Course Syllabus

SW 825 Historical and Contemporary Issues in Social Work and Social Welfare
Fall Term 2015

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 Hallett 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
course, 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 Canvas, alphabetized by the last name of the author. The conversion from CTools to Canvas may be a bit rocky, so please let me know if there are problems!
• Primary Documents and Original Sources:
  o Brace, Charles Loring (1872). The Dangerous Classes of New York and Twenty Years of Work Among them. NY: Wynkoop & Hallenbeck, Publisher. Available online through the library. Link: http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015005251320;view=1up;seq=8
  o Addams, Jane (1910). Twenty years at Hull House with biographical notes NY: MacMillan Company. Available online through library. Link: http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015010143306;view=1up;seq=10

• The Book Essay and Discussion Reading:

Recommended Reading:
• Articles. Recommended articles are posted on Canvas. We will talk about these but these lists are primarily there for your reference.

Recommended 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, student-led class discussions on 4 major readings, and student presentations on individual original research projects. To be successful, a seminar requires the full participation of all members in all aspects of this course. This includes active and critical engagement with the assigned readings, preparation for class, and thoughtful and respectful participation in class.

Assignments and Grading: There are three assignments for this course. Detailed instructions for the second assignment will be distributed under separate cover. In brief, these assignments are:

1) “Obituary” Assignment. This will reflect 10% of your final grade. Write your own professional obituary. (If that seems to ghoulish to you, you can write your own honorary retirement speech!). In essence, it should speak to what you hope to accomplish in your professional life as social worker, researcher, scholar, teacher etc. As you situate your own
envisioned career, demonstrate that you can place your life’s work in the broader historical professional discourses that we will be discussing in class. What intellectual and/or practice “footprint” or legacy do you wish to leave on the social work profession and how might it connect to what’s already been done? (5 pages, due September 29).

2) **Book Club Discussion and Essay.** This will reflect 40% of your final grade. We will be reading four books on some aspect of social work history written by contemporary, preeminent scholars in the field. *Although all students are responsible for reading all of these books, each student will select one book for the purposes of this assignment.* (There will be several students per book). Each student is responsible for: a) writing a critical book review essay (7-8 pages); b) drafting at least 3 class discussion questions; and c) leading (a lively!) class discussion on the books (in conjunction with your classmates assigned to the same book). The critical book review essay should: provide a concise summary of the content of the book, offer a critical assessment (what was significant, what was effective, how did it enhance or inform your views about social work), links or references to other reading or literature and identify its contribution to your development as a social work scholar.

3) **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 50% of your final grade.

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES**

**Session 1 - Tuesday September 8th**

**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

“True meaning becomes synonymous with authoritative interpretations, and authoritative interpretations are based on conferred power within particular contexts.”

- Stanley Witkin

**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.

**Discussion:** Introduction to Social Welfare Policy and Why history? What evidence? What Interpretation? Where do we fit?

**Exercise:** Historic Evidence and the Hull House: “Labeling Project”

- Jane Addams, Mary Rozet Smith and The Hull-House Alternative Labeling Project.
- **Exercise:** A definitional exercise: What is social work?
Reading Required:

Canvas:


Recommend reading, if interested

• Stuart, P. Appendix B: Chronologies.

**Session 2 - Tuesday September 15th**

**The Politics of Us and Them: Inclusion/Exclusion. Settlement and Movement.**

**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.*

**Abstract:** Finding our roots: economic, religious, political, social. Is social welfare a matter of charity or an entitlement? Individual or collective responsibility? Who is entitled to what and why? What are the implications of us and them politics of inclusion, exclusion, and migration. Where should boundaries be drawn? Law of settlement, citizenship, refugees, migrant labor, migration, immigration and emigration. Worthiness and unworthiness. The role of work. Unemployment and the unemployable. Social control and social movement. The current European migrant and refugee crises and the current immigrant response in the U.S.

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

**Documents:**

• Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601
• Law of Settlement
**Required Readings:**

- 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
  - “Introduction: What is poverty?”
  - Chapter 1 “The Middle Ages: is poverty necessary?”

**Session 3 -- Tuesday September 22nd**

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

**Wealth and Redistribution & Barbara Simon Book Discussion**

*Charity is no substitute for justice withheld.*

- St Augustine


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 4 - Tuesday September 29th
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.

**“Obituary” Assignment Due**

**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:

- Stern & Axinn:
  - Chapter 2 The Colonial Period
  - 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 October 6th
Introduction to Applied Philanthropy and the Birth of Social Work Education in the Progressive Era &
Michael Reisch and Janice Andrews Book Discussion

**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, economics, and other social sciences. Professional organizations, scholarship and journals, practice. The implications of “social” in social work.

**Seminar Content:**


Required readings:

• Leighninger (book):
  - Chapter 1: *A call for action*
  - Chapter 2: *The first training schools in social work*
  - Chapter 3 *Parallel paths*
  - Chapter 4 *The relationships between social work training and the development of a profession*
  - Chapter 5 *The shape of the emerging profession of education for social work*


Recommended Reading:


**Session 6 -- Tuesday October 13th**

*Progressive Era Practice: 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. 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 CAS)

Required readings:

- Stern & Axinn: Chapter 5: Progress and Reform
- Brace, C.L (1872). The Dangerous Classes (see online holdings). Read Chapter VIII “A new Organization” pp. 84-96; and Chapter XIX “The best remedy for juvenile pauperism” pp. 223-233.
- Addams, J. (1910). Twenty years at Hull House (see online holdings). Chapter 5 The first days at Hull House pp. 89-112.

Recommended Readings:

- Wenocur, Stanley & Reisch, Michael (1989). Chapter 4 “Fashioning social work into casework”.
- Brandeis Brief (1908) from Muller v. State of Oregon.
Abstract: Finishing Up the Progressive Era: Role of science in “applied philanthropy” 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 it 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:

- Staller Lecture: The Creation and Expansion of the Welfare State

Required Readings:

- Stern & Axinn:
  - Chapter 6: The Depression and New Deal
  - Chapter 7 – War and Prosperity

Recommended Readings on Welfare State
• Nancy Rose, Discrimination Against Women in New Deal Work.
• Social Security Act of 1935.
• Turner, J.B. and Young, Whitney M. (1965). Who has the revolution or the tho Social Security Act of 1935. African American Struggle for Civil and Economic Equality.

Recommended Readings on Social Work Controversies: (You might take note of the year of publication and think about the evolution of some of these conversations).

• Witkin, Stanley L. (1996). If empirical practice is the answer, then what is the question? Social Work Research, 20 (2).

**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 November 3rd**

**Retraction of the Welfare State and Current Confusion (Affordable Care Act)**

The retraction of the welfare state: Compassionate Conservatives. The Moral Majority. The Reagan Revolution: New federalism and devolution. Return to the private sector. The Clinton years: Failed health care reform, don’t ask- don’t tell, the mid-term elections, DOMA, reforming welfare “as we know it” and SCHIP. Contract with America: The Republican agenda and blueprint. Bush mixed messages: Armies of Compassion, Faith-based initiatives, War on Terrorism, USA PATRIOT, and NCLB. Obama legacy?


The recurring health care reform debate. Prisons as mental health service providers. Revisit Dorthea Dix?

**Seminar Content:**

- *Staller Lecture:* Retraction of the Welfare State and U.S. Health Care Basics: An overview of the health insurance system

**Required Readings:**

- Stern & Axinn:
  - Chapter 8 - Conservative Resurgence and Social Change
  - Chapter 9 - Social Welfare in the Information Society
- Kaiser Foundation. Summary of the Affordable Care Act.

**Recommended Reading:**

Session 9 -- Tuesday Nov 10th

Social Movements continued & Joyce Bell Book Discussion

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).

One presentation by a student on their historical research projects

Readings: Students will suggest based on their historical research.

Recommended Reading:

Session 10 -- Tuesday Nov 17th

Three presentations by students on their historical research projects

Readings: Students will suggest based on their historical research.

Session 11 -- Tuesday Nov 24th

CLASS PRESENTATIONS ON HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Three presentations by students on their historical research projects

Readings: Students will suggest based on their historical research.

Session 12 -- Tuesday December 1st

CLASS PRESENTATIONS ON HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Three presentations by students on their historical research projects

Readings: Students will suggest based on their historical research.

Session 13-- Tuesday Dec 8th

CLASS PRESENTATIONS ON HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Three presentations by students on their historical research projects

Readings: Students will suggest based on their historical research

HAVE A GREAT BREAK!