



Course title:	Political Social Work	
Course #/term:	SSW 640 001, Winter 2021	
Time and place:	Tuesdays, 9:00 AM - 12:00 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

This course will introduce students to political social work, which is social work practice, theory, and research that focuses on the use of policy and politics to create social change. Students will gain an understanding of how politics impacts their lives as well as the lives of those served by social workers on both a micro and macro level. This course will prepare students for work in political settings, such as on advocacy and electoral campaigns, as staff for elected officials, and running for office themselves. Students will develop practice skills for policy advocacy and engaging with policymakers, influencing policy agendas, and empowering clients to become politically engaged. Students will critically examine the role of social workers in politics throughout history and the ethics that govern practice in political settings. Finally, students will develop a political engagement plan to facilitate their continued involvement.

b. Course objectives and competencies

In this course, students will learn how to:

- Describe the history of political social work and the field's engagement in social and political action;

- Describe political social work theories and current research;
- Identify the five domains of political social work and strategies to make change in a variety of practice settings;
- Apply social work research-practice, engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation skills to political settings;
- Describe the ethical responsibility of social workers to engage in political social work and explore methods to manage ethical dilemmas;
- Develop skills to engage in electoral, advocacy, and voter engagement campaigns;
- Identify strategies and skills to facilitate discussion across political divides;
- Apply skills for political engagement to advance social, economic, and environmental justice;
- Explore careers in political social work and develop a personal plan for engagement

c. Course design

This course will use multiple methods including but not limited to: lectures, demonstrations, case studies, readings, guest speakers, discussions, written assignments, individual and group exercises. The course will be offered primarily in person with the possibility of a flipped-class or hybrid structure.

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.

Issues related to privilege, oppression, diversity, and social justice will be explored through a political lens. This course will focus on providing students with the tools to advance social justice through engagement in policy and politics. Students will gain skills to engage marginalized groups and those typically excluded from the political process in making change in their communities.

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials

All materials will be provided on Canvas. Students are expected to have completed all assigned readings prior to class. Readings may be changed due to visits by guest lecturers, special circumstances, and student needs. I will aim to make any changes to readings two weeks in advance.

b. Class schedule

Date/Time	Agenda
Session 1 January 19	Social Work & Politics
Session 2 January 26	History, Theory, & Research
Session 3 February 2	Power & Strategy
Session 4 February 9	Ethics
Session 5 February 16	Engaging Individuals and Communities in Political Processes
Session 6 February 23	Voting Rights
Session 7 March 2	Influencing Policy Agendas and Decision-making
Session 8 March 9	Engaging with Political Parties
Session 9 March 16	Holding Professional and Political Staff Positions
March 23: Well-being break	No class

Session 10 March 30	Engaging with Electoral Campaigns (Candidates)
Session 11 April 6	Engaging with Electoral Campaigns (Ballot Initiatives)
Session 12 April 13	Seeking and Holding Elected Office
Session 13 April 20	Wrap-up

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
Your Political Social Work Past	2/1/2021	20%
Your Political Social Work Present	Part 1: 2/15/2021 Part 2: 3/8/2021 Part 3: 3/22/2021	20% each
Your Political Social Work Future	4/19/2021	20%

d. Attendance and class participation

Both class attendance and active purposeful participation in class discussion and activities are paramount for the successful completion of this course. This course covers a content domain that is extensive, and given the time framework of the course each class moves quickly in discussing information.

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*