

WURZWEILER SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK YESHIVA UNIVERSITY
Ph.D. PROGRAM IN SOCIAL WELFARE

SWK 8296: SOCIAL POLICY
Fall 2019

Faculty/Instructor

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the world of policy analysis. It addresses postmodern challenges to scientific ethos and their implications for social workers seeking to undertake policy analysis in a credible, constructive, and critical manner. The course also provides working knowledge and requisite skills to enable social workers and other helping professionals to analyze policies and programs, with client advocacy, professional integrity, and social justice in mind. The course uses a framework (dubbed the 3Ps) that classifies policies as Products (legislation, bills), Processes (making policy, implementing policy), and Performance (policy outcomes, program evaluation).

The world of policy analysis presents formidable challenges to social workers and other helping professionals seeking to retain a sense of professional integrity as analysts while fulfilling the mandate to pursue social justice. Both integrity and social justice are two core values of the social work profession but in the world of policy analysis they may come into conflict with one another. Social workers and other helping professionals having a requisite set of conceptual, critical, practical, and technical skills are better able to adjudicate competing or conflicting demands of professional integrity and social justice. This course is meant to highlight what such skill sets entail, thereby enabling social workers and other helping professionals to effectively meet such challenges and to avoid conflating advocacy for and research about public policies.

The course highlights how policies are invariably value-laden. Policy analysts must possess conceptual and technical skills to enable them to identify and assess values that underlie policies in question and those that may be ignored or downplayed. Social justice is one such value that social workers use in their assessment of policies and in determining societal priorities. Policy analysis may serve different purposes, contingent upon the context in which it is carried out. As such, its relation to policymakers and others who have a stake or an interest in the particulars of any given policy complicates the role of the policy analyst. A related goal of the course is to show how policy analysis can be done in a way that enables social workers and other helping professionals to retain professional integrity. The integrity of policy analysts in general, and of agenda-driven policy analysts specifically, including social workers guided by the professional mandate to seek social justice, may be severely tested unless safeguards are in place.

Another goal of this course is to highlight those safeguards that enhance the integrity and legitimacy of the practice of policy analysis itself.

Readings and class discussions are designed to concentrate on approaches, paradigms, and analytic problems associated with policy analysis and policy development, as well as discussion of pertinent policy

issues. Examples of social policy proposals under consideration or recently acted upon by current and previous administrations will be used throughout the semester. In this regard, students are expected to keep up with the latest developments in policy and current news by through methods of your choice, including newspapers, television news, radio, podcasts, and in-depth publications, with emphasis on those areas of social welfare policy pertinent to students' research interests.

Note: The course may be revised periodically to adapt to emerging policy questions.

II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES (under review)

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Required Text

Caputo, R.K. (2014). *Policy analysis for social workers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN: 978-1452203270; Retail List Price: \$81.00; also available as an e-textbook 180-day rental or purchase from Vital Source, URL: <https://www.vitalsource.com/products/policy-analysis-for-social-workers-caputo-richard-k-v9781483321394>

IV. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Readings

It is expected that all reading assignments listed as "required" in the course outline and Canvas will be read and that students will make every effort to avail themselves of the recommended readings. In addition to the assigned readings, students are expected to skim news sources such as major national newspapers (such as *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, or *Wall Street Journal*), news radio (such as NPR), podcasts (such as Up First, The Daily, This Week with Sam Sanders, the Globalist, the Takeaway, or PRI's the World), television news (such as local news or BBC), and specialized or long form publications (Politico, the Hill, the Atlantic, or Vox). In-depth sources such as *Congressional Quarterly*, *Congressional Weekly*, and professional journals may also be useful. These sources will be extremely helpful to all students in preparing class assignments and participating in class discussions.

Each week, in class, you will have a chance to reflect on the readings, pose questions, and interact with your classmates. This will be part of your course grade.

Policy Analysis

The main assignment of the course is a policy analysis that can be tailored to a specific area of interest. Students are encouraged to consider an area that relates to the topics you expect to cover in your dissertation. The assignment will be scaffolded, meaning that it will be submitted in several parts over the semester, with opportunities to revise following feedback from the professor, from peers, and from the Writing Center. Specifics about the assignment and submission requirements will be available during the first week of class.

V. CLASS FORMAT

The course is face-to-face, and will involve lecture, class discussion, and small group work. In all aspects of the course, students are encouraged to draw upon course readings, their experiences, and outside literature to think analytically about current issues, problems and alternative solutions regarding policy

practice. Each student is expected to actively participate in-class discussions, contributing knowledge, experience, and ideas. The goal of class discussions is to engage with the topics and move the discussion forward. Details about weekly assignments and the expectations will be available via Canvas.

VI. COURSE GRADING

The University grading system will be applied. The grade will be based upon the extent to which the student meets the course objectives, as demonstrated in the form, content, and promptness of written assignments as well as class attendance and participation.

Criteria for final grades are:

- | | |
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| 1. Policy Analysis (including all components and versions) | 65% |
| 2. Online Participation | 35% |

VII. EVALUATION

Students are provided opportunity to evaluate doctoral courses. An online anonymous evaluation form pertaining to the course and instructor will be made available near the end of the semester. Evaluation, however, is ongoing and students are encouraged to provide feedback about their learning needs throughout the semester on the CANVAS course platform.

VIII. PLAGIARISM

Students should remember that the School will not condone plagiarism in any form and will sanction acts of plagiarism. A student who presents someone else's work as his or her own work is stealing from the authors or persons who did the original thinking and writing. Plagiarism occurs when a student directly copies another's work without citation; when a student paraphrases major aspects of another's work without citation; and when a student combines the work of different authors into a new statement without reference to those authors. It is also plagiarism to use the ideas and/or work of another student and present them as your own. It is not plagiarism to formulate your own presentation of an idea or concept as a reaction to someone else's work; however, the work to which you are reacting should be discussed and appropriately cited. Any student who can be shown to have plagiarized any part of any assignment in this course will automatically **FAIL** the course and will be referred to the Associate Dean for disciplinary action that may include expulsion.

IX. HIPAA ALERT

In line with the new HIPAA regulations concerning protected health information, it is important that you understand that any case information you present from your work, will need to be de-identified. What this means is that any information that would allow another to identify the person needs to be changed or eliminated. This includes obvious things like names and birth dates but may also contain other information that is so unique to the person that it will allow for identification, including diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender. If diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender is directly related to the case presentation it can be included if it will not allow for identification.

X. CONFIDENTIALITY

Given the nature of classroom discussion and the presentation of case materials and at times personal revelation in class, students are reminded that the same commitment to confidentiality with clients extends to classmates. What is shared in class stays in class.

XI. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who are enrolled in this course and who will be requesting documented disability-related accommodations should make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services, (646) 685-0118, as soon as possible. Once you have been approved for accommodations, contact me to ensure the successful implementation of those accommodations.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1, September 9-15

Introduction & Overview of the Course

- Overview of course and course assignments
- Social policy and social work: relationship and history
- Roles and responsibilities of social workers in the policy process
- The current social work policy agenda: federal, state and local

Required Readings

Mars, R. (Host). (2019, July 23). *Invisible women* [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from <https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/invisible-women/>.

Read through the policy agendas on the following websites, or those from social work organizations of which you are a member:

Council on Social Work Education: <https://cswe.org/Advocacy-Policy/Policy-Agenda>

National Association of Social Workers: <https://www.socialworkers.org/Advocacy/Policy-Issues>

Congressional Research Institute for Social Work and Policy: <https://crispinc.org/our-issues-2/>

NASW-New York City: https://www.naswnyc.org/page/Leg_Priorities

NASW-New York State: <https://naswnys.org/advocacy/issues/>

Recommended Readings

As listed on Canvas

Week 2, September 16-22

Policy Analysis and Policy Studies

- Historical Roots
- Contemporary Development of Policy Studies
- Think Tanks

Required Readings

Caputo, R.K. (2014). *Policy analysis for social workers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Appendix B: Historical Overview of Policy Analysis and Policy Studies.

Park, Y. (2008). Facilitating injustice: Tracing the role of social workers in the World War II internment of Japanese Americans. *Social Service Review*, 82(3), 447-483.

Park, Y. (2015). “A Curious Inconsistency” The discourse of social work on the 1922 Married Women’s Independent Nationality Act and the intersecting dynamics of race and gender in the laws of immigration and citizenship. *Affilia*, 30(4), 560-579.

Recommended Readings

As listed on Canvas

Week 3, September 23-29

Science, Values & Policy Analysis

- The postmodern challenge
- Social work and competing in the policy analysis arena
- Value-neutrality, value-relevance, and critical thinking

Required Readings

Caputo, R.K. (2014). *Policy analysis for social workers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 1: Science, Values, and Policy Analysis.

Krase, K. S. (2013). Differences in racially disproportionate reporting of child maltreatment across report sources. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, 7(4), 351-369.

Vanidestine, T. (2018). Conceptualizing “race” and racism in health disparities discourse: A critical discourse analysis. *Journal of Sociological Research*, 9(2), 1-20.

Recommended Readings

As listed on Canvas

Week 4, September 30– October 6

The Purpose of Policy Analysis

- Rationales for public policy
- Market considerations
- Distributional and other goals

Required Readings

Caputo, R.K. (2014). *Policy analysis for social workers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 2: The Purpose of Policy Analysis.

Other readings as listed on Canvas

Recommended Readings

As listed on Canvas

Week 5, October 7-13

Approaches to Policy Analysis

- A typology of roles
- Advocacy, ethics, and policy analysis
- Forming a policy agenda – what should be done
- Deciding on an appropriate type of analysis

Required Readings

Caputo, R.K. (2014). *Policy analysis for social workers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 3: Approaches to Policy Analysis.

Other readings as listed on Canvas

Recommended Readings

As listed on Canvas

Week 6, October 14-20

Policy as Product: Evaluating Policy Proposals

- Criteria for selecting policy proposals (e.g., effectiveness, efficiency, equity, liberty/freedom, political feasibility, social acceptability, administrative feasibility, and technical feasibility among others)
- Descriptive summary of policy proposals (e.g., “who gets what?”, “for what reasons?”, “under what conditions?”)

Required Readings

Caputo, R.K. (2014). *Policy analysis for social workers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 4: Evaluating Policy Proposals.

Other readings as listed on Canvas

Recommended Readings

As listed on Canvas

Week 7, October 21-27

Providing feedback: Workshopping peer reviews

(Possibly no class- Dr. Krase might be away. If so, class time will be replaced with on-line time)

Required Readings

Readings as listed on Canvas

Recommended Readings

As listed on Canvas

Week 8, October 28 – November 3

Policy as Product: Matching Policy Proposals to Problems

- Goodness-of-fit with analysis of social problem
- Criteria specific to eligibility rules
- Trade-offs in evaluating eligibility rules
- Funding of policy

Required Readings

Caputo, R.K. (2014). *Policy analysis for social workers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 5: Matching policy proposals to problems.

Other readings as listed on Canvas

Recommended Readings

As listed on Canvas

Week 9, November 4-10

Costs, Benefits and Risks: Applying Cost-Benefit Analysis

(Possibly no class- Dr. Krase might be away. If so, class time will be replaced with on-line time)

- Development of cost-benefit analysis (CBA)
- CBA and common sense
- Steps to CBA
- Monetizing impact
- Distributional effects and weights to CBA

- Risk assessment
- Identifying alternatives

Required Readings

Caputo, R.K. (2014). *Policy analysis for social workers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapters 6: Costs, Benefits, and Risks & 7: Applying cost-benefit analysis (CBA).

Other readings as listed on Canvas

Recommended Readings

As listed on Canvas

Week 10, November 11-17

Policy as Process: Making Policy

- Making laws
- Conceptual and theoretical considerations
- Practical consideration

Required Readings

Caputo, R.K. (2014). *Policy analysis for social workers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 8: Making policy.

Other readings as listed on Canvas

Recommended Readings

As listed on Canvas

Week 11, November 18-24

Policy as Process: Implementing Policy

- Theoretical considerations
- Practical considerations
- Street-level bureaucrats

Required Readings

Caputo, R.K. (2014). *Policy analysis for social workers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 9: Implementing policy.

Other readings as listed on Canvas

Recommended Readings

As listed on Canvas

NO CLASS- THANKSGIVING WEEK

Week 12, December 2 – December 8 Policy as Performance

- General considerations
- Main approaches to evaluation: Pseudo-evaluation, formal evaluation, & decision-theoretic

evaluation

Required Readings

Caputo, R.K. (2014). *Policy analysis for social workers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 10: Policy as performance.

Other readings as listed on Canvas

Recommended Readings

As listed on Canvas

Week 13, December 9-15

Evaluation, Values, and Theory

- Values and evaluation
- The role of theory in program evaluation and policy analysis

Required Readings

Caputo, R.K. (2014). *Policy analysis for social workers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 11: Evaluation, values, and theory.

Other readings as listed on Canvas

Recommended Readings

As listed on Canvas

Week 14, December 16-December 19

A Holistic Framework for Policy Analysis

- General principles, guidelines, and standards of evaluation practice
- An overarching framework for program evaluation and policy analysis

Required Readings

Caputo, R.K. (2014). *Policy analysis for social workers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Epilogue: A holistic framework for policy analysis.

Other readings as listed on Canvas

Recommended Readings

As listed on Canvas