1. Course Statement

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 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.

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)
- 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. 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

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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Lesson: Social Problem Construction: Competing Framings of Policy-Related Stories</td>
<td>Read: Syllabus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Lesson: Finding Policy: Locating, Identifying, and Reading Policy</td>
<td>Read:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Complete:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Live Zoom Session: See Canvas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Lesson: Identifying Advocacy Strategies: Making your Voices Heard</td>
<td>Read:</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Immigrant families in limbo as Biden’s immigration bill fails to get support in Congress [Video]. Youtube.**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HzLeiDcrZlo

**Complete:**
Day 5 - Reflective Discussion
Day 7 - Project Deliverable
| Week 5 | Synthesizing the Pieces: Policy Presentations  
**Complete:**  
Day 5 - Reflective Discussion  
Day 7 - Project Deliverable  

**Read:**  

**Watch:**  
**Complete:**  
Day 5 - Reflective Discussion  
Day 7 - Prepare and Present Final Projects  
Reflective Discussion |

c. **Assignments**

There are four 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.
• Discussions: Participating in reflective discussions and in a substantive and meaningful way.
• Project Deliverables: Completing all project deliverables by their due dates.
• Final Project: Participating in the final project including all required submissions.

Each assignment is graded Pass/Fail. To pass the course you must pass the final assignment and twelve of the other assignments (class sessions, discussions, deliverables).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Percent of overall grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Live Zoom Sessions</td>
<td>Day 7 of each week</td>
<td>Pass/Fail (each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Reflective Discussions</td>
<td>Initial Posts: Day 5 of each week Peer Responses: Day 7 of each week</td>
<td>Pass/Fail (each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Project Deliverables</td>
<td>Day 1 of Week 2 Day 7 of Weeks 2-4</td>
<td>Pass/Fail (each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>Final Class Session</td>
<td>Pass /Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Final Project Description:**

Students will work in small groups to ‘produce’ a news story, podcast, YouTube video or another 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 Policy

Students are expected to attend all the live, synchronous class sessions. In addition, students are responsible for all content of this course, including the content provided in the asynchronous and synchronous contexts.

Pedagogically, this class has been designed with learning, practice and reflection activities that take place in the live sessions, so missing live sessions has the potential to have significant learning implications for students.

Communication is essential for social work practice (and is a technical standard for our program). Therefore, students are expected to notify the instructor ahead of time if they cannot attend a live session. If students miss a live session, they are expected to watch live session recordings and access missed content and notes from a peer in the course. The instructor is available by appointment to provide support and answer questions students have about any missed live content.

In this course, students receive a point for attending each live session. If a student misses live sessions without prior communication with the instructor, they will be at risk of a grade reduction, including receipt of a non-passing grade.

Given that this course is an intensive 5-week experience, if students fail to attend 2 live sessions or do not communicate about missed class sections, the student will be asked to set up a meeting with the instructor to discuss their course progress and their academic advisor will be notified.

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.
- Lectures will be recorded and posted to Canvas but I reserve the right to pause the recording if the discussion is veering into sensitive areas.

e. 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 at least twelve of the other assignments (class sessions, discussions, deliverables).
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
- Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction
- Student Grievance Procedures
- Policy for Grading in Special Circumstances

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. 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