Course title: Practicing Policy with Current Events
Course #/term: SW 649, Fall, 2021
Zoom link: Found in Canvas
Credit hours: 1
Prerequisites: None
Instructor: Fatima Salman
Pronouns: She/her/hers
Contact info: Fsalman@umich.edu (You may expect a response within 48 hours)
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.

b. Course objectives and competencies
● Articulate framings of policy related stories as social constructions. (Essential 14, Essential 30, Essential 39, EPAS 1, EPAS 5, EPAS 6, EPAS 7)
● Assemble policy resources (e.g., legislation, regulations, white papers) needed to understand a social welfare policy problem (Essential 6, Essential 28, Essential 39, EPAS 1, EPAS 2, EPAS 5, EPAS 7)
● Analyze a social welfare policy issue in terms of contextual features (e.g., historical, political, legislative, ideological) while considering structural privileges and inequities. (Essential 6, Essential 28, Essential 39, EPAS 1, EPAS 2, EPAS 5, EPAS 7)
c. **Course design**
This course will be online with live synchronous sessions each week and will utilize a combination of lectures, discussion, in-class exercises, and a course project with weekly deliverables.

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. Using 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**
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 versions, 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.
The reading material for this course will take four forms. All of it will be available online and/or will be 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).

MSW Candidates are expected to complete all required readings and other assigned course work prior to class’

Required readings will be discussed/debriefed in class.

b. Class schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Required Readings &amp; Assignments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 1/12/22 8-10pm</td>
<td>Lesson: Social Problem Construction: Competing Framings of Policy-Related Stories</td>
<td>Read: Syllabus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Lesson: Finding Policy: Locating, Identifying, and Reading Policy</td>
<td>Read:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Center for Migration Studies. (n.d.). <em>President Biden’s executive actions on immigration.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other Sources as assigned</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Lesson: Consuming Policy Stories: Deconstructing Arguments and Contextualizing Information</th>
<th>Watch:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PBS NewsHour. (2021, March 26). <em>Immigrant families in limbo as Biden’s immigration bill fails to get</em></td>
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</table>
Other Sources as assigned |
|---|---|---|
c. Assignments- both are 50% of the final grade

**Attendance and Participation:** Attending all five class sessions, including reading all assignments and coming to class prepared. Students are expected to participate in class. Your grade will be affected if you miss a class (-10 points for each missed class session). Communication with me of any expected absence is necessary. Students are responsible for content information from missed classes.

Participating in reflective discussions and in a substantive and meaningful way. Students are expected to keep their videos on during the class.

**Final Project:** Participating in the final project including all required submissions.

**Final Project Description:**

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) and submit both the file containing the project and a statement outlining each participant’s contribution to the project. 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.
- Identify a socially just policy response using critical analysis, ensuring all voices are heard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Percent of overall grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance (includes preparedness for class and participation)</td>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>Final Class Session</td>
<td>50%</td>
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d. **Live class participation**

Please mute your audio if you are not speaking. I strongly suggest keeping your camera on, but if that is not possible, I understand.

Please use the raise hand function if you have a comment to make or question to ask. Feel free to use the chat to include supplementary information or to ask questions. I will try to keep tabs on what is being written in the chat, but my first priority will be the verbal discussion. If you use the chat, please keep the conversation on topic.

e. **Grading**

The course and all assignment grading is on a pass or fail basis.

Because all grading is pass/fail, there is no way to accept late work for a reduced score. If you are unable to complete a graded item, please contact your instructor as soon as possible to see if an alternative is available for your circumstances.

Students should:

- Attending all five 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 (see master assignment), including final presentation, written product, and final submission.

For additional information, please reference the following resources
a. Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction
b. Student Grievance Procedures
c. Policy for Grading in Special Circumstances

d. 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