



Course title:	Introduction to Social Welfare Policies and Services	
Course #/term:	SSW 530, Section 002, Fall 2020	
Time and place:	Tuesdays 9-12, Room 1840 SSWB (or online)	
Credit hours:	3	
Instructor:	3	
Pronouns:	Kristin Seefeldt	
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	You may expect a response within 48 hours	
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Office hours:	By Appointment, see end of document for sign ups	

1. Course Statement

a. Course description

This course surveys the history of social welfare policy, services, and the social work profession. It explores current social welfare issues in the context of their history and the underlying rationale and values that support different approaches. Emphasis is placed on major fields of social work service such as: income maintenance, health care, mental health, child welfare, corrections, and services to the elderly. Analytic frameworks with regard to social welfare policies and services are presented. These frameworks identify strengths and weaknesses in the current social welfare system with respect to multiculturalism and diversity; social justice and social change; behavioral and social science theory and research; and social work relevant promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation programs and services in relations to the diverse dimensions (including ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation).

b. Course content

There are four main content areas for the course.

1. The philosophic and practical basis for social welfare provisions, including consideration of the respective roles and relationships of: the individual; the family; the community, groups, educational settings, churches, and workplaces; the nonprofit sector; the government at various geographic levels.
2. The history of the social work profession: from the altruistic philanthropist to the development of professional practice; the emergence of distinct methods of practice in their historical context; the influence of religious values, ethics, and social and political climates on the profession's development; the emergence of specific policies and programs within their historical, social and political contexts.
3. A critical analysis of current social welfare policies, and programs, nationally and cross-nationally with attention to: the strengths and weaknesses of various policies and programs; evolving population needs; the ways in which current policies and programs address promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation issues, and social justice/social change perspectives.
4. Descriptions and analyses using recent social science theory/research knowledge of major areas of social welfare provision and patterns of their delivery, including, but not limited to: services for families, children, adolescents, adults, and the aging (including income maintenance, protective services, health and mental health, corrections and criminal justice, and education) including those targeted toward promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation; and, community service programs.

c. Course objectives and competencies

This course addresses the following competencies and practice behaviors:

COMPETENCY 3—Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.

Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information. Social workers

3.1 distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom

COMPETENCY 4—Engage diversity and difference in practice.

Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers

4.1 recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power

COMPETENCY 5—Advance human rights and social and economic justice.

Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice. Social workers

5.1 understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination

5.3 engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.

COMPETENCY 6—Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.

Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers

6.2 use research evidence to inform practice.

COMPETENCY 8—Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.

Social work practitioners understand that policy affects service delivery, and they actively engage in policy practice. Social workers know the history and current structures of social policies and services; the role of policy in service delivery; and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers

8.1 analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being

COMPETENCY 9—Respond to contexts that shape practice.

Social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively. Social workers

9.1 continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services

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

1. Describe the historical basis for the current U.S. social welfare system, including the history and role of the social work profession. (Practice Behaviors 4.1, 5.1, 9.1)
2. Describe and critically analyze current social welfare policies, procedures, and programs including the role of behavioral and social science research and theory in their evolution. (Practice Behaviors 3.1, 4.1, 5.3, 9.1)
3. Discuss the strengths and limitations of the current social welfare system in terms of the functions of the provision of basic needs, protection of the vulnerable, prevention, promotion, treatment, rehabilitation, protection of society, and provision of social control. This discussion will incorporate state, national, and cross-national analyses. (Practice Behaviors 4.1, 5.1, 6.2, 9.1)
4. Describe and critically analyze major fields of social welfare service provision from a multicultural perspective, including but not limited to income security, health and mental health services, child welfare, educational practices, services to the elderly, and corrections. (Practice Behaviors 3.1, 4.1, 5.1, 6.2, 8.1, 9.1)
5. Discuss and critically analyze current debates, trends, and ethical issues in each specific field of service presented in the course including the implications for

social work practice and promoting social justice and social change. (Practice Behaviors 4.1, 5.1, 5.3, 6.2, 8.1, 9.1)

d. Course design

It is anticipated that the multiple sections of this course will be coordinated and lectures, assignments, readings, class exercises, and examinations will be shared across instructors. Various classroom teaching strategies may be used, including lecture, multimedia presentations, video documentaries, small and large group discussion, and presentations by students and guest lecturers.

e. Curricular themes

Theme Relation to Multiculturalism & Diversity:

The course examines how the diverse dimensions (such as ability, age, class, color, 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 influence their perspectives of and experiences with social welfare policies and practices. Specific fields of service are critically analyzed from multicultural, historical, and/or cross-national perspectives.

Theme Relation to Social Justice:	The course critically analyzes current trends and ethical issues and their implications for promoting social justice and social change.
Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation:	The course gives attention to the ways in which current policies and programs address promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.
Theme Relation to Behavioral and Social Science Research:	Analytic frameworks drawn from behavioral and social science literature and research are presented for each field of service.

f. Relationship to social work ethics and values

The historical overview in this course includes an analysis of the value base of the profession. Ethical responsibilities of social workers within fields of service will be reviewed. Differences among codes of ethics for several social work professional organizations will also be explored.

g. Intensive focus on PODS

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 developing 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.

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials

All of the materials you will need for class will be under the corresponding “**Module**” in Canvas. These are labeled by week (e.g., week 2) and by date (e.g. September 8). You will notice up to 3 different categories:

Read this: Click on this to find the required readings for the week

Watch this: Click on this for any videos to watch (sometimes it will be a podcast)

Activities: Click on this for the activities for the week

Please note that while every week except the first will have at least one reading, there may not always be videos and/or activities. I’m still curating videos and podcasts, so later in the term you’ll see “TBD,” meaning that the selection is still to be determined. However, any new material will be posted in the Canvas module at least a week before it is due.

Additionally, any powerpoints I use during class will be posted under “Read this.”

****Important notes about assigned readings, videos, and activities****

1. With the exception of the first week, students are required to complete the readings, watch the videos, and do the activity prior to each week’s class.

2. The readings and videos reflect a diverse array of perspectives, including historical perspectives. Due to the age of some documents, language used may not be current. You may find some ideas expressed in certain readings to be controversial and not reflective of social work values. However, these ideas are part of the current political discourse in the United States, and as social workers, you need to be aware of these positions so that you are able to be a better advocate.
3. We may not always discuss each reading in class; however, each student is responsible for the material covered by the readings. Students will need to draw upon the readings in order to complete the final exam.

Important, Supplementary Media

1. The best way to keep current on policy issues is to regularly read a major newspaper, such as the *New York Times* (www.nytimes.com) or *The Washington Post* (www.washingtonpost.com). *The Wall Street Journal*, although focused on business issues, often has very good feature articles on domestic policy. As with all newspapers, one should be careful to distinguish between the news reports and the editorial commentary.
 - a. The **NYT** also offers a student discount rate on student subscriptions to hard copy editions, and it's also accessible (with a day delay) through the library.
 - b. A limited number of articles per month in the Washington Post can be freely accessed, and this paper covers the Congressional issues with great detail.
2. News reports and feature shows (such as on MSNBC, CNN or ABC Nightline) are another source of information about current policy issues. The PBS News Hour on Public Television is an excellent source of more in-depth discussion of ongoing and emerging policy issues.

Additional Recommended Media

- Local Newspapers (Ann Arbor, Detroit);
- CNN News and Policy discussions;
- "All Things Considered" and/or "Morning Edition" on National Public Radio. This can be accessed locally via WKAR-FM (90.5) or WUOM-FM (91.7).
- Evening Network News - (CBS, ABC, NBC).

b. Class schedule

As of this writing, our class is scheduled to meet in person on the following days:

- September 8
- September 29
- October 20
- November 9

It's up to you if you want to attend in person. My understanding is that you will be able to join the classroom via Zoom (each week there will be a Zoom link in Canvas and you should get an invite as well). And, all in-person sessions are subject to going online should conditions with the pandemic change. In sum, you can always attend via Zoom.

Class	Agenda	Required Readings, Video, Activities
Week 1 September 1	Introduction and course overview ; allocation exercise	Readings: None Watch: Intro video Activity: Allocation exercise
Week 2 September 8 MEET IN ROOM 1840	U.S. Federal Budget and Taxes In this session we'll explore and demystify the federal budget and income taxes. Both are integral for promoting social justice, providing social services, and tackling (or not) inequality. Yet, particularly in recent years, both are the source of political fights and public disgruntlement. We'll also look at state and local budgets and place the U.S. in a comparative context.	Readings: Staller, "Federal and state budget basics for social workers: Social welfare impact and social justice implications" Watch: Budget video Activity: Play Fiscal Ship
Week 3 September 15	Understanding the Foundations of Government: We will look at the U.S. Constitution as an historical document and a living document. What does the "historic" Constitution say about inclusion and exclusion? How does the "living" Constitution relate to social welfare policy? How was political power structured? We will consider government	Read: United States Constitution Amendments to the Constitution Elliott and Hughes "A Brief History of Slavery That you Didn't Learn in School" Video: None Activity: Global constitutions

Class	Agenda	Required Readings, Video, Activities
	<p>structure (federal, state, local), hierarchal nature of policy (statutes, regulations, rules, etc.) and different types of policy (Constitutional, judicial, legislative, executive). Pay attention to federalism, the enumerated powers clauses and reserve powers amendment, the general welfare clause, voting rights amendments, and the roots (and legacy) of structural racism.</p>	
<p>Week 4 September 22</p>	<p>Social Welfare in Historical Context</p> <p>Where do our current conceptions of deservingness come from? Who should be responsible for providing assistance? These notions evolve over time, although certain themes remain constant. We begin exploring these and related questions by examining social welfare “service delivery” from the poorhouse through the Progressive era and the various state and federal policies that shaped and still maintain inequality. The end of this time period also marks the beginnings the social work as a profession.</p>	<p>Read: Carlton-LeNay. “African American Social Welfare History”</p> <p>Reisch, U.S. Social Policy and Social Welfare: A Historical Overview. Read pages 53-72</p> <p>Watch: Beliefs, Myths, and Values</p> <p>Activity: In class</p>
<p>Week 5 September 29 MEET IN ROOM 1840</p>	<p>Social Welfare in Historical Context, Continued</p> <p>The Great Depression of the 1930s marked the largest</p>	<p>Read: Staller document</p> <p>Reisch, U.S. Social Policy and Social Welfare: A Historical Overview. Read</p>

Class	Agenda	Required Readings, Video, Activities
	<p>economic catastrophe in U.S. history. But from that event came the establishment of the welfare state, as well as various programs intended to provide immediate relief from the Depression. Yet even with the expansion of the welfare state, certain groups continued to be excluded</p>	<p>pages 72-79.</p> <p>Watch: Major Social Welfare Programs</p> <p>Activity: In class</p>
<p>Week 6 October 6</p>	<p>The Intersection of Immigration and Social Welfare: Historical Roots and Contemporary Debates</p> <p>Debates about immigration and related policies provide an exemplary case to bridge history with current day events. How has the U.S. responded to new arrivals? How has and does that response vary by race, ethnicity, and country of origin? In what ways do current debates reflect long-standing biases and prejudices?</p>	<p>Read: Betten, N. &Mohl, R.A. "From Discrimination to Repatriation: Mexican Life in Gary, Indiana, During the Great Depression"</p> <p>Watch: The Chinese Exclusion Act</p> <p>Activity: TBD</p>
<p>Week 7 October 13</p>	<p>Poverty and Inequality-Measuring and "Fighting"</p> <p>Poverty is a concept that is widely discussed but its meaning and how to address it is hotly contested. In this session we'll look at various ways to conceptualize poverty</p>	<p>Read: Matthews, Dylan. 2014. "Everything You Need to Know about the War on Poverty." <i>Washington Post</i>. Cassidy, J. (2014) "Picketty's Inequality Story in Six Charts."</p> <p>Watch: Poverty and Inequality</p>

Class	Agenda	Required Readings, Video, Activities
	and its causes as well as a closely related concept- income inequality. This session will also highlight the U.S.'s War on Poverty, a concerted set of policies and services to ameliorate poverty. Did we win this war?	Activity: Re-working the Poverty Line
Week 8 October 20 MEET IN ROOM 1840	Issue Analysis in-class exercise	To be assigned
Week 9 October 27	The Safety Net Today- Contraction of the Welfare State If the 1935 Social Security Act marked the expansion of the U.S. welfare state, the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity moved the country away from guarantees of benefits and toward state and local responsibility and discretion in providing assistance. What are some of the ramifications? And in what ways has the public assistance always been difficult to navigate?	Read: Seefeldt (2016), <i>Abandoned Families</i> , Chapter 5 Edin, Kathryn and H. Luke Shaefer. (2015). "Welfare is Dead," (Canvas) <i>America</i> . New York: Houghton Mifflin. Video: TBD Activity: Michigan Application for Assistance
Week 10 November 3	Election issues- Class meeting optional	Material to be determined by class interest

Class	Agenda	Required Readings, Video, Activities
<p>Week 11 November 10 MEET IN ROOM 1840</p> <p>Discussion Question Week</p>	<p>Housing, Wealth, and the Wealth Gap</p> <p>Slavery, Jim Crow, and financial and housing policies have all established and continue to maintain large racial wealth disparities. Why does this matter, and what can be done?</p>	<p>Read: <i>Abandoned Families</i>, Chapter 6</p> <p>Watch: Elliot video</p> <p>Activity: TBD</p>
<p>November 24</p>	<p>NO CLASS- BREAK</p>	
<p>Week 12 December 3</p> <p>Discussion Question Week</p>	<p>The Complex Welfare State: Health Care as a Case Study</p> <p>The U.S. is the only highly industrialized country that does not provide universal health insurance to its citizen. How did that come to be, and how does that relate to other themes we have explored during the semester (e.g., federalism, “deservingness,” racial discrimination, othering of immigrants and LGBTQIA+ individuals, etc).</p>	<p>Read: Michener, “Federalism, Health Care, and Inequality.”</p> <p>Kurzweil, (2014). “Justice is What Love Looks Like in Public:’ How the Affordable Care Act Falls Short on Transgender Health Care Access.”</p> <p>Watch: TBD</p> <p>Activity: TBD</p>

Class	Agenda	Required Readings, Video, Activities
Session 13 December 10	The Ongoing Struggle for Equality and Civil Rights: Social Movements and Social Policy	Read: Staller document Cooper, "Native American Activism: 1960s to Present" Watch: TBD Activity: TBD

c. Assignments

You have four assignments:

Policy worksheet

You will answer specific questions around a particular, current policy debate. A separate handout details this assignment and will be available under the "Syllabus, Assignments and Other Administrative Materials." Upload the assignment to Canvas before class on **October 13**. If you need assistance with writing, please consult the SSW's writing help website: ssw.umich.edu/writing-help

Discussion questions

Twice during the semester you must submit a discussion question for us to consider. The question must be related to the readings and topic covered that week and should promote thoughtful discussion (e.g., it should not be a question that one could answer with a factual statement). You have six dates to choose from: **9/5; 9/22; 10/6; 10/27; 11/10; 12/3**. The question will be graded pass/no pass. Submit the question under the relevant week's "Discussion" tab on Canvas.

Issue Analysis

The "Issue Analysis" assignment will be completed in class on October 20. It is a group activity and will be graded pass/no pass. Students who miss class that day must complete a make-up assignment.

Final Exam

The final is a take-home exam consisting of short answers essays, covering material in readings and emphasized in class lectures, handouts and discussion. It will review material from the whole semester and there will be choices in which essays you answer. The exam will be distributed on December 3 and due December 13, uploaded via Canvas.

Assignments and Due Dates

Policy Worksheet	30% of grade	October 13 at beginning of class; submitted via Canvas
2 Discussion Questions	15% of grade (together)	September 5, 22/October 6, 27/November 10/December 3 (pick 2)
Issue Analysis	20% of grade	October 20 in class
Final exam	35% of grade	December 13 by 5pm; submit via Canvas

d. Attendance and class participation

Learning takes place when you can engage with the material, and part of that engagement occurs in discussions with each other. Missing class deprives you of this opportunity and also affects your colleagues when they are not able to learn from you, so please attend as much as you possibly can. Additionally, it will be difficult to pass the final exam unless you attend and participate in class.

Participation in class can take many forms. I realize that not everyone is comfortable speaking in a larger group; if you can, please try. But there will be ample opportunity to participate in smaller group discussions.

I hope that all students will work with me to create and foster a learning environment that promotes professional socialization, respectfulness, and broadens our mutual awareness of human differences and diversity. Students will be encouraged in this class to examine how the structure of our current social welfare systems evolved from and still reflects biases and negative beliefs about certain populations. Questioning and disagreeing are all part of the learning process, and I would encourage all students to engage in these activities with thoughtfulness and respect.

The School's [Policy on Class Attendance](#) can be found in the MSW Student Guide.

e. Grading

The criteria for each grade are as follows:

A+, A, A- Superlative mastery of subject content, demonstration of critical analysis, creativity and/or complexity in completion of assignment. The difference between A and A- is based on the degree to which excellence in these skills are demonstrated.

B+ Mastery of subject content beyond expected competency, but has not demonstrated additional critical analysis, creativity or complexity in the completion of the assignment.

B Mastery of subject content at level of expected competency – meets course expectations

B- Less than adequate competency but demonstrates student learning and potential for mastery of subject content.

C or C- Demonstrates a minimal understanding of subject content. Significant areas needing improvement to meet course requirements.

F Student has failed to demonstrate minimal understanding of subject content.

I grade all papers anonymously. I download them all at once and grade randomly. Put only your student identification number on your submitted work. After I have read and graded all the papers and exams, I will determine which paper belongs to whom. If you want me to read drafts I generally am able to do so but know that you may give up anonymity. Having me provide feedback on a draft is not a guarantee of an “A” (or any other grade).

Late work will **not** be penalized provided you have communicated with me in advance about an alternative due date. However, it is to your benefit to turn in assignments when they are due, since you’ll only accumulate more work as the semester continues.

Written work will be evaluated in relation to how well it addresses the topic and the clarity of presentation. It is important to follow assignment instructions carefully and to read and re-read work before turning it in. If possible, you should have someone who is unfamiliar with your subject read your paper before you submit it. Ask them to read for clarity of your writing, if you omitted a word or phrase, or if you used the wrong word. Spell checkers and grammar checkers are useful, but not as reliable as a human reader.

Students are expected to avoid “language that might imply sexual, ethnic, or other kinds of discrimination, stereotyping, or bias.” (*Health and Social Work*, 11:3, Summer 1986.)

Challenges to any grade must be in writing (not verbal); must be specific and must be based on substantive arguments not on nebulous references to “fairness.” The instructor reserves the right to re-read, and re-grade, the work in its entirety in the case of a challenge. The grade may be adjusted up or down.

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*

Contacting me/Office hours

Email is the easiest way to reach me. In your subject line, please put “SSW 530” and then I will easily see it so that I can answer promptly.

The telephone number listed on the first page is my office phone- if you leave a message there I will get an alert on my email.

Office hours will be remote this year. All of you have access to sign up via my Google calendar. To sign up, go to this link:

<https://calendar.google.com/calendar/selfsched?sstoken=UUdpd3hqQ1pqaHU1fGRIZmF1bHR8YjktZmVkm2UzZmE3N2I0YzAyMjY1NDfkN2U3ODE>

You will be able to see the time slots that I’m available to meet. Pick one and hit save.

The appointment link is also on the front page of the course’s Canvas site. I’d love to get to know all of you, so feel free to sign up even if it’s just to chat!