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.

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Course title: Practicing Policy with Current Events
Course #/term: SW 649, Fall, 2022
Course Website: [Canvas Address]
Live Class Meeting: TBD via Zoom in Canvas
Credit hours: 1
Prerequisites: None
Instructor: Karen M. Staller
Pronouns: She/her/hers
Contact info: Email: kstaller@umich.edu Phone: 734-763-5769
You may expect a response within 72 hours
Office: 2704
Office hours: By appointment via zoom. Email instructor.

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 taking into account structural privileges and inequities. (Essential 6, Essential 28, Essential 39, EPAS 1, EPAS 2, EPAS 5, EPAS 7)
- Create strategies for resolving a social welfare policy problem that advance human rights; social, economic, and/or environmental justice; and address power dynamics to ensure voices are included. (Essential 14, Essential 34, EPAS 2, EPAS 3, EPAS 6, EPAS 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 29, Essential 30, Essential 34, Essential 35, EPAS 1, EPAS 2, EPAS 3, EPAS 5)

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. 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.
2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials

All required and supplemental materials will be provided to you within the Canvas website. Students must complete all pre-work to engage in the course and complete discussions and activities fully. Some materials may require electronic access to external links. Other materials are located within the University of Michigan Library materials. You will be required to log into your University account using your credentials (username and password) to access University of Michigan Library 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.

b. Class schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Required Readings &amp; Assignments</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Week 1    | Lesson: Social Problem Construction: Competing Framings of Policy-Related Stories  
Virtual Session: [https://umich.zoom.us/j/95913665270](https://umich.zoom.us/j/95913665270)  
You MUST log in through your umich.edu account. Pass Code: SW649. | **Read:** Syllabus  
Staller (2022). Dobbs case study on social welfare problem construction. Canvas. UMSSW  
**Watch:**  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Lesson: Finding Policy: Locating, Identifying, and Reading Policy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Virtual Session: <a href="https://umich.zoom.us/j/95913665270">https://umich.zoom.us/j/95913665270</a></td>
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<td>You MUST log in through your umich.edu account. Pass Code: SW649</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Lesson: Consuming Policy Stories: Deconstructing Arguments and Contextualizing Information</th>
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<td>Virtual Session: <a href="https://umich.zoom.us/j/95913665270">https://umich.zoom.us/j/95913665270</a></td>
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<td>You MUST log in through your umich.edu account. Pass Code: SW649</td>
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**Solomon, P. (2022, July 31) Early America’s complicated history with abortion access. [Video] PBS NewsHour**

**Complete:** Project Progress Posting (after class)

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**Read:**

- President Biden’s Executive Order on Protecting Access to Reproductive Healthcare Services
- DHHS announced guidelines to clarify emergency services.
- Michigan Penal Code. Act 328 of 1931 Ch III § 750.14 *Abortion*

**Watch:**


**Complete:** Project Progress Posting (after class)

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**Watch:**

- CBS News (2022, Aug 4). *Kansas upholds abortion rights [Video]*
- Fox News (2022, Aug 2) *Election results: Kansas abortion measure fails [Video]*
- Fox News (2022, Aug 2) *Value them Both Coalition reacts after Kansas votes down amendment [Video]*
c. Assignments

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

**Attendance:** Attending all five class sessions, including reading all assignments and coming to class prepared;
**Project Progress Posting** (after class): Completing all project postings right after class; and

**Final Project**: Participating in the final project.

Each assignment is graded Pass/Fail. To pass the course you must pass the final assignment and achieve eleven of thirteen points (class attendance and project progress postings).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Percent of overall grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Live Zoom Sessions</td>
<td>Day 7 of each week</td>
<td>Pass/Fail</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1 pt each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Project Progress Postings</td>
<td>Day 7 of Week 2-4</td>
<td>Pass/Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2 pts each)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>Final Class Session</td>
<td>Pass /Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(50 points)</td>
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**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;
d. Attendance and class participation

Students are responsible for all content of this course, including the content provided in the live, synchronous sessions. Absences are counted from the first scheduled live class meeting. The program has an 80% attendance requirement for live, synchronous sessions. Students who miss more than 20% (live, synchronous sessions) are at risk of a grade reduction, including receiving a non-passing grade. See the Policy on Class Attendance from the MSW Student Guide for further information.

If you are unable to attend a Live Zoom Session, please contact your instructor as soon as possible.

e. 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.

f. Grading

The course and all assignment grading is on a pass or fail basis. To pass the course you must pass the final assignment and achieve eleven of thirteen points (class sessions and project progress postings).

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.

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

g. 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.
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