

**The University of Texas At Austin  
School of Social Work**

**General Social Welfare Policy Analysis  
Social Problems & Social Welfare Policy Analysis  
(MSSW Policy II)**

<b>Course Number:</b>	SW N392P1	<b>Instructor:</b>	Noël Bridget Busch
<b>Unique Number:</b>	95680	<b>Office Number:</b>	3.130D
<b>Semester:</b>	Summer 2001	<b>Contact Information:</b>	471-3198 nbusch@mail.utexas.edu
<b>Meeting Time/Place:</b>	Mon & Wed 1:30 – 4:00 p.m. SW 2.106	<b>Office Hours:</b>	Mondays 12 – 1:30 p.m. and by appointment

### I. Standardized Course Description

This course focuses on the process of public and private development, including identification, selection, implementation, and evaluation. The course will include modules on process, problems, and programs specific to the concentration areas in the MSSW program. By the end of the semester students should be able to apply their knowledge of the social policy analysis process to selected policy issues related to administration and planning.

### II. Standardized Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course the students will be able to:

1. Critically evaluate the process of social welfare policy development at state and federal levels;
2. Research and utilize alternative frameworks for analyzing the development of social welfare policy;
3. Utilize frameworks for evaluating and analyzing the effects of social welfare policy;
4. Analyze contemporary issues in the development (and analysis) of social welfare policy;
5. Critically evaluate selected issues in health, mental health, substance abuse, disability, child welfare, income maintenance, gender or race policy;
6. Apply the underlying causes of social problems to the design of social welfare policy with a special emphasis on the causes and consequences of poverty;
7. Assess how the structure of current social welfare policies affects men, women, members of various ethnic groups, people of various ages, and other population groups;
8. Develop a plan for influencing social welfare policy as part of each social worker's commitment to promote social and economic justice.

### III. Teaching Methods

The primary teaching approach in this course will be collaborative learning. Material in the course will be presented through a variety of teaching strategies. For example, case studies, discussions, videos, small group work, field trips, new articles, examinations, readings, and lectures will be considered. Videos will be used as tools for addressing key concepts in the course. The goal is to stimulate critical thinking, intellectual creativity, and sharing of knowledge and skills with and through the class. Students will be responsible for material presented through all these activities. Assigned readings are for the week in which they are listed and students should complete the readings prior to class and be prepared to discuss them. However, the instructor may not review all assigned readings in class.

#### IV. Required Textbooks

Conley, D. (1999). Being Black, Living in the Red: Race, Wealth, and Social Policy in America. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Dash, L. (1997). Rosa Lee: A Mother and Her Family in Urban America. New York, NY: Plume.

Kozol, J. (1995). Amazing Grace. New York, NY: Perennial Press.

Other required readings will be distributed or put on reserve at the LRC during the semester.

#### V. Course Requirements

The final course grade will be determined based on scores of five (5) criteria that are designed to measure how well each student meets the course objectives. The additional information for completing each assignment is included later in the syllabus or will be distributed by the instructor later in the semester.

1. Participation, preparedness, and contribution to other's learning	10 points
2. Reaction paper to Kozol book	25 points
3. Reaction paper to Dash book	25 points
4. Group project & presentation focusing on a current social issue	<u>40 points</u>
	100 points

#### VI. Grading Scale

A = 90 – 100 points  
 B = 80 – 89.9 points  
 C = 70 – 79.9 points  
 F = < 70

#### VII. Students with Disabilities or Special Learning Considerations

Please let me know if you have a learning and/or another disability and if you require special accommodations. I am interested in this class being a productive learning experience for everybody.

#### VIII. Course Policies

1. Students are expected to attend **ALL** class meetings, to read **ALL** the assigned readings, and to participate in class discussions.
2. There are no "excused" absences. Students missing more than two (2) class sessions will receive a 10% reduction in their overall course grade. Students missing four (4) or more class sessions may receive an "F" for the course. The instructor may use her discretion. As soon as you know that you will not be attending class, please let me know.
3. Assignments are to be submitted according to the schedule. All late assignments will receive a **five (5) percent penalty per day** (weekend days will be included). All assignments are due at the beginning of the class period—assignments turned in after 5:30 p.m. will be considered late.

4. The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) is the style manual to be used for all assignments. Incorrect APA style will result a deduction of points on assignments.
5. Appropriate referencing is required. Failure to use quotation marks for direct quotes or citation for indirect quotations and/or others ideas may result in a “0” for the paper or an “F” for the course.
6. All papers are to be word-processed or typewritten, double-spaced, 10 – 12 point font, and “normal” margins.
7. University policies governing scholastic dishonesty, as presented in the General Information Bulletin and the brochure prepared by Student for Academic Integrity apply in this course. Scholastic dishonesty may result in a report to the Undergraduate Program Director, the Dean of the School of Social Work, and/or the Dean of Students. Students may receive an “F” for the course and other sanctions in accordance with University policies.

### **XIII. Explanation of Assignments**

#### **1. Participation, preparedness, and contribution to other’s learning**

Students will be evaluated throughout the semester on their individual contributions to class discussion through preparedness (prior reading and thinking on the topics) and readiness and willingness to discuss topics in class. The expectation is that in all assignments the professor and students will perform at her/his/their highest levels and at a level commensurate with quality graduate study, teaching, and scholarship. In addition, this course provides students the opportunity of on-going discussions, deliberations, negotiations, and learning from others that is involved in policy analysis and practice.

We will start every class period with a current policy check-in. Students should clip newspaper and/or magazine articles or summarize news coverage of topics relevant our topic and/or readings for the day and social policy.

#### **2. Reaction Paper to Dash Book**

Students will write a 5 – 6 page reaction paper related to the Dash book. The paper should be social problem and social policy focused. Therefore students should:

- a. Identify three of the most pressing problems faced by Rosa Lee’s family.
- b. Describe these problems using an ecological framework considering all components of the ecological perspective explained in class. Be thorough.
- c. Are these problems “social problems” or “private issues?” Explain.
- d. How do you view Rosa Lee and her children?
- e. Discuss the concepts of “worthy and “unworthy”.
- f. Social policies may play a role in preventing the spread of social problems. Describe a social policy, that may have prevented the spread or increase in magnitude of the problem you identified above.
- g. Are there social justice issues that should social workers should address on behalf of this family? Explain.

**Due: June 27<sup>th</sup>**

#### **3. Comparison Paper Using the Kozol & Dash Books**

Students will write a 5 – 6 page comparison reaction paper using the Dash and Kozol books. The paper should be social problem and social policy focused. Therefore students should address the following:

- a. What are the common themes that these stories share? (Framework should be a social problems and policy focus)
- b. Were there stark differences? What were they?

- c. How does an ecological framework for understanding these individuals, families, communities look similar or different? Be thorough.
- d. Do you view Rosa Lee and her children differently or the same as the families in Amazing Grace? Why or why not? Explain.
- e. Revisit the concepts of “worthy and “unworthy.” Discuss and explain.
- f. Social programs or provisions are often developed to alleviate the pain and suffering of people experiencing social problems. What programs or provisions would you develop in order to reduce or ameliorate the problem you identified above? Would you expect the same program to work in the DC community as the Bronx community? Explain.

**Due: July 18<sup>th</sup>**

#### **4. Group Project and Presentation**

Groups will be required to choose a social problem to investigate and present to the class. **The issue should be locally relevant (one this community or another Texas community is experiencing).** Groups should prepare an approximately 45 minute presentation on the topic, followed by 15 minutes of questions. (Use your time wisely—you need to cover all the relevant outline points—practice not being too brief or lengthy—after 45 minutes groups will be asked to wrap-up.) **Every group member is required to present relevant material during the presentation.** Group members will receive one grade, therefore if someone is not contributing to the group's work, I need to know earlier rather than later. Groups will be limited to 5 students. In order to complete this assignment groups should collect information through literature review, Internet searches, agency visits, in-person or telephone interviews, etc..

Criteria for grading:

- group's creativity of presentation,
- thoroughness and understanding of the topic,
- thoughtfulness in analyzing the issue,
- use of appropriate literature and other information,
- usefulness of materials distributed
- and presentation skills.

Each group should prepare handouts, visuals, or use technology. (Let me know what equipment you may require.) Be creative by using a clip of a relevant video (should not exceed 5 - 8 minutes), a case study, an agenda, charts, graphs, interviews with stakeholders or when appropriate, a member of the intended population, etc.

Groups should also prepare and distribute

- (1) a bibliography of academic resources on the topic
- (2) a list of community resources
- (3) other relevant handouts

The presentation should cover the following topics:

1. Nature and scope of the issue. Define the issue(s); number of people affected or institutions affected; economic and social consequences of the issue. How widespread is the problem? Who specifically is affected and how? What are the known or suspected causes of the issues/problem? Are other localities, communities, states, countries facing a similar issue?
2. Historical background on the problem. What are the historical antecedents of the problem/issue and what policies were developed previously? How important has the problem/issue been addressed by policy? How has the problem been previously handled? What is the legislative, judicial, administrative, and/or broader social economic, political, etc., history of the issue in Texas. What recent events led to the creation of the proposed policy?

3. Description of policy. What policies are being proposed and who is proposing them? Students should identify at least two policies related to the social problem identified. One policy or provision should come from the legislative agenda considered by the 77<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature. A program or agency policy should also be identified and discussed. (Look for organizations that may serve the indented population.) How is the policy intended to work? On what knowledge of scientific grounding, if any, does the policy rest? What resources and/or opportunities is the policy expected to provide (economic opportunity, cash, in-kind services, redistribution of goods and services, empowerment, status, prevention services, education, etc.). How will implement the policy? What are the short and long-term indented consequences? What funding is needed? Under what administrative will the policy be developed and implemented? What provisions are made for overseeing, evaluating, and coordinating policy outcomes? What criteria is being used in determining the effectiveness of the policy outcomes? How long is the policy expected to exist (is there a specific requirement for review and continuation)?
4. Involvement of social workers in dealing with the issue. Is social work, as a profession, directly or indirectly (locally, nationally, internationally) involved?
5. Stakeholders. Who are the major stakeholders involved in this issue—how are they involved? What do they say should happen to address the issue? Identify proponents and opponents, if appropriate.
6. Policy Analysis. Organize and present this section using one of the models studied in class. Students should choose one of the following models discussed in class; Burch, Chambers, Dobelstein, Jasson, Chamber, Gilbert and Terrell or DiNitto or self-identified model. You may need to do additional reading and evaluation of the models. Students should justify why they choose the model. (This means give a rationale for your choice by discussing criteria that the model included that you considered important.)
7. Conclusions and Recommendations. What are your recommendations regarding the legislative policy or proposed policy now that you have analyzed using one of the models? Would you suggest modifications? If so, what are they? How would you improve?

**Presentations will be scheduled during the last two class periods of the semester, July 25<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>.**

## **IX. Criteria for Evaluation of Written Work**

1. **Completeness and thoroughness**  
How fully has the issue been addressed? When appropriate, has the issue been sufficiently researched using library resources, interview, and other means in order to gain differing perspectives and full knowledge of the issue? Has the theoretical and empirical literature on the subject been incorporated in the paper? Does the paper leave the reader with the impression that major questions have been considered, or are important issues left unaddressed? Has the paper been carefully proofread?
2. **Organization and clarity**  
Is the paper well written and organized in a logical manner? Are there appropriate transitions between sentences, paragraphs, and sections? Are the sentence structure, syntax, and grammar of appropriate quality? Have headings and subheading been used to improve organization? Has the student addressed issues in a way that can be understood by someone unfamiliar with the issues as well as by someone knowledgeable about the issues?
3. **Referencing**  
Are there a sufficient number of appropriate references? Has referencing been done appropriately and according to the style of the American Psychological Association? Are the references well integrated in the text? Were the references obtained from

various sources (scholarly, Internet, interviews, etc.)? Are short direct quotations noted in quotation marks; are longer direct quotations indented, and are page numbers indicated for all direct quotations? Are indirect quotes paraphrased sufficiently? Were interviews of those who are involved with the creation or setting of policy and those impacted by the policy included in the analytical discuss of the policy?

**4. Originality and Creativity**

Have different viewpoints been compared and contrasted in a way that shows that the writer has a thorough understanding of the issues? Has the writer used his or her analytical skills in a way that suggests more than a restatement of what other have said about this issue? Has the student suggested points that have not been addressed by others?

## IX. Course Calendar

<b>Day &amp; Date</b>	<b>Chapter &amp; Lecture Topics</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
Wednesday, June 6		Dash, first half	<b>See email instructions</b>
Monday, June 11	Introduction		
Wednesday, June 13	Introduction	Conley, Chapter 1	
Monday, June 18	Ecological Perspective	Conley, Chapter 2	
Wednesday, June 20	Social Problems approach	Dash, second half	<b>Discussion of Dash book</b>
Monday, June 25	History Perspective Values Perspective	Kozol, first half	
Wednesday, June 27	Definitions of Policy		<b>Assignment # 2 Due</b>
Monday, July 2	Models	Conley, Chapter 3	
Wednesday, July 4	Models		<b>Holiday—No Class</b>
Monday, July 9	Models		
Wednesday, July 11	Special Topic Focus: Social Security	Kozol, second half	<b>Discussion of Kozol</b>
Monday, July 16	Special Topic Focus: Mental Health	Conley, Chapter 4 & 5	
Wednesday, July 18	Special Topic Focus: Poverty		<b>Assignment # 3 Due</b>
Monday, July 23			<b>Work on Group Projects—No in class meeting</b>
Wednesday, July 25		Conley, Chapter 6	<b>Assignment # 4 Due: Group Presentations</b>
Monday, July 31			<b>Assignment # 4 Due: Group Presentations</b>