



Course title:	Practicing Policy with Current Events	
Course #/term:	SW 649, #36589, Winter 2022	
Time & place:	Mondays: 03/07; 03/14; 03/11; 03/28; 04/11 9am-12pm, Room 3816	
Credit hours:	3	
Prerequisites:		
Instructor:	Terri Friedline	
Pronouns:	She, her, hers	
Contact info:	Email: tfriedli@umich.edu	Phone: (734) 764-5547
	You may expect a response within 2-3 business days	
Office:	#3688	
Office hours:	By appointment	

1. Course Statement

a. Course Description

This policy skills course will help students develop an understanding of how to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and/or environmental justice through the application of critical thinking skills. Content area will be drawn from current events (e.g., immigration, child welfare, health care debates), and students will learn how to critically analyze the policy implications, prerequisites for any informed, professional, and ethical policy advocacy. Students will develop strategies to engage in policy practice to effect change and advocate for clients. Finally, students will gain specialized knowledge and skills in a current policy area relevant to social work practice, which will also give students the ability to advocate for their clients, the profession, and the promotion of social justice.

b. Course Objectives and Competencies

Articulate framings of policy-related stories as social constructions (Essential 6, 28, 39; EPAS 1, 2, 5, 7); Locate policy resources (e.g. legislation, regulations, white papers) needed to understand a social welfare policy problem (Essential 14, EPAS 6); Analyze a social welfare policy issue in terms of contextual features (e.g., historical, political, legislative, ideological) while taking into account structural privileges and inequities (Essential 29, 30, 34, 35; EPAS 1, 2, 3, 5); Identify strategies for resolving a social welfare policy problem that advances human rights; social, economic, and/or environmental justice; and address power dynamics to ensure voices are included (Essential 6, 28, 39; EPAS 1, 2, 5, 7); Advocate for a specific solution to a social welfare policy problem in a way that acknowledges contextual and social equity issues surrounding the problem (Essential 44; EPAS 1, 5).

c. Course Design

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

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

The reading materials for this course will take four forms, and these materials will be available online and/or posted on Canvas:

- Current Media – news and educational sources of record as selected by the instructor. (E.g. print and electronic news sources such as the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*; public television or radio shows such as the *NewsHour* and NPR programs such as *All Things Considered*, or *Morning Edition*; curated podcasts or YouTube videos);
- Non-governmental Organizations or Think Tank Websites as selected by the instructor and relevant to the course topics (e.g. Center for Budget and Policy Priorities; Kaiser Family Foundation, Heritage Foundation; Human Rights Watch; Brookings Institution);
- Governmental Departments, Agencies and Reports as selected by the instructor and relevant to the course topic (such as federal and state legislative information, judicial sources, executive orders, state agency policy manuals); and
- Selected readings posted on Canvas (e.g. social science articles; theoretical literature; policy briefs; policy documents).

Throughout the course students will be expected to follow current events related to social welfare policy issues which impact social work practitioners and their clients. The course may focus on a topical content area as defined by the instructor before the start of the semester (e.g. immigration,

child welfare, climate change, natural disaster relief, water rights). Assigned readings will be selected by the instructor accordingly. Additional pertinent short readings or podcasts might be added over the semester. The instructor will give advance notice to students or bring these additional materials to class as news events unfold. Closed captioned media sources, audio verions, and other formats will be used with an eye toward inclusivity and accessibility of all students. However, students with any unique challenges should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to ensure adequate access to materials.

b. Class Schedule

Date/Time	Agenda Practicing Policy Skills	Required Readings & Assignments
Session 1 Monday, 03/07/2022 9:00am-12:00pm	Social Problem Construction: Competing Framings of Policy-Related Stories	Materials via Canvas
Session 2 Monday, 03/14/2022 9:00am-12:00pm	Finding Policy: Locating, Identifying, and Reading Policy	Materials via Canvas
Session 3 Monday, 03/21/2022 9:00am-12:00pm	Consuming Policy Stories: Deconstructing Arguments and Contextualizing Information	Materials via Canvas
Session 4 Monday, 03/28/2022 9:00am-12:00pm	Identifying Advocacy Strategies: Making your Voices Heard	Materials via Canvas
Session 5 Monday, 04/11/2022 9:00am-12:00pm	Synthesizing the Pieces: Policy Presentations	Materials via Canvas

c. Assignments

Policy Performance: Producing and Presenting a News Story, Podcast, or Public Educational Announcement, due on 4/11/2022 and 50% of the final grade

Students will work in small groups to ‘produce’ a news story, podcast, YouTube video or other research-based educational segment. These will not be opinion pieces or propaganda. Rather the final product must reflect careful research, critical engagement and thoughtful analysis of a current events topic. Students will “perform” (or “present”) their projects in the final class (5-8 minutes a piece); submit a written transcript of their segment, complete compendium of references and sources consulted and attest to the

equal participation of each member of the group. In addition, each assignment must be submitted with an individual attestation from each student of their unique efforts toward producing the final project and how the project elements, as well as course content, relate to mastery of the course competencies. Students must demonstrate that they can:

- Contextualize the competing frames of a specific policy problem critical to social work practice;
- Critically assess the policy response using the skills developed in class;
- Synthesize material about this policy problem and response in an informative, factual, educational presentation; and
- Identify a socially just policy response using critical analysis, ensuring all voices are heard.

d. Attendance and Class Participation, 50% of the final grade

This is a one-credit, required, course. For this reason, attendance is mandatory at every class session unless other accommodations have been made with the instructor. For more information, please visit the MSW Student Guide and review [Policy on Class Attendance](#).

There are four basic requirements for this course. Each will be used in assessing the overall final grade. They are:

- Attending all class sessions which include lectures and skill building;
- Reading all assignments and coming to class prepared;
- Participating in class discussions and activities in a substantive and meaningful way; and
- Participating in the final project, the Policy Performance assignment, including final presentation, written product, and final submission.

e. Grading

This will be a (S) Satisfactory or (U) Unsatisfactory grade. Satisfactory will be 70 points or more and Unsatisfactory will be 69 points or less.

Grading:	Total:
Attendance and Participation (10 points/class)	50 points/50% of grade
Policy Performance	50 points/50% of grade

Course grading is on a pass or fail basis. Mandatory attendance, the course expectations listed above, and the final policy performance will be factored into the final assessment as specified by the instructor.

Please review these policies in regard to grades. [Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction](#) as well as [Student Grievance procedures](#) and the [policy for grading in special circumstances](#). You should expect to submit assignments no later than 5:00 pm on the due date in order to receive maximum points.

3. Resources for Students

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: This course is intended for all U-M students, including those with mental, physical, or cognitive disabilities, illness, injuries, impairments, or any other such condition that tends to negatively affect one's equal access to education. If, at any point in the term, you find yourself not able to fully access the space, content, and experience of this course, you are welcome (and not required) to contact me by email, phone, or during office hours to discuss your specific needs. I also encourage you to contact the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office at <http://ssd.umich.edu>. If you have a diagnosis, SSD can help you document your needs and create an accommodation plan. By making a plan through SSD, you can ensure appropriate accommodations without disclosing your condition or diagnosis to course instructors. For more information and resources, the University's Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD), located at G664 Haven Hall and available via phone (734) 763-3000 or website <http://www.umich.edu/~sswd/>

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing: The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (734) 764-8312 and <https://caps.umich.edu/> during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselor physically located in the School of Social Work, (Megan Shaughnessy-Mogill) at (734) 763-7894 or by email mshaughm@umich.edu. You may also consult University Health Service (UHS) at (734) 764-8320 and <https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs>, or for alcohol or drug concerns, see www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources. The MSW student Guide to Health and Wellness can be found at http://www.ssw.umich.edu/current/Health_Wellness_Guide.pdf

Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness. The University of Michigan's Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC) promotes healthy relationships, teaches non-violence and equality, supports survivor healing, and fosters a respectful and safe environment for all members of the university community. All services are free and confidential. Visit SAPAC's website <https://sapac.umich.edu/> and contact them via their 24-hour crisis line at (734) 936-3333 or office phone at (734) 764-7771.

Safety & Emergency Preparedness: All University of Michigan students, faculty and staff are required to familiarize themselves with emergency procedures and protocols for both inside and outside of the classroom. In the event of possible building closure (i.e. severe weather conditions, public health notices, etc.) you may contact (734) 764-SSWB (7793) for up-to-date School closure information. For more information view the annual Campus Safety Statement at <http://www.dpss.umich.edu/>. Register for UM Emergency Alerts at <http://www.dpss.umich.edu/emergencymanagement/alert/>. In the event of an emergency, dial 9-1-1 from any cell phone or campus phone.

Dependent Care Resources: For students with child or parenting/elder care responsibilities, please consult the Students with Children website (<http://www.studentswithchildren.umich.edu>). This site is dedicated to the needs of students at UM who juggle parenting/elder care, study, and work. Resources include child care, financial assistance, social support, housing, and health care information. The website was created by the former Committee on Student Parent Issues (COSPI). For additional information on work/life support please also visit the Work/Life Resource Center site (<http://www.hr.umich.edu/worklife/>) and the UM Child Care gateway (<http://www.hr.umich.edu/childcare/>).

Student Code of Academic and Professional Conduct: All students should be familiar with the Student Code for Academic and Professional Conduct (<http://archive.ssw.umich.edu/studentguide/2014/page.html?section=12&volume=1>) which holds students

to the highest standards of academic and professional conduct. Unacceptable academic behavior refers to actions or behaviors that are contrary to maintaining the highest standards in course work and includes such actions as cheating, plagiarism, falsification of data, aiding and abetting dishonesty and impairment. Any suspected situations of academic misconduct will be discussed with the student and then reported to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs.