TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-COMMERCE
School of Social Work
Social Work 328: Social Welfare Policy
Fall 2012

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course is the foundation social welfare policy and services course for social work students. In the course, the student is expected to become acquainted with the social welfare institution and learn to analyze how its policies & services interact with other social forces in responding to social problems at all levels of client systems – from micro to mezzo and macro-level. The primary focus of the course is to emphasize examination of social policies and how they affect all levels of client systems, especially oppressed populations. Attention is given to the role of social welfare policy and policy practice in achieving social justice. Prerequisites: SWK 225, 250 and 275, Psci 220, and Hist 122. Concurrent enrollment in SWK 322 and SWK 325 is required. Restricted to social work majors. 3 semester hours.

GOALS & COMPETENCIES:

1. Prepare BSW graduates for entry-level professional social work practice that reflects generalist social work knowledge and skills. Graduates will be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

1.1 Apply critical thinking and effective communication (2.1.3)
1.2 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research (2.1.6)
1.4 Apply knowledge of policy to practice (2.1.8)
1.5 Apply change strategies with all levels of systems (2.1.10)

2. Enable BSW graduates to practice ethically and apply social work values to promote equality and justice. Graduates will be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

2.1 Apply social work ethics & principles (2.1.2)
2.2 Engage diversity in practice (2.1.4)
2.3 Promote human rights and social and economic justice (2.1.5)

3. Provide meaningful contexts through which BSW students engage in leadership, service, and professional excellence. Graduates will be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

3.1 Identify and respond as a professional social worker (2.1.1)

3.2 Respond to professional contexts that shape practice, demonstrating qualities of leadership for the profession. (2.1.9)

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To develop students' understanding and knowledge of the basic organizational structures and services of the major social welfare programs in the U.S.

2. To develop students' understanding of how social policy and services impact social injustice and inequality, particularly for women and diverse minority groups, thereby increasing students' awareness of how social policy can be effectively used as a mechanism for positive social change.

3. To increase students' understanding of the organizational context and various processes, including legislative, judicial, and administrative, by which social welfare programs are developed, implemented, and modified over time.

4. To enable students to develop the skills necessary to critically assess, analyze, and evaluate social and economic policies and programs, particularly as they affect disadvantaged populations, through the application of structured models of research and analysis.

5. To help students integrate their knowledge of societal values with social work values and ethics and understand how all of these affect social welfare policies and programs.

6. To develop students' abilities to demonstrate commitment to social work values and ethics when evaluating the effectiveness of social welfare policies with all levels of client systems; and to assist students to integrate their knowledge about societal values with social work values and ethics in order to understand how all of these affect social welfare policies and programs.

7 To develop students' awareness of the political and economic forces impacting social welfare policies and services in America, and assist students to identify the interrelatedness of social work practice with social welfare policies and services as a method to facilitate social justice.

8. To develop student's abilities to plan change strategies on behalf of clients at all levels of systems in ways that are responsive to relevant issues of oppression and diversity.

TEXT:

DiNitto, D. M. (2005). Social Welfare: Politics & Public Policy (7th edition). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

GRADING:

In general, a course grade of "C" represents an acceptable level of work. A course grade of "B" represents a substantial effort and achievement, a grade for better than average product and effort. An "A" is awarded only in cases of both outstanding effort and quality in required products.

Grades will be awarded on the following basis:

A = 90 – 100% of possible points
B = 80 – 89% of possible points
C = 70 – 79% of possible points
D = 60 – 69% of possible points
F = below 59% of possible points

Exams – 3 @ 100 points	300 points
Policy Paper	100 points
Weekly Assignments (20 points/week)	200 points
Total possible points	600 points

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Policy Paper – Students are to analyze a federal or state social welfare policy and write a scholarly 10-12 page analysis that addresses the various aspects of policy including the history, effectiveness, and an evaluation of the policy. Additional information will be provided on the first day of class.

2. Weekly Assignments – 10 of the 15 weeks students are expected to complete the activity assigned. These activities will vary from week to week and can include article summaries, worksheets, web-based research and other similar activities. These activities are expected to be completed for the full 20 points to be awarded in the assigned time frame.

3. There will be 3 exams throughout the semester. It is important that you are not absent on exam days. If you are absent and miss one of the 3 examinations on the date it is administered you will not be allowed to make up that exam. Instead you will have the option of taking a Final Comprehensive Examination at the end of the semester to replace the grade of the exam missed.

CLASS ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:

Students are expected to attend class, reflecting responsibility which is inherent in the development as a social work professional. Roll will be taken regularly. If the student arrives to class late or leaves early the student will be considered tardy. Two tardies will constitute an absence.

Students are allowed 3 absences (excused or unexcused) without any penalty. On the 4th and 5th absences (excused or unexcused), a letter grade will be deducted from the student's final grade for each absence. Students with "university approved absences" will be allowed to make up any missed work, but will still have the aforementioned letter grades deducted due to the inability to participate in the class interaction. The 6th absence (which is approximately 20% of class days) can result in the student receiving an "F" in the course. If a student is unable to attend class regularly, then he/she should drop or withdraw from the course until such a time that consistent attendance is possible.

Class participation has three components: (1) appropriate verbal and non-verbal interactions with classmates, (2) attentiveness, and (3) active involvement in class activities. Evaluation of class participation is based on instructor observation. Students will be given verbal or written feedback if problems are evident.

POLICY ON DUE DATES

Assignments are due *at the beginning of class on the dates indicated* in the course schedule. Late assignments will not be accepted. Students are encouraged to plan ahead and duplicate all work onto an alternative electronic device to avoid technological problems or loss of information. Electronic copies enable students to access their assignments on one of the campus computers should their personal computer become inoperable.

ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE DUE DATE.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

All written assignments (including Group Discussions) must demonstrate acceptable writing style, including the use of Standard English, acceptable grammar, and the use of the American Psychological Association (APA) style of reference citation. Chapters from P Pyrczak, F., & Bruce, R. R., (2007). *Writing empirical research reports* (5th ed.).Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Publishing can help guide your writing, especially the sections on literature reviews.

Part of the grading process will include an evaluation of presentation, including clarity, coherence, logic and organization of the assignment. All assignments must be typewritten, using double-spacing and standard margins. It is the student's responsibility to ensure the paper is submitted in the correct location by the assigned due date. The instructor will utilize "Turnitin" software to determine instances of plagiarism. Below is a partial list of factors that are addressed in the grading process:

- Any error in APA reference or citation format from the 7th edition
- Lack of quotation marks at the beginning and end of all direct quotes
- Extra or missing punctuation (i.e. commas, semi-colons, colons, periods)
- Incomplete sentences (i.e., sentences without a verb)
- Run-on sentences (i.e., sentences that run together without appropriate punctuation and capitalization delineating each sentence)
- Incorrect spelling
- Inappropriate and inconsistent verb tense

- Lack of noun-verb agreement
- Incorrect use of capitalization (e.g., social work is generally not capitalized)
- Incorrect use of possessives (examples of correct use are Shawn's book, the parents' child)
- Any contractions (e.g., I'm, can't, won't), except in direct quotes from another
- source)
- Lack of neatness (e.g., hand written corrections, uneven indentions)
- Papers that are not typewritten
- Use of a size other than #12 fonts
- Lines not double spaced
- Margins that are less than or wider than 1 inch
- Failure to indent the first line of a paragraph
- Incoherent sentences

POLICY ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING

Every student is expected to do his/her own work. Law, ethical standards, university policy, and departmental policy demand that students refrain from plagiarism and any form of cheating. Plagiarism is the "Act of appropriating the literacy composition of another, or parts of passages from of his [or her] writings, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as the products of one's own mind." (Black's Law Dictionary, Abridged Fifth Edition, 1983). When using others' words, phrases, or ideas in writing, the original author should be given proper credit.

Cheating may take different forms. These include, but are not limited to, copying others' answers during an exam, using notes or other forms of help during an examination or quiz, except when explicitly permitted by the instructor, giving or receiving help on exams or assignments, or submitting work for one class which has already been submitted for another class for credit. Use of citations from the Internet without paraphrasing content AND proper referencing is regarded as plagiarism. Professors have the right to use electronic review programs (such as Turn It In") to identify plagiarism.

The department does not tolerate plagiarism or cheating. A student found to be engaging in such illegal and unethical conduct may receive a failing grade in the course and may be subjected to further disciplinary proceedings. Any assignment or exam that lacks honesty will be given a grade of "0".

ACCEPTABLE CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

"Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to obey all federal, state, and local laws, in addition to the regulations of the University. The standards of Student Conduct including disciplinary rules and procedures are designed to provide and conform to the basic tenets of due process, as developed by institutions of higher education. As such, the University distinguishes these procedures and regulations as an educational and growth

process which is not intended to conform to adversary proceedings as in a court of law. (Student's Guide Book, 2011, p. 35).

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

The Department of Social Work expects all social work students to conduct themselves in an ethical, professional manner. Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession articulates its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards as set forth in the *NASW Code of Ethics* to guide social workers' conduct. The *Code* is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve. Accordingly, we expect social work students to demonstrate courtesy, respect and support for fellow students, instructors, clients, and all other persons.

All students enrolled in BSW or MSW classes are expected to observe the tenets of the NASW Code of Ethics and the Social Work Student Code of Conduct. Our Code of Conduct is reflective of professional and academic expectations – a student who cannot demonstrate appropriate behaviors will not be appropriate for practice in the social work profession. Students who violate these Codes may be asked to meet with appropriate Social Work faculty (instructors or Program Directors). In addition, the department's Academic and Professional Issues (API) Committee is responsible for dealing with student issues when requested by faculty.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

It is the policy of Texas A&M University-Commerce and the Social Work Department to do everything we can to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law, and the University's commitment to providing equal opportunities. Any student with a disability who needs accommodation, for example, in accessibility, seating placement or in arrangements for examinations should not hesitate to inform the instructor. If required, large type, Braille or cassette recordings of syllabus or assignments can be provided.

Students with conditions that require special attention or accommodation should contact the Director of Disability Resources & Services at 903-468-5150 (located in the Library, Room 132).

COURSE OUTLINE

I. Introduction & Overview of course

II. Politics, Rationalism, and Social Welfare

III. Government and Social Welfare

IV. Defining Poverty: Where to Begin

V. Preventing Poverty: The Social Insurance Programs

VI. Helping the "Deserving Poor": Aged, Blind, and Disabled

VII. Ending Welfare As We Knew It: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

VIII. Fighting Hunger, Fighting Fat: Nutrition Policy and Programs in the United States

IX. Improving Healthcare: Treating the Nation's Ills

X. Changing Paradigms: The Poverty Wars

XI. Providing Social Services: Help for Children, the Elderly, and Individuals with Mental Illness

XII. Addressing Civil Rights and Social Welfare: The Challenges of a Diverse Society

XIII. Implementing and Evaluating Social Welfare Policy: What Happens after a Law is Passed

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