



Course title:	Theories and Principles of Socially Just Policies	
Course #/term:	SW 638 002, Winter 2021	
Time and place:	Tuesdays, 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM	
Credit hours:	3	
Prerequisites:	Foundation Essentials	
Instructor:	Justin D. Hodge, LMSW-Clinical and Macro	
Pronouns:	He/him/his	
Contact info:	Email: hodjusti@umich.edu	Phone: 734-325-9136
	You may expect a response within 48 hours (unless otherwise noted)	
Office:	3743	
Office hours:	Schedule directly here or email to find a time	

1. Course Statement

a. Course description

In this course, students will be exposed to various theoretical frameworks informing policy development, delve deeply into the role of different institutional actors in the policy process, and gain an understanding of basic economic principles frequently employed in policy debates and discussions. With this knowledge, students will be able to identify, in a more sophisticated and nuanced way, policies that promote social justice and those that do not; understand how certain theoretical frameworks and ideas have been used to oppress and to empower different groups, and identify points of interventions within existing institutions.

This course will cover different concepts of justice, fairness, and equity as they apply to public policy, including Rawls' theory of justice. Students will also interrogate ideas about neoliberalism through an introduction to concepts from economic theory that often used to promote or thwart the development of certain policies. This includes the concepts of supply and demand; market failure; and public goods. Finally, drawing upon various theories of justice, students will examine processes that can be used to promote socially just policy making.

b. Course objectives and competencies

In this course, students will learn how to:

- Identify how economic theories inform public policy debates and describe the consequences for social justice
- Understand the basic nature of supply and demand, markets, public goods, and other economic concepts;
- Describe and identify various theoretical frameworks of social justice and how they relate to public policy;
- Identify and explain processes that would promote socially just policy making;
- Apply the principles of social justice to critically analyze public policies;
- Determine opportunities to advance social justice within existing political and policy institutions;

c. Course design

This course will use multiple methods including but not limited to: lectures, case studies, readings, guest speakers, discussions, written assignments, individual and group exercises. The course will be offered primarily in person, although occasionally materials may be presented online.

d. 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.

This course encourages students to develop critical thinking skills so that they can understand the ways in which various economic and political theories are used in the policy process and how those frameworks can promote social justice or can oppress individuals and groups (Critical Contextual Thinking; Critical Awareness). Students will use principles of social justice to examine current public policy debates and to interrogate various institutions and economic models (Critical Contextual Thinking; Critical Awareness; Conflict, Dialog, and Community). Using knowledge gained in the course, students will be able to identify points of interventions within existing institutions to promote socially just policies (Actions Toward Social Justice Vision).

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials

All materials will be provided on Canvas. In order for us to have in-depth and meaningful discussions, students are expected to come to class having read the assigned material. Some of the readings are dense and contain ideas about which you may be unfamiliar- just try your best and come to class with lots of questions!

b. Class schedule

Date/Time	Agenda	Required Readings & Videos
Session 1 January 19	What do we mean by "socially just" in the context of public policy? What are your criteria for "justness?"	Read This: Syllabus "The Social Justice Case for Cancelling Student Debt"
Session 2 January 26	Overview of Western theories informing public policy: utilitarianism; Rawls' principles; libertarianism; others	Read This: Wolff, "Social Justice and Public Policy: A View from Political Philosophy" Rawls, "A Theory of Justice" (excerpt)
Session 3 February 2	Understanding economic theory. Efforts to promote social justice are often constrained or hampered by economic systems. Moreover, public policy in much of the Western world is deeply influenced by economic theory.	Read This: Wheelen, "The Power of Markets" Friedman, "Capitalism and Freedom" (excerpt)

	We'll spend 2 sessions examining some of the fundamental principles of microeconomics.	
Session 4 February 9	Alternative Economic Views Modern Monetary Theory (MMT) and Stratification Economics are two alternative views of macro and micro economic functioning- do these views do a better job of promoting social justice?	Read This: "What if the Federal Deficit Actually Didn't Matter?" Watch This: Interview with Darrick Hamilton
Session 5 February 16	Human rights and the capabilities approaches What are the strengths and weaknesses of a human rights-based approach to public policy? How can the capabilities approach be translated into policy?	Read This: United Nations Declaration of Human Rights Batliwala, "When Rights go Wrong" Sen, <i>Development as Freedom</i> , intro and chapter 1
Session 6 February 23	Anti-colonial thought and social justice	Read This: Fanon, <i>The Wretched of the Earth</i> , chapter 1 Bassett, "No Justice, No Health" Watch This: The Black Panthers and Social Policy
Session 7 March 2	Pedagogy of the Oppressed and Policy	Read This: Freire, <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> , chapters 2 & 4 Watch This: Theater of the Oppressed NYC

<p>Session 8 March 9</p>	<p>Feminist Thought and Policy</p>	<p>Read This: Gender Budgeting</p> <p>Parker West, “Soccer Moms, Welfare Queens, Waitress Moms, and Super Moms: Myths of Motherhood in State Media Coverage of Child Care during the Welfare Reforms of the 1990s” Preview the document</p>
<p>Session 9 March 16</p>	<p>Queer Theory and Policy</p>	<p>Read This: “Queer Theory” Preview the document</p> <p>What About the Rest of Us An Overview of LGBT Poverty Issues and a Call to Action.pdf Preview the document</p>
<p>March 23: Well-being break</p>	<p>No class</p>	
<p>Session 10 March 30</p>	<p>Visioning Just Policies</p>	<p>Read This: Dreaming Beyond Capitalism: A Culture Without Fear (Links to an external site.)</p> <p>To Build a Future Without Police and Prisons, We Have to Imagine It First (Links to an external site.)</p> <p>Centering Blackness: The Path to Economic Liberation for All</p>
<p>Session 11</p>	<p>Transformative Policy</p>	<p>Read This: Real Utopias I</p>

April 6	Processes	Social Empowerment and the State Preview the document
Session 12 April 13	Class presentations/ discussions on final projects	
Session 13 April 20	Class presentations/ discussions on final projects	

c. Assignments

Assignment instructions are posted on Canvas in the “Assignments” section. All assignments are due by 11:59 PM on the dates listed.

Assignment	Due date	Percent of overall grade
Introduce Yourself	2/1/2021	10%
Apply Theory To Current Events	2/16/2021 3/9/2021 3/21/2021	20% each
Proposal for a Socially Just Policy	4/25/2021	30%

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- and this is a discussion heavy course. Missing class deprives you of this opportunity and also affects your colleagues when they are not able to learn from you. Student attendance is therefore expected at every class session, but I also understand that you may need to miss class, or that unexpected circumstances, such as internet outages, will occur. I will record class lectures, and I urge you to contact me directly if you’ve had to miss class so that we can work together to make sure you have all the necessary material covered.

e. Grading

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

Final grades will be determined on the basis of performance. Letter grades will be allocated as follows:

100+	A+	77-79	C+
93-100	A	73-76	C
90-92	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-66	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-
		<60	E

f. Class Recording and Course Materials

Audio and video recording of in-class lectures and discussions is prohibited without the advance written permission of the instructor. Students with an approved accommodation from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities permitting the recording of class meetings must present documentation to the instructor in advance of any recording being done. The instructor reserves the right to disallow recording for a portion of any class time where privacy is a special concern. If the instructor chooses to record a class, they will decide which classes, if any, are recorded, what portion of each class is recorded, and whether a recording is made available on the course management website. On days when classes are recorded, students will be notified a recording is occurring. Class recordings and course materials may not be reproduced, sold, published or distributed to others, in whole or in part, without the written consent of the instructor.]

g. COVID-19 Statement

For the safety of all students, faculty, and staff on campus, it is important for each of us to be mindful of safety measures that have been put in place for our protection. By returning to campus, you have acknowledged your responsibility for protecting the collective health of our community. Your participation in this course on an in-person/hybrid basis is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University, including maintaining physical distancing of six feet from others, and properly wearing a face covering in class. Other applicable safety measures may be described in the [Wolverine Culture of Care](#) and the [University's Face Covering Policy for COVID-19](#). Your ability to participate in this course in-person/hybrid may be impacted by failure to comply with campus safety

measures. Individuals seeking to request an accommodation related to the face covering requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the [Office for Institutional Equity](#). If you are unable or unwilling to adhere to these safety measures while in a face-to-face class setting, you will be required to participate on a remote basis. I also encourage you to review the [Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) and the [COVID-related Addendum to the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

h. Health-Related Class Absences

Please evaluate your own health status regularly and refrain from attending class and coming to campus if you are ill. You are encouraged to seek appropriate medical attention for treatment. School of Social Work students who miss class due to illness of any kind will be given opportunities to access course materials online or provided with alternative learning opportunities. Please notify me by email about your absence as soon as practical, so that I can make accommodations. Please note that documentation (a doctor's note) for medical excuses is *not* required.

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*