibility@umich.edu. 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, 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.

Religious Observances

Although the University of Michigan, as an institution, does not observe religious holidays, it has long been the University’s policy that every reasonable effort should be made to help students avoid negative academic consequences when their religious obligations conflict with academic requirements. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of absence. Students who expect to miss classes, examinations, or other assignments as a consequence of their religious observance shall be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete such academic responsibilities. It is the
obligation of students to provide faculty with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which they will be absent. Such notice must be given by the drop/add deadline of the given term. Should disagreement arise over any aspect of this policy, the parties involved should contact the Department Chair, the Dean of the School, or the Ombudsperson. Final appeals will be resolved by the provost. http://www.provost.umich.edu/calendar/religious_holidays.html

Communication Policy
E-mail (doylekg@umich.edu) is the best way to reach me. Please include SW 671 in your subject line. I will generally respond within 24 hours. If your message is urgent in nature, please indicate that in the subject line.

If you wish to schedule office hours, we can set up a time when we see each other at class, or we can schedule via email. Though I do have an “office” at the School, none of us should be subjected to a windowless environment any more than is absolutely necessary, so we will choose a separate location to meet.

Electronic Devices
Laptops, tablets, and other electronic devices are fantastic resources. Instantly accessing information may come in handy during certain class activities. But let’s face it: electronic devices also provide many distractions too. I strongly prefer that you do not use laptops or tablets to take notes in class, as it distracts all of us. Please wait until break to check e-mail or use social media. I reserve the right to change this policy at any time and for any student. I also may periodically conduct a “screen check,” and neither of us wants that to happen.

Please respect all of us and keep all cell phones off or on silent. Misuse of electronic devices will be factored into your engagement grade.

Academic Misconduct
If you haven’t already, please acquaint yourself with University of Michigan, UM School of Social Work, and NASW policies on scholarly integrity. All academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and misrepresentation, will be treated seriously. You will find a discussion of plagiarism in the Student Guide to the Master’s in Social Work Degree Program online. Plagiarism—presenting another’s words or ideas as your own—is a serious violation of academic integrity and will be grounds for failure of the course and other disciplinary action as described under the School’s policies on academic and professional conduct (see: http://www.ssw.umich.edu/studentguide Volume 1 Section 12.02). Note that using Web resources increases the risk of “accidental plagiarism.” Do not let that happen. Another useful resource is located at: http://www.lib.umich.edu/academic-integrity/resources-students.
### Schedule

#### Required Assignments

(Assignments DUE on the date listed by 9:00am ←Note the time!
Assignments are due before class starts on that day.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Content and other useful information</th>
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</table>

Unless otherwise noted, required readings and assignments come from the Jansson textbook, or can be found on our Canvas site.

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### Session 1, September 17

#### Required Preparation

1. Jansson Ch. 1 (Joining a Tradition of Social Reform)
2. Jansson Ch. 3 (Obtaining skills and competencies for policy advocacy)
3. NASW Code of Ethics Revised 2008

**Assignment (Value-Clarifying Skills)**

This is a pass/fail assignment, and liberal use of bullet points as opposed to paragraphs is absolutely fine. I am more interested in your grasp of the concepts than on the length.

In no more than 2 pages, define/discuss the following concepts (again, remember this is pass/fail so don’t worry about spending too much time on it):

- Social Policy
- Politics
- Social Justice
- Distributional Justice
- Policy Advocacy

#### Introduction and course overview

**Recommended Readings**

- Jansson Ch. 2 (Articulating four rationales for participating in policy advocacy)
### Session 2, September 24

#### Required Preparation
1. Jansson Ch. 4 (Understanding the ecology of policy in governmental, electoral, community, and agency Settings)
2. **Choose (A) or (B)**
   - **A)** Listen to: “Fresh Air” on NPR May 14, 2015. You can find the podcast or listen at this link: [http://www.npr.org/2015/05/14/406699264/historian-says-dont-sanitize-how-our-government-created-the-ghettos](http://www.npr.org/2015/05/14/406699264/historian-says-dont-sanitize-how-our-government-created-the-ghettos)
     (If you listen to the podcast, you only need to listen to the interview with Richard Rothstein, approximately 36 minutes total.)
   - **OR**
     You can find it in .pdf on our Canvas site or here: [http://www.epi.org/publication/making-ferguson/](http://www.epi.org/publication/making-ferguson/)

#### Assignment
Turn in the first of your 3 article takeaways. Full description of the assignment is found on Canvas.

### Policy Venues and Processes

#### Recommended Readings
- Jansson Ch. 5 (Expanding policy advocacy across national borders)
### Session 3, October 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Preparation</th>
<th>Agenda Building and Issue Framing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Ypsi Township_First-of-its-kind plan bans section 8 housing, limits rentals</td>
<td>Andrea Plevek and Mercedes Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Washtenaw County Affordability and Economic Equity - Analysis</td>
<td>from Washtenaw County Office of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Jansson Ch. 6 (Committing to an issue: Building agendas)</td>
<td>Recommended Readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at the intersections of race, class, and gender. <em>Journal of Politics</em>, <em>68</em>(4),</td>
<td>*What Government Agencies Do and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>894-910. (skim)</td>
<td><em>Why They Do It.</em> New York, NY:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Basic Books.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Assignment (Political Skills)

1-2 page Memo  
Full description of the assignment is found on Canvas.
### Session 4, October 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Preparation</th>
<th>Problem Identification</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Jansson Ch. 7 (Analyzing problems in the first step of policy analysis)</td>
<td>Required Readings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assignment (Analytical and Interactional Skills)**

1. Submit your paper topic. Instructions for submission will be posted on Canvas.
2. Problem analysis and focus group development. Full description of the assignment is found on Canvas.

### Session 5, October 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Preparation</th>
<th>Developing Policy Proposals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Jansson Ch. 8 (Developing policy proposals)</td>
<td>Recommended Readings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assignment (Analytical Skills)**

1. Turn in the second of your 3 article takeaways. Full description of the assignment is found on Canvas.
2. Read assignment that is due next week and consider beginning the assignment. It is a difficult assignment.
# Session 6, October 22

## Required Preparation


## Assignment (Analytical Skills)

Design a Decision-Making Matrix for an agency policy. Full description of the assignment is found on Canvas.

## Skill Development

### Recommended Readings

### Session 7, October 29

**Required Preparation**

1. Jansson Ch. 9 (Presenting and defending policy proposals)  
   **Read up to the section called “Gaining Support for Grant Proposals.”**


**Assignment (Political and Interactional Skills)**

Pass/Fail Assignment: Develop an outline of a persuasion strategy for both a hostile and a sympathetic audience. Full description of the assignment is found on Canvas.

**Recommended Readings**

In Chapter 9, the Policy Advocacy Challenge “Making a PowerPoint Presentation to Public Officials with Respect to Homelessness in Los Angeles County” gives a nice example of a PowerPoint presentation—*I recommend scanning this as you start thinking about your presentations.*


### Session 8, November 5

**Required Preparation**

1. Jansson Ch. 10 (Developing and using power)


4. Pass/Fail Assignment: Prove to me that you voted (or that nothing was up for vote in the jurisdiction where you are registered.)

**Assignment**

Turn in the last of your 3 article takeaways. Full description of the assignment is found on Canvas.

**Recommended Readings**


### Session 9, November 12

#### Required Preparation
1. Jansson Ch. 11 (Developing political strategy and putting it into action)

#### Advocacy Strategy

#### Recommended Readings
- Jansson Ch. 12 (Engaging in ballot-based policy advocacy)

#### Assignment (Analytical Skills)
Shorten a policy brief. Full description of the assignment is found on Canvas.

### Session 10, November 19

#### Required Preparation
1. Jansson Ch. 13 (Troubleshooting the implementation of policies)

#### Policy implementation & policy management

#### Recommended Readings

#### Assignment (Interactional Skills)
Develop a facilitator’s agenda of a community meeting. Full description of the assignment is found on Canvas.

**Presentations begin December 3rd**, which sounds like a long time from now, but it will sneak up on you!
There is no class this week, but the readings that are due for the December 3\textsuperscript{rd} class are less technical than other readings (aka easier to read during a break), and are designed to help you prepare for your presentation. Although only a handful of you are likely actually do this 😊 I recommend that you consider reading the Heath and Koegel chapters during break.

**Session 11, December 3**

**Required Preparation**
2. Koegel, T. *The Exceptional Presenter: A Proven Formula to Open Up and Own the Room*. Austin, TX: Greenleaf, 2007. Read Chapters 4 and 5.

**Assignment (All Skills)**
½ of you will do presentations today, and the other ½ next week. Full description of assignment is found on Canvas. *If you’re reading this and are inclined to “get it over with,” you can contact me and request to give your presentation this week. For everyone else, I will randomly assign you the date, and the order of your assignment.*

**Session 12, December 10**

**Recommended Readings**


**Papers Due:** At or before 11:59pm on Sunday, December 13, 2015.