



*SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK*

**SWK 521: Foundations of Social Welfare Policy**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This foundation course in social welfare policy introduces students to social policy development, social welfare institutions, and the historical and existing policies underpinning the development of social policy. Course content is designed to emphasize the effect of social policies on client systems at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Specific attention will be given to the interaction between social welfare policies and at risk populations. No pre-requisites.

**GOALS & COMPETENCIES:**

**1. Prepare MSW graduates for professional advanced generalist practice that reflects application and integration of critical thinking, theoretical frameworks, and differential interventions. Students will be able to reflect the following competencies:**

F 1.1 Demonstrate critical thinking and effective communication (2.1.3)

F 1.4 Engage in change strategies with individuals, families, groups, organizations & communities (2.1.10)

**2. Enable MSW graduates to apply ethical reasoning to advance equality, justice, and social change. Students will be able to reflect the following competencies:**

F 2.1 Engage in policy practice (2.1.8)

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F 2.2 Apply social work ethics & principles (2.1.2)

F 2.3 Engage diversity in practice (2.1.4)

F 2.4 Promote human rights and social and economic justice (2.1.5)

**3. Promote leadership and service that is relevant to individual contexts of practice and enhances well-being and quality of life. Students will be able to reflect the following competencies:**

F 3.1 Engage as professional social workers (2.1.1)

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

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

1. Learn to analyze and integrate an understanding of important historical events, which have had an impact on contemporary social work practice.
2. Learn methods of formulating, analyzing and evaluating social policy within the context of general systems theory, and multiple perspectives (gender, culture, class, religion, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental ability, and national origin) using a strengths perspective.
3. Learn to critically analyze and project future trends in social welfare policy based on historical experience.
4. Become familiar with applications of research (historical, qualitative, quantitative) within the context of social welfare policy in the United States.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- (1) Students will be able to critically discuss the impact social policy has on people's lives; values & ethics and their role in the policy and planning process; along with the reciprocal impact between social policy and social work practice.
- (2) Students will gain skills in utilizing research techniques and employing professional ethics in the planning, implementing and evaluating of policies
- (3) Students will clarify their own commitment to social justice and social change, demonstrating skills for assisting others in doing the same.

(4) Students will demonstrate an understanding of the importance of facilitating the development of social networks (organization, community); mobilizing citizen participation and power in the policy arena.

(5) Students will be able to offer a comparative analysis of social welfare systems; demonstrating understanding in social planning, social policy and legislative processes as sources of social change.

**RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER COURSES:** SWK 503, SWK 505, SWK 506, SWK 553

**TEXTS:**

Karger, H. J. & Stoesz, D. (2010). *American social welfare policy: A pluralist approach*, (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon. ISBN: 0-205-40182-1.

**For Reference Only:**

House Ways and means Committee Green Book: can be accessed at:  
<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/wmprints/green/index.html>

**GRADING:**

Assigned Activities & Quizzes	100 points
Policy Analysis Paper	100 points
Mid-Term Exam	100 points
Final Exam	100 points

**Grading Scale:**

360-400 points	A
320-359 points	B
280-319 points	C
Grades below a C are considered failing	

**SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS:**

**PLEASE NOTE: All assignments will be submitted by students in the appropriate Dropbox on the eCollege web portal on the due date designated in the course schedule below. Assignments are due on the following Monday at 11:59pm on the designated week of the course schedule.**

## **OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS:**

### **POSITION STATEMENT PAPER AND ORAL TESTIMONY (100 PTS) –Goals & Competencies (1.1, 1.4, 2.1-2.4, 3.1-3.1), Competencies (1-5)**

#### **How to write a position paper:**

The purpose of a position paper is to generate support on an issue. It describes a position on an issue and the rationale for that position. The position paper is based on facts that provide a solid foundation for your argument. In the position paper you should:

- Use evidence to support your position, such as statistical evidence or dates and events.
- Validate your position with authoritative references or primary source quotations
- Examine the strengths and weaknesses of your position.
- Evaluate possible solutions and suggest courses of action.

Choose an issue where there is a clear division of opinion and which is arguable with facts. You may choose an issue on which you have already formed an opinion. However, in writing about this issue you must examine your opinion of the issue critically. Prior to writing your position paper, define and limit your issue carefully. Social issues are complex with multiple solutions. Narrow the topic of your position paper to something that is manageable. Research your issue thoroughly, consulting experts and obtaining primary documents. Consider feasibility, cost-effectiveness and the political/social climate when evaluating possible solutions and courses of action.

The following structure is typical of a position paper:

An introduction-clearly identify the issue and state the author's position (should catch the reader's attention). The introduction should contain the following:

- Identification of the issue
- Statement of the position

The body- several paragraphs and should clarify the position of the author which is supported by evidence and facts (evidence can be primary source quotations, statistical data, interviews with experts, and indisputable dates or events). The body should contain the following:

- Background information
- Supporting evidence or facts
- A discussion of both sides of the issue

A conclusion should contain the following:

- Suggested courses of action
- Possible solutions

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### **Part I: Position Statement**

In social work practice, a position statement is a form of policy declaration. Position papers are position statements that generally provide detail and specificity arising out of an analysis and are aimed at enlightening and educating as well as influencing. You may choose from state, federal, or international policies.

You are required to hand in a 1 to 2 page position statement in letter form. You are required to use the following format:

1. Identification of the bill and its sponsor.
2. Brief summary statement of your position.
3. Summary of the issues and rationale for your position.
4. Statement of recommendation for changes.
5. Identification of person or organization.

A minimum of 5 journal articles must be used to write this paper. The paper should be written in APA format, 12 point font, double-space and Times New Roman font. Students will present their ideas in the form of a presentation to the class.

### **Part II: Oral Testimony**

You are required to give oral testimony in class. You are required to use the following format:

1. Identification of the person giving testimony.
2. Statement of appreciation to the hearing committee.
3. Brief statement of position taken.
4. Summary of issues and statement of rationale.
5. Statement of recommendations or changes.
6. Offer of assistance and thanks.

Time allowed: 3 to 4 minutes.

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT PAPER (100 PTS)-SECTION I - Goals & Competencies (1.1, 1.4. 2.1-2.4, 3.1-3.1), Competencies (1-5)**

Problem or need analysis: at a minimum, this requires that the student define the problem using objective and subjective data. Although often the most demanding and troublesome step in the inquiry process, it is nevertheless vital. Having defined the problem or need, it then becomes possible to determine its magnitude and scope, the salient characteristics of the problem and the theoretical notions or empirical evidence suggesting causes of the problem or conditions associated with its occurrence.

**POLICY ANALYSIS PAPER (100 PTS)-SECTION II- Goals & Competencies (1.1, 1.4. 2.1-2.4, 3.1-3.1), Competencies (1-5)**

The purpose of this task is to arrive at a general understanding of the present-day policies that have been established to deal with the social problem under consideration. More specifically, policy analysis attempts to determine historical antecedents to existing policy; the values and goals implicit and/or explicit in a policy; and the sources – legislative, judicial or administrative – from which the current formalized policy has emanated. Within this context the student examines the scope of coverage, the kind and level of benefits to be provided in the interest of attaining the goals set forth in the policy, and other specific features that influence the manner in which social services are made available to the problem population. Consider how policies written to affect certain populations based on gender, sexual orientation, race and/or class.

**MID-TERM AND FINAL EXAMS ONLINE VIA ECOLLEGE (100 PTS EACH) - Goals & Competencies (1.1, 1.4. 2.1-2.4, 3.1-3.1), Competencies (1, 3)**

Exams will be scheduled and completed online via eCollege. Exam questions may consist of multiple choice, matching, short-answers and true false questions.

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**TOTAL POINTS AVAILABLE****500 PTS****Guidelines for all Written Work:**

Written work for this class must be in APA style using 12-point font. Grading criteria for written work includes: thoroughness, logical development of points, clarity of written expression, application of scholarly research and appropriateness of information presented as it relates to topic chosen. This is a graduate level course and expectations are considerably higher than those at an undergraduate level. It is important to demonstrate your ability to do research at the library, to critically analyze various positions, comparing and contrasting strengths and weaknesses, and presenting facts in a manner persuading the reader to his/her own conclusions. In conducting scholarly research, sources included should cover legislation and/or public documents, books and journal articles. Citations from course texts, the internet (unless accessing an on-line journal or government document), popular magazines or handouts given by the instructor do not represent scholarly research and should be used sparingly.

**CLASS ATTENDANCE AND 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. Students are expected to be on time and prepared to participate when class begins as well as be present throughout the entire class meeting. Classroom exercises, discussions, role plays, guest speakers and other in-class experiential exercises are essential for a student's professional learning and continued

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development of self-awareness. Tardiness (or early departure) of more than 15 minutes will count as .5 absence (2 tardies/early departures = 1 absence). A student is considered absent if he/she arrives more than 30 minutes late to class, leaves 30 or more minutes early or does not come to class.

The following penalties for absences (unexcused, or excused, according to university policy) will be administered:

Weekly	Up to 2 absences No penalty	3 absences 1 letter grade drop	4 absences Class grade of "F"	
Bi-weekly	Up to 3 absences No penalty	4 absences 1 letter grade drop	5 absences 1 letter grade drop	6 absences Class grade of "F"
Summer 10-week	Up to 1 absence No penalty	2 absences 1 letter grade drop	3 absences Class grade of "F"	

**ONLINE OR WEB-ENHANCED CLASSES:** Just as students are required to attend face-to-face classes, students are required to log in and participate in online components. To receive credit for attendance online via eCollege, students must log in and complete assignments in a timely manner. Not logging in to eCollege (which can be monitored by the instructor) and completing assignments online during the appropriate time is the equivalent of an absence for each week this occurs.

Final evaluation and grades depend on both presence and participation. Students' grades will be significantly impacted by inadequate participation or lack of required time commitment each week. Students are expected to spend a comparable amount of time in the online learning environment as they would in class (3 hours a week in the classroom). In addition, just as in traditional F2F classrooms, students are expected to spend time reading and studying class materials.

**NOTE: PROBLEMS WITH YOUR INTERNET CONNECTION AND/OR COMPUTER ARE NOT CONSIDERED AS REASONS FOR LACK OF PARTICIPATION.** You have access to the university's computer labs (in the social work department AND other campus facilities, including the library) as well as local libraries and other access to computers and ISPs. If you believe that you are unable to fulfill the requirements for the course you should talk with your instructor about the possibility of dropping or withdrawing.

Class participation has three components: (1) Appropriate 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 feedback if problems are evident.

**POLICY ON DUE DATES: Assignments are due as indicated in the course schedule below. All assignments must be in the Dropbox when they are due by no later than 11:59pm. There are no exceptions to this policy. NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED IN THIS COURSE. No assignments may be emailed directly to the professor. They will**

**not be graded. No assignments may be put in DocSharing with the exception of the PDF article of the journal that you are sharing with classmates. Assignments uploaded in DocSharing will not be graded.**

### **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 literary 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, Updated version 12.12

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 SCHEDULE**

<b>WEEK</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS</b>
<b>1</b>	01/14 – 01/20	Defining Social Welfare Policy (SWP) (Placing SWP in a historical context Influence of economic/Political Environment	Chapter 1 in Text
<b>2</b>	01/21 – 01/27	Policy Analysis Framework  Social Action and Advocacy in Social Work	Chapter 2 in Text
<b>3</b>	01/28 – 02/03	Influences of Religion on SWP The Making of	Chapter 3 in Text Chapter 8 in Text

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		Governmental Policy	
4	02/04-02/10	Discrimination	Chapter 4 in Text
5	02/11-02/17	Poverty in America	Chapter 5 in Text

6	02/18 – 02/24	Social Insurance Programs Public Assistance Programs	Chapter 10 in Text Chapter 11 in Text <b>Mid-term Examination due by 2/24 at 11:59pm on eCollege</b>
7	02/25-03/03	The American Health Care System Mental Health and Substance Abuse Policy	Chapter 12 in Text
8	03/04-03/10	Child Welfare Policies	Chapter 15 in Text <b>Organizational Analysis or Position Statement Paper is Due in the Dropbox by 3/10 at 11:59pm</b>
9	03/11-3/17	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
10	03/18 – 03/24	Criminal Justice System	Chapter 14 in Text
11	03/25 – 03/31	Housing Policies The Politics of Food Policy and Rural life	Chapter 16 & 17 in Text <b>Problem Statement Paper Due in the Dropbox by 4/1 at 11:59pm</b>

12	04/01 – 04/07	Privatization and Human Services Corporations	Chapter 6 in Text
13	04/08 – 04/14	Insurance Companies Non-profit Service Providers Pharmaceutical Companies Food/Energy/Communications industry	Chapter 7 In Text

14	04/15 – 04/21	Tax Policy and Income Distribution	Chapter 9 <b>Policy Analysis Paper Due in the Dropbox by 4/21 at 11:59pm</b>
15	04/22 – 04/28	International Perspectives on Social Welfare Policy	Chapter 18
16	04/29 – 05/05	Final Exam - On-Line	<b>Final Exam-On-line-Due by Tuesday, May 5, 2014 at 11:59pm</b>

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

### **Reference Material**

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