SOCIAL POLICY
SWK 6210
SUMMER 2017

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Social Welfare Organization, a prerequisite for SWK 6210, offered students a foundation to understand policies within the historical and political context and to describe current patterns of social welfare service delivery. Building on this knowledge base, the Social Policy course focuses on policy analysis, policy practice and advocacy.

The course is divided into three components. The first part is an overview of social work roles in policy practice and the organizational context in which such practice often takes place. The second concerns the process of policy formulation and implementation. Students are provided with the tools necessary to analyze and evaluate existing social welfare policies at the federal, state, local, and agency levels within a social justice framework. The third component concerns the skills needed to influence policy decisions, with particular attention to advocacy. Issues concerning the promotion of social justice as well as the value and ethical issues that social workers confront in social welfare policy development and implementation activities are explored. Students have the opportunity to study social policies of relevance to their own practice.

A prerequisite for this course is the successful completion of first year course work, including SWK 6210. This course builds on this foundation knowledge and skills, and further develops students’ understanding of the centrality of social welfare policy to the context of social work practice, reinforcing and expanding knowledge and skills developed in the Social Welfare Organization course. This course is consistent with a social work problem solving approach, as taught in practice and research courses. The course content also relates to the macro content sections of Human Behavior and the Social Environment and builds upon content infused throughout the curriculum related to social justice, equity, and equality for populations in need and at-risk.

SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES

This course will help students achieve the following competencies:

Competency 3 – Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Social workers understand that every person, regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human
rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. Social workers:

- apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and

- engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

To measure this competency, students will:

3A – Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice
3B – Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice

**Competency 5 – Engaging in Policy Practice**

Students will understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare needs and services, are influenced by public policy, as implemented at the federal, state, and local levels. Students will understand the impact of policy in service delivery and the influence of practice in policy development. They will understand the role of social work in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels, and how social workers can actively engage in policy practice to effect change within these settings. Students will recognize and understand the historical, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. Students will become knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation.

Specifically, students will:

- Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal levels that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;

- Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;

- Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights, and social, economic, and environmental justice.

To measure this competency, students will:

5A – Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being
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.

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.

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.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
Students with disabilities who are enrolled in this course and who will be requesting documented disability-related accommodations are asked to make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services, Rochelle Kohn, Beren Campus, 917-326-4828, rkohn1@yu.edu, Abby Kelsen, Wilf Campus, 646-685-0118, akelsen@yu.edu, during the first week of class. After approval for accommodations is granted, please submit your accommodations letter to Disability Services Office immediately.

E-RESERVES (Electronic Reserve)
Most of the articles mentioned in the curriculum are available on electronic reserve (E-Reserve). You can access the full text articles from your home or from a university computer at no charge.
How do I Use E-RES?

1. Go to the library’s online resources page:
   http://www.yu.edu/libraries/online_resources.asp

2. Click on E-RESERVES. If you are off-campus, at this point you will be prompted for
   your Off Campus Access Service login and password.

3. Click on “Search E-RESERVES” or on “Course Index,” and search by instructor's name,
   department, course name, course number, document title, or document author. [All Policy
   Sequence courses will be listed under Stein, the sequence chair.]

4. Click on the link to your course.

5. Enter the password given to you by your instructor at the start of the term.

6. Locate and click on the item you wish to view. Titles beginning with "A", "An", or
   "The" are alphabetized under "A" and "T" respectively.

7. When the article text or book record appears on the screen, you can print, email, or save it
   to disk.

To view documents that are in pdf format, the computer you are using must have Adobe Acrobat
Reader software. You can download it FREE at
   www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html

TEXTS

A. Required Texts

   Boston, MA: Pearson.
   List: $166   ISBN-10: 020584 8974

   List: $92   ISBN-10: 0205763685


Many Internet booksellers discount new and used versions of these materials. Significant
savings are available through on-line book rentals.
B. Recommended Texts


List: $145.95 ISBN-10: 0495006238


List: $32.50 ISBN-10: 0415943965


**Instructional Methods, Course Requirements and Grading**

Class sessions include lectures that follow the progression of the course outline. Discussions focus on lecture content, reading assignments, current events relevant to social policy and student experiences in the field. A variety of techniques, including classroom exercises, audio-visual presentations and guest speakers may be used.

Students are expected to complete all assigned readings on time, attend class and participate knowledgeably in class discussions. *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal* or other national newspaper should be read daily.

**Assignments:**

1. **Mid-term.** There will a take-home assignment or in-class examination due on the 8th session.

This midterm will incorporate Competency 3, Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice; and Competency 5, Engaging in Policy Practice. As indicators of this competency, students will:

3A – Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice
3B – Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice
5A – Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being

Spring, 2017 Midterm Examination.

This is a take-home exam. You may use the textbook, other assigned reading materials, or class notes for this exam. You may also use other materials or websites to assist you,
although this is not a research assignment. (However, please do not read or use web encyclopedias, such as Wikipedia, Answers.com, or About.com.)

**DUE DATE: TBA, IN CLASS.** Two-thirds of a grade will be deducted from papers handed in after the due date.

Please answer both questions. Responses must be typed.

1. **Letter to the Editor: TANF**

After carefully reading about public assistance programs, especially the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, you have become concerned about the ability of poor parents to support their families. You are aware that welfare legislation often reflects the low esteem politicians and the public have regarding poor people. You note the increasing needs of low income families in the current economic environment. You want to make a difference – by helping to increase public awareness of the needs of poor families and suggest changes to the TANF program.

You decide to write a letter to the editor of *The New York Times* to state the need for change. Fortunately, your textbook (Karger & Stoesz) provides you with the information you need: the myths about poor families, data about poor families, what TANF provides to poor families, what families are required to do to continue receiving benefits, and who is not eligible for benefits.

Your letter should inform the public about:

- The goals of the TANF program
- Who is affected
- 2 problems with the program that you’d like to change, and why you’d like to change them
- How you propose to make the program more responsive to poor families
- You should anticipate an opposing argument that you can effectively counter

Your letter should be 3 double-spaced pages.
2. **Letter to a Legislator: Supporting Social Policy**

Our reading and class discussions to date considered important issues addressed by American social policy, including poverty and public assistance; minimum wage and the working poor; civil rights and discrimination; disaster assistance; and the public health implications of gun violence. You wish to influence and improve the legislative process by writing a letter to a key legislator. You hope to assure that policies and programs better reflect your social work values and the Social Work Code of Ethics.

Please identify a policy area or program – covered in class discussion or readings to date – that you’d like to be more responsive to community needs, and suggest a way to improve it. (Best to select a policy issue you care strongly about.

- Address your letter to an appropriate federal, or state legislator. This person should be named, with a title (for example, Chair, Health Committee) and address. In your address, legislators are called, “The Honorable [name].”

You may use the Internet or other materials to select a key legislator. For example, the League of Women Voters website is a helpful resource in the U.S. ([www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org), click on “Take Action,” then “Find Your Representative”) for identifying legislators, including those who represent you.

- Identify the problem area
- Identify who is impacted by the problem
- Propose 1 solution – a new or refined policy or program
- Back up your proposed solution with an argument why it will be beneficial. You should anticipate an opposing argument that you can effectively counter.

Your letter should be 2-3 double-spaced pages.

2. A **final paper** will be due on the **12th session**. A complete description of the assignment follows.

This assignment requires you to describe a social problem and evaluate an existing social policy designed to address the problem. Include the following:

1. Definition of the problem.
2. Extent of the problem.
3. Underlying causes and factors. Include at least two opposing views of what caused the problem.
4. Existing policy designed to address this problem.

5. Flaws in the existing policy. Why is it not working?

6. Changes in the policy consistent with social work values and policy positions.

Paper should be 10-12 pages excluding reference page and should incorporate the scholarly at least 5 non-assigned references from the professional literature. APA style is required.

This final will incorporate Competency 5, Engage in Policy Practice. As indicators of this competency, students will:

5A – Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being

**Grading Policy:**

The first assignment will be worth 35%, the final assignment 45% and constructive participation 20%.
UNIT I: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL POLICY AND POLICY PRACTICE

Session 1. Introduction and Course Overview (Competencies 3 & 5)

- Course overview and requirements
- Definitions of social policy

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


Session 2. Social Work Policy Practice (Competencies 3 & 5)

- Social policy and social work practice – the professional responsibility to engage in policy practice and policy advocacy
- Social work values, and ethical, analytic and political rationales for policy practice
- Roles and responsibilities of social workers in the policy process
- Diversity, social action and ethical considerations

Required Readings:


**Recommended Readings:**


**Session 3. The Policy Process** (Competencies 3 & 5)

- Policy practice in governmental, community and agency settings- how laws are enacted, the role of regulation and policy implementation through social programs
- Methods and models for policy analysis.
- Governmental policy making: Levels of social policy and structures for decision-making (legislative, judicial and executive roles)
- Role of policy practitioners

**Required readings:**


**Recommended readings:**


McCloskey, R.(1994). *The American Supreme Court*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press - Chapter 8 (The Presidency); Chapter 9 (The federal bureaucracy); Chapter 11 (Domestic policy).

UNIT II: THE SOCIAL WORKER AS A POLICY ANALYST

Session 4. Defining social problems (Competencies 3 & 5)

- How are social problems defined: the process and the players
- Causes of social problems
- Understanding the need for social change
- Problem definition, populations-at-risk and diversity
- Civil rights policy responding to diverse communities

Required readings:


Recommended readings:


Session 5. Theoretical perspectives: How Social Welfare Policies are Created (Competencies 3 & 5)

- Developing a policy agenda
- Poverty and its characteristics
- Minimum and living wages
- Relationship of policy and practice
- Policy and politics
- Powerless populations and unpopular issues

Required readings:


**Recommended readings:**


**Sessions 6. Models for Analyzing Social Policies** (Competencies 3 & 5)

- Recurring policy issues and options
- Formulating governmental policy
- Anatomy of policy proposals – analysis of selected policies
- Theories of policy development and implementation
- Models for policy analysis

**Required readings:**


**Recommended readings:**


**Session 7. Analysis of Selected Social Policies as They Affect Vulnerable Populations**  
(Competencies 3 & 5)

- Information for policy analysis
- Public assistance programs, including Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
- Selected topics: poverty, health care, social welfare policies affecting children & families, aging, social welfare policy

**Required readings:**


**Recommended readings:**


Session 8 and 9. **Health Care Policy** (Competencies 3 & 5)

- Health care policy
- Medicare, Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act
- The role of regulation in the policy implementation process
- Role of the policy practitioner
- Client empowerment

**Required readings:**

**Recommended readings:**


**UNIT III: THE SOCIAL WORKER AS A POLICY ADVOCATE: TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

Session 10. **The Role of Coalitions and Professional Organizations** (Competencies 3 & 5)

- Mental health policy
- Institutional vs. community care
- Building coalitions
- Understanding power and politics – government and advocacy organizations
- Influencing and organizing
- Developing political strategies

**Required readings:**


Recommended readings:


Sessions 11, 12, & 13. Controversial Issues in Social Policy (Competencies 3 & 5)

- Meeting legislators and officials, public hearings and testifying
- Educational and lobbying activities
- Using legislative, policy and advocacy websites
- How to reach and involve public opinion
- Powerless populations and unpopular issues

Required readings:

  - Session 11: Role of government, social policy, & social work. pp. 316 – 320.
  - Session 13: Electoral politics. Pp. 120 – 125.


Recommended readings:

Karger, H. Debates 2, 5, 8, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17.
Session 14: **Future Directions and Course Evaluation** (Competencies 3 & 5)

- Trends in social welfare
- The public vs. private sectors
- Trends in privatization
- Current policy issues
- Course review

**Required readings:**


**Recommended readings:**


Bibliography


**Journals** (sample list)

Administration in Social Work
AFFILIA, Journal of Women in Social Work
Child Welfare
Families in Society
Health and Social Work
International Journal of Social Welfare
Journal of Aging and Social Policy
Journal of Applied Social Sciences
Journal of Black Studies
Journal of Family & Economic Issues
Journal of Health and Social Policy
Journal of Politics
Journal of Poverty
Journal of Social Policy
Journal of Social Work
Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare
Social Service Review