



Course title:	Engaged Policy Development - Battling the Opioid Epidemic
Course #/term:	SW 799 Section 7, Spring/Summer 2019
Time and place:	Wednesdays 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM, Online
Credit hours:	1
Prerequisites:	None
Instructor:	Justin D. Hodge, LMSW
Pronouns:	He, his, him
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Office:	3743 SSWB
Office hours:	By appointment

1. COURSE STATEMENT

Course Description

As drug overdose deaths continue to rise, it is imperative that social workers are equipped with the skills to face this crisis, both from a micro and macro perspective. In this course, students will engage with the crisis from a policy perspective as they explore potential solutions. Students will participate in a simulation through which they will explore the role of the government in combating the opioid crisis. Examples of roles that students will take include: policymakers, policy advocates, prescribing doctors, and community stakeholders. Students will be assigned a role, will research their character, and will engage with the other participants as that character throughout the duration of the simulation.

Course Content

This course will be a good fit for students interested in expanding their understanding of the policymaking process, the role of stakeholders in that process, and the impact that advocacy groups and professionals can have in policy development. Additionally, students, both with a micro and macro focus, with an interest in substance abuse and mental health will have a particular interest in the content of the simulation.

Course Objectives

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

1. Students will gain an understanding of the policymaking process and the limits of governmental intervention.
2. Students will gain skill in exploring policy issues from a variety of perspectives and will develop persuasive arguments for a position determined for them.
3. Students will gain skill in researching policymakers and other decision makers to determine their positions on issues.

Course Design

Students will engage with each other using the online platform to develop coalitions and attempt to sway those with differing positions to their side. In addition to asynchronous communication through ViewPoint, students will engage with each other synchronously via BlueJeans video conferencing three times throughout the course. Students will be oriented to the online platform at the beginning of the course and the closing session will be used to debrief the experience.

Curricular Themes

Theme Relation to Multiculturalism & Diversity

The course will focus on working for policy change in a multicultural society, including the problems and potential of engaging in successful advocacy campaigns and the internal processes that govern policy development.

Theme Relation to Social Justice

This course provides students with a unique opportunity to explore how the policy-making process can be used to promote social justice. The specific content for this simulation focuses on the opioid crisis and the stakeholders involved in combating it. By exploring the crisis through a simulation, students both gain background knowledge on the issue as well as come to understand it from a wide range of perspectives.

Relationship to SW Ethics and Values

The NASW Code of Ethics establishes an ethical imperative for social workers to engage in social and political action on behalf of social justice and in support of the needs of diverse and disadvantaged populations. This course covers a complex array of ethical dilemmas that arise in the process of developing and enacting social policies. It will examine the ways in which the NASW Code of Ethics may be used to guide and resolve value and ethical issues. It also discusses some of the ethical issues involved in pursuing social justice through policy engagement.

2. CLASS REQUIREMENTS

Text and class materials:

Required Reading

- Canvas - Required and recommended readings are posted on Canvas.

Class schedule:

- Course schedule can be found in ViewPoint.

Grading:

Please review the MSW Student Guide policies on [Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction](#) as well as [Student Grievance procedures](#).

This course is offered satisfactory/unsatisfactory. To receive a satisfactory grade, students must fulfill the requirements of their specific role within the simulation, including engaging with other students.

Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: <https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources>. They include:

- Safety and emergency preparedness
- Mental health and well-being
- Teaching evaluations
- Proper use of names and pronouns
- Accommodations for students with disabilities
- Religious/spiritual observances
- Military deployment
- Writing skills and expectations
- Academic integrity and plagiarism