

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the University of Michigan, named for Michigami, the world's largest freshwater system and located in the Huron River watershed, was formed and has grown through connections with the land stewarded by Niswi Ishkodewan Anishinaabeg: The Three Fires People who are Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi along with their neighbours the Seneca, Delaware, Shawnee and Wyandot nations.

Legacies

As we live and learn on these territories, we must keep in mind the community struggles for self-determination and colonial legacies of scholarly practices. I use community struggles broadly to include indigenous peoples, enslaved peoples, and those peoples of the Mexico-Republic of Texas territories. I use colonial legacies to reflect our existing social structures, institutions, systems, and policies built from colonial domination.



Course Syllabus

Course Title:	Essentials of Social Welfare Policy
Course #/Term:	SW 508 (Section 12), Fall 2021
Time and Place:	Thursday 6:00pm-9:00pm
Credit Hours:	3
Prerequisites:	None
Instructor:	Rita Xiaochen Hu, MSW
Pronouns:	She, her, hers
Contact Information:	rxhu@umich.edu (expect response within 48 hours)
Office Hours:	By Appointment (zoom or in-person)
Office:	B660 SSWB

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 support, health care, mental health, 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 relation to 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).

a. Course objectives and competencies

- Understand historical context and its current applications within the profession and practice (Essential 6, EPAS 7)
- Recognize power dynamics; ensure voices are included (Essential 14; EPAS 6)
- Understanding the current legislative processes (Essential 28; EPAS 2)
- Assess strategies to advocate for social, economic and environmental justice and change, while protecting human rights (Essential 29; EPAS 2, 3)
- Recognize the extent to which structures, policies and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, create or enhance privilege and power (Essential 30; EPAS 1, 2, 5)

- Analyse policies that advance human rights and social, economic and/or environmental justice (Essential 34; EPAS 5)
- Understand the history of social work practice and social welfare delivery systems and current applications within the profession (including inherent ambiguity) (Essential 39; EPAS 1, 5)
- Understand major social welfare policy domains (eg: health, immigration, income support) (Essential 39; EPAS 1,5)
- Understand frameworks of ethical decision making and how to apply critical thinking to those frameworks in the social welfare policy arena (Essential 44; EPAS 1, 5)

Course Design

The course will utilize a combination of lectures, discussion, and in-class exercises. 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.

Intensive Focus on PODS

This course integrates Privilege, Oppression, Social Justice, and Diversity (P.O.D.S.) 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 P.O.D.S. learning.

Additional Resources

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*

Proper Use of Names and Pronouns

All students will be referred to by the names and pronouns they use (e.g. she, they, ze, he). If you have a name that differs from the one that appears on the roster, please inform the instructor as soon as possible so that I can use your correct name and pronouns.

Communication

Email is the best way to reach me if you have any questions regarding course requirements and content or to schedule a one-on-one meeting. You can expect a response from my within 48 hours. While drafting your email, please include “[SW508]” in the subject line. Including the course number in the subject line will help me to identify and prioritize your email. Also, please include your first and last name at the end of your email.

Anonymous feedback is a great place for you to share any comments you have about the class. You can share your thoughts about the class climate (including your fellow classmates and the instructor), my ways of teaching, and/or how you think I can best meet your needs and engage you during our class. However, it is not a place for you to post questions you have about the course. Here < <https://forms.gle/EyCr4Fen9UP626w78> > is the link to the feedback form.

To protect your privacy, your email address will not be collected upon submitting the feedback. I encourage you to leave constructive feedback and please use appropriate language. I will check the form once a week and report back to the class if there is any feedback.

Canvas. “SW 508 012 FA 2021” gives you access to all the course-related links and materials. I will use “Announcements” to communicate with all the class members. You can use “Chat” or “Discussion” if you want to communicate with other class members.

Updated 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. Your participation in this course is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University, including properly wearing a face covering in class and compliance with the University COVID-19 Vaccination Policy. Other applicable and additional safety measures may be described in the Campus Maize & Blueprint. Your ability to participate in this course 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 and those seeking an exemption related to the vaccination requirement should submit an exemption request through WolverineAccess. 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.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS FALL 2021

Course Modules

- Each module consists of three components:
 - **Pre-class** — complete prior to each class
 - **Read** — reading
 - **Watch/Listen** — videos or podcast materials
 - **During-class** — complete during each class
 - **Activity Worksheet** — worksheets or activities you take notes on during the class. *These are due at the end of each class.*
 - **Post-class**
 - **Lecture Materials** — slides and/or lecture notes
 - **Supplemental (Extra) Material** — not required materials that offer further information on the topic. They can be readings, podcasts, videos, websites, etc.
 - “Important Course Documents” Module
 - This module will include all the documents that are relevant throughout the course. You will be able to find the most up-to-date course syllabus, policy worksheet assignment instruction, library resources under this module.

Non-Module Course Materials

- **News Media**
 - The best way to keep current on policy issues is to regularly read, watch and/or listen to legitimate sources of news coverage. Be careful to distinguish between news reports and editorial commentary or opinion pieces. Recommended media sources include:
 - National/International news: Newspapers. The *New York Times* (NYT) (www.nytimes.com), The *Washington Post* (www.washingtonpost.com), The *Los Angeles Times*, The *Wall Street Journal* etc.. All of these newspapers are available free to students if you log onto the university **library** website. Note my final exam questions will be drawn primarily from articles from these publications.
 - Online news magazines: The *Atlantic Monthly*, The *Weekly Standard*, *Time*, the *Economist*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *National Review*, *The New Republic* etc.
 - Other sources. The *PBS NewsHour*, *National Public Radio*, *MSNBC*, *CNN*, *ABC Nightline*, *BBC*, *Al Jazeera*, etc. The *NewsHour* is online at www.Pbs.org/newshour/ and has extensive links to additional material. *National Public Radio* is also readily available online. This can be accessed locally via WKAR-FM (90.5) or WUOM-FM (91.7) or online.

- Local News (Detroit Free Press; Michigan, Ann Arbor) Mlive.com
<http://www.mlive.com/#/0>
- **Recommended (but not required) Textbooks.** These are excellent sources for an overview of material.
 - Reisch, Michael (Ed). *Social Policy and Social Justice: Meeting the challenges of the diverse society*. 3rd Edition Cognella Publishers.
 - Stern, Mark J. (2015). *Engaging Social Welfare: An introduction to policy analysis*. New York: Pearson Education, Inc. ISBN-13: 978-0-205-73067-4 (any format). Used copies of Stern abound.
 - Schiele, Jerome (Ed.) *Social Welfare Policy: Regulation and Resistance Among People of Color*. Thousand Oaks: Sage
 - DiNitto D. & Johnson, D. (2016). *Social welfare: Politics and Public policy* (8th ed.). Pearson.

Important notes about assigned readings and media

The readings 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.

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.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

- 1) **Attendance and Participation (10%).** Students are expected to attend all sessions. If you have to miss one, please notify the instructor before the session by email. Participations can be in many forms including but not limited to small group discussions, class-wide discussions, asking questions, bringing in current events, coming to office hours, etc.
- 2) **Activity Worksheets (30%).** Weekly (a few are in-class activities) but there are 13 required assignments. They are designed as **worksheets** which apply the content knowledge covered in the readings. Each of these assignments is worth a maximum of 5 points (60 points). Points will be awarded to you as an individual for **uploading a thoughtful and fully completed worksheet to Canvas by the end of each class (Thursday, by 11:59pm)**. Points will be deducted for late or incomplete assignments. These worksheets will be the basis for discussion during breakout sessions during class. Together these weekly assignments constituted **40% of your final grade**.

- 3) **Policy Worksheet (30%).** You will find the policy worksheet instructions under the “Important Course Documents” module. The Policy Worksheet activity will take more time to complete than the Activity Worksheets so start early. This will be graded by the instructor. **Due at 11:59pm on November 11.**
- 4) **Final Take-home Exam (30%)-** The final “take-home” exam is in essay question format. Questions will be inspired by current news. The exam is NOT a current events test but rather will involve placing current events in political and/or historical context in light of material covered, (and emphasized), in class and/or in reading assignments. Questions are much like the Activity Worksheets. The exam will be comprehensive. Samples of old final exams are available on the Canvas site. However, in reviewing old exams remember that the content of this course is dictated, to some extent, by current public discussions on social policy issues. Don’t be concerned if you see issues in old exams that we have not covered this semester.
- **Final Distributed in class on Dec 9**
 - **Due: Friday, December 17th by 5:00 pm.**

The **criteria** for each grade are as follows:

- | | |
|---------|---|
| A range | Mastery of subject content, demonstration of critical analysis, creativity and/or complexity in completion of assignment. The difference between A+, A, and A- is based on the degree to which 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. |

Notes on Grading:

1. It is best not to assume you will receive an “A” in this course. The instructor grades on a relative, not absolute, grading scale. Since virtually all of you were “A” students as undergraduates there will be a natural and necessary redistribution at the graduate level.
2. In general, I do accept challenges to grades. However, challenges 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.

Course Environments. 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 may still reflect, 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.

General Expectations for Written Work. 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, age or other kinds of discrimination, stereotyping or bias” (*Health and Social Work, 11:3, Summer 1986*)

Plagiarism. W Representing someone else’s words, statements, ideas or works as one’s own without proper acknowledgement or citation — is a serious violation of academic integrity and will be grounds for failure on an assignment and other disciplinary action as described under the School’s policies on academic and professional conduct:

Section 1.12.00: Violations of the Code of Academic and Professional Conduct | University of Michigan School of Social Work (umich.edu)

Writing Support. Social work students can receive individual writing assistance from Betsy Williams, Writing Skills and Study Skills Coordinator, through the **U-M SSW Career Services office**. Students may schedule an appointment and supply a draft of their paper (at any stage). Email Betsy Williams at betsywil@umich.edu or call 734-647-6081 to leave a message . You can find helpful resources on writing linked from ssw.umich.edu/writing-help

In addition, the **Sweetland Writing Center** offers graduate students up to seven sessions per semester. They can help you develop your argument, improve your paper organization, correct grammar, and craft effective prose. You can register with them on line and schedule a virtual appointment at <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/>

And the **English Language Institute** focuses on serving international students: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/eli>

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I want to acknowledge the generous SW 508 teaching team led by Dr. Karen Staller, who were willing to sharing their teaching plans, materials and advice with me. The Fall 2021 SW 508 teaching team includes: Karen Staller, Kristin Seefeldt, Lydia Li, Addie Weaver, Lisa Fedina, Shawna Lee, Sean De Four, Colleen Crane, and Dana Levin.

Fall 2021 Course Overview in Brief

Week	Topic	Deadline (11:59pm)
One (9/2)	Introduction to Each Other & Social Welfare Policy	Activity Worksheet #1
Two (9/9)	Foundational Roots of Structural Discrimination	Activity Worksheet #2
Three (9/16)	U.S. Government Structure and Policy Making for Social Workers	Activity Worksheet #3
Four (9/23)	U.S. Constitution as Supreme Law and Historical Record for Social Workers	Activity Worksheet #4
Five (9/30)	Government Budgets and Taxes for Social Workers	Activity Worksheet #5 Topic for the policy worksheet assignment
Six (10/7)	Origins of Social Work Practice and Services & Lasting Influences	Activity Worksheet #6
Seven (10/14)	Creation of the U.S. Welfare State and Structural Exclusion	Activity Worksheet #7
Eight (10/21)	Equality, Opportunity, and Civil Rights: Activism to Policy	Activity Worksheet #8
Nine (10/28)	The Vanishing Welfare State and Privatization	Activity Worksheet #9
Ten (11/4)	Social Work Professions: Development & Enduring Tensions	Activity Worksheet #10
Eleven (11/11) NO IN-PERSON CLASS	Poverty and Inequality: Economic Inequality & the Wealth/Race Gap	Activity Worksheet #11 Policy Worksheet
Twelve (11/18)	Complex Welfare State: Health Policy as Case Study	Activity Worksheet #12
Thirteen (11/25)	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
Fourteen (12/2)	Topical Issues TBD	Activity Worksheet #13
Fifteen (12/9)	Course Wrap-up & Final Take-home Exam Distribution	
Sixteen	Final Take-Home Exam	5:00pm Dec 17 (Fri)

