

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN**

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

**SOCIAL POLICY ANALYSIS AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS**

<b>Course Number:</b>	SW382R	<b>Instructor's Name:</b>	Diana DiNitto
<b>Unique Number:</b>	63010	<b>Office Number:</b>	SSW 3.130B
<b>Semester:</b>	Spring 2006	<b>Office Phone:</b>	471-9227
		<b>E-mail:</b>	ddinitto@mail.utexas.edu
<b>Meeting Time/Place:</b>	T, 2:30-5:30 SSW 2.132	<b>Office Hours:</b>	T, 12:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m., 5:15 p.m.-5:45 p.m., and by appointment
		<b>Teaching Assistants:</b>	Monica Lenker and Kristie Kimbell

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course critically examines, from both historical and current perspectives, the overall structure of the American social welfare system with a focus on the disproportionate social, economic and political problems of vulnerable populations. The course also considers the parallel historical development of the profession of social work, including the ways in which it responded to social problems across key periods of social welfare policy development (for example, the New Deal, the War on Poverty, urban renewal, the contemporary period of welfare reform).

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. Understand the dominant historical themes that have shaped social welfare policy in the United States;
2. Understand the economic and political constraints and opportunities in the development of social welfare problems and policies;
3. Understand the relationship between the history of the social work profession and the development of social welfare policy;
4. Apply social work values to critically analyze social problems;
5. Gain knowledge and skills as a background for analyzing major policies that form the foundation of social welfare and analyze organizational, local, state, national and international issues in social welfare policy and social service delivery;
6. Understand social welfare policy arenas impacting service delivery, social work practice, and attainment of individual and social well-being;
7. Understand how social policies differentially affect diverse populations in American society;

8. Gain knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of social workers in the policy process, including advocacy, leadership, research, and community organizing, with the goal of promoting and advocating for social and economic justice through [both] organizational and social change.

**METHODS OF INSTRUCTION**

The primary methods of instruction are informal lectures (students are encouraged to ask questions and make comments during lectures), class discussions and exercises, and student presentations. Guest speakers will be invited to augment class sessions. Films and other learning devices may also be used.

**READINGS**

The primary textbook for the course is DiNitto, D. M., with Cummins, L. K. (2005). *Social welfare: Politics and public policy*, 6th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. You may purchase it at the UT Co-op, purchase it for online use at [www.safarix.com](http://www.safarix.com), obtain it through other sources you may know of, or use copies in the Learning Resource Center located in the bottom floor of the School of Social Work. Profits from new copies purchased are donated to the School of Social Work.

There will be many opportunities to do additional readings for the course assignments.

**COURSE AGENDA**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPICS, ASSIGNMENTS, and ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>READINGS</b>
Week 1 T, Jan. 17	Introductions  Overview of course  Rationalism, politics, and the polarization of policymaking in the U.S.  Historical period: Social welfare in colonial America  Historical presentation group meeting	DiNitto, Ch. 1: Politics, rationalism, and social welfare policy; Ch. 2: Government and social welfare, pp. 36-44
Week 2 T, Jan. 24	Class exercise: Public opinion and social welfare Finances in the welfare state Guest speaker? Historical period: Social welfare in pre-civil war America Historical period presentation group meeting	DiNitto, Ch. 2: Government and social welfare, pp. 44-79

Week 3 T, Jan. 31	Poverty in the U.S.  Class exercise: Developing a poverty line for Austin, Texas  Historical period presentation group meeting	DiNitto, Ch. 3: Defining poverty: Where to begin
Week 4 T, Feb. 7	Class presentation: Historical period: Civil War & post-war period  Social security, unemployment insurance, and workers' compensation  Guest speaker: Professor Kenneth Apfel	DiNitto, Ch. 4: Preventing poverty: The social insurance programs
Week 5 T, Feb. 14	Class presentation: Historical period: Progressive era  Social insurance, public assistance, and civil rights protections for individuals with disabilities  Guest speaker?  <b>Submit topic and plan for legislative analysis project</b>	DiNitto, Ch. 5: Helping the "deserving poor": Aged, blind, and disabled
Week 6 T, Feb. 21	Class presentation: Historical period: Great Depression and the New Deal  Child support enforcement and TANF in Texas with comparisons to other states  Guest speaker?	DiNitto, Ch. 6: Ending welfare as we knew it: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
Week 7 R, Feb. 28	Class presentation: Historical period: War, prosperity, and the Great Society  Have the poverty wars ended?  <b>Meet at LBJ Library &amp; Museum</b>	DiNitto, Chapter 9: Changing paradigms: The poverty wars
Week 8 T, Mar. 7	Class presentation: Historical period: Stagflation and conservatism  Food stamps and other nutrition programs  Class exercise: Eating on food stamps	DiNitto, Ch. 7: Fighting hunger, fighting fat: Nutrition policy and programs in the United States
Week 9 T, Mar. 14	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	<b>HAVE FUN!</b>

Week 10 T, Mar. 21	Mental health policy in Texas and beyond Guest speaker? Child welfare policy: Texas and beyond	DiNitto, Ch. 10: Providing social services: Help for children, the elderly, and individuals with mental illness, pp. 384-427
Week 11 T, Mar. 28	The aging of America and the social welfare response Legislative analysis presentations	DiNitto, Ch. 10: Providing social services: Help for children, the elderly, and individuals with mental illness, pp. 427-440
Week 12 T, Apr. 4	Social policy and the politics of gender (e.g., sexual assault, sexual harassment, reproductive rights) and sexual orientation (e.g., gay marriage, gay adoption, gays in the military) Guest speaker? Legislative analysis presentations	DiNitto, Ch. 11: Addressing civil rights and social welfare: The challenges of a diverse society, pp. 441-474
Week 13 T, Apr. 11	Social policy and the politics of race (e.g., civil rights, affirmative action, voting rights) and immigration Legislative analysis presentations	DiNitto, Ch. 11: Addressing civil rights and social welfare: The challenges of a diverse society, pp. 474-510
Week 14 T, Apr. 18	Health care Legislative analysis presentations <b>Drafts of legislative analysis projects due if you want feedback</b>	DiNitto, Ch. 8: Improving health care: Treating the nation's ills
Week 15 T, Apr. 25	This week we will participate in the 20 <sup>th</sup> Annual Heman Sweatt Symposium on Civil Rights. This year's topic is Health Care Disparity: A Civil Right Issue. In lieu of our regular class meeting, attend at least one of the symposium's events. Monday-Thursday's events are from 6 pm-8 pm; Friday's is 7 pm-9 pm. A schedule will be provided to you once it is finalized.	DiNitto, Ch. 8, Improving health care: Treating the nation's ills (con't.)
Week 16 T, May 2	Policy implementation and evaluation Discussion of Heman Sweatt symposium Legislative analysis presentations <b>Course Instructor Survey</b>	DiNitto, Ch. 12, Implementing and evaluating social welfare policy: What happens after a law in passed

---

Week 17

**Submit all final course work by 10 a.m. (no class meeting)**

May 9

## **STUDENT EVALUATION**

Your grade in this course will be based on (a) weekly submissions related to class readings, (b) a group presentation on a historical period in social welfare history, and (c) a legislative analysis project composed of a paper, editorial, and brief presentation in the form of mock legislative testimony.

### **A. Weekly Submissions**

At the beginning of each class period submit one sheet of paper with a) a paragraph that discusses two things you learned and why you found these points of particular interest, and b) a paragraph discussing two issues or questions that the readings raised for you. Papers should be single-spaced. If you do not submit this during the first 10 minutes of class you will not receive credit. Assignments will not be graded per se, but each assignment will receive a check, check plus, or check minus to indicate its quality as an indication of whether the material presented, particularly the questions or issues posed, reflect graduate level analysis. Though there is no grade for these assignments, every assignment that is not submitted will result in a reduction of one letter grade from your final course grade. Because illnesses or emergencies occur, missing one assignment or turning one in late will not result in a lower letter grade. It is wise not to utilize this provision as a “week off” because one cannot predict what might occur later in the semester.

### **B. Historical Period Presentation**

Students will work in groups of approximately 5 to develop interesting and informative presentations on a historical period in social welfare history. Students will draw numbers to form groups. The presentations should cover:

1. General economic and social conditions of the period and a feel for life during this period for men and women and members of different social classes and ethnic groups
2. Pressing social welfare problems of the period
3. General thought and philosophy of social welfare provision
4. Major new developments in meeting social welfare needs
5. Attention to developments (or lack of developments) in social welfare with regard to gender, age, disability, race/ethnicity, and related factors
6. The viewpoints/positions and roles of social work prototypes/social workers and social welfare and social work organizations in addressing social welfare problems
7. Accomplishments of prominent social work prototypes/social workers of the period.

Presentations should be creative and engaging. You may wish to use some PowerPoint slides with text, graphics, or photos, handouts, audio or video/film clips (documentaries of the time or popular films depicting the era), other media, skits acted by individuals portraying figures of the times discussing an issue or debating an issue, and/or brief class exercises. Presentations should be at least 45 minutes but no more than 60 minutes long.

**This presentation is worth 35% of the final grade.** Grades will be assigned for the group. Along with the materials you submit (PowerPoint, handouts, etc.), submit a sheet with each group member's name and the contribution he or she made to the presentation. Each group member should submit a sheet separately evaluating the group process and evaluating his/her own contribution to the process. It should be clear that each group member should participate fully in developing the presentation and presenting it if the group's goal is to make the highest quality presentation possible in addition to earning the best grade possible. Obviously, groups that go later will have more opportunity to develop their presentations and to learn by observing other groups' presentations. Since scheduling group meetings can be difficult, some class time will be devoted to group meetings. The course instructor is available for consultation during the class periods and at other times to meet with groups to discuss plans and help generate ideas.

### **C. Legislative Analysis Project**

The purposes of the legislative analysis project are to provide an opportunity to learn more about the legislative process and an important contemporary legislative issue of particular interest to the student, to develop skills in policy analysis, writing, and presenting that are critical to the profession of social work, and to learn more about different roles that social workers and others play in the policy process. **This project is worth 65% of the final grade. It will include (1) a 12- to 15-page (not including references), double-spaced paper, (2) a 750-word editorial that can be submitted to a newspaper(s), and (3) a brief (approximately 7- to 10-minute) class presentation in the form of legislative testimony.**

This project involves selecting a social welfare policy bill introduced in a recent session of the Texas legislature or the U.S. Congress. Suggested topics will be discussed in class. Students may meet with the instructor to discuss topics and plans for the project. Bill topics may include child welfare, health care, public assistance, mental health services, services to people with developmental disabilities, aging, immigration, gay rights, other human rights protections, or other social welfare policy issues. Students should identify legislators, organizations, groups, and committees that have worked on or are currently working on the policy issue of interest. Students may also wish to work with groups, organizations, or committees involved in the issue. Students should investigate the legislative history of the issue, become familiar with the bill and related proposals to introduce new legislation or modify existing legislation, seek the opinions of those with various views on the issue, and determine which groups and individuals (such as legislators, professional groups, citizen advocacy groups) are supportive of, opposed to, or neutral on the issue and why. Students may work in groups to gather information, but each student must independently write her or his paper analyzing the policy issues and presenting conclusions and recommendations. The editorial may be jointly authored. The

legislative testimony presentation may also be done with another student(s), in which case additional time will be allotted.

It may help to approach this project, particularly the 12- to 15-page paper, as if you were working as an aide for a state legislator, a policy analyst for a social welfare agency (governmental or private) or advocacy organization concerned about social welfare policy (such as the National Association of Social Workers or a human services coalition), or a staff member of a legislative committee. In any case, prepare a report to thoroughly familiarize your employer or others about the issue and help them decide what modifications, if any, are needed and why.

1. The 12- to 15-page paper should cover the following broad topics and specifics to the extent they are relevant to the bill you selected:
  - (a) **A brief introduction to the bill stating its importance (positive or negative) for social welfare policy in Texas or the nation.** The introduction should also include a brief statement of what you intend to accomplish in your paper.
  - (b) **A description of the problem/issue that necessitated or preceded the bill.** What is the nature of the problem? How widespread is it? How many people are affected? Who (everyone? the poor? particular age groups?) is affected and how? What are the known or suspected causes of the problem? How will (or does) the policy address the problem?
  - (c) **The historical background of the bill.** What are the historical antecedents of the bill or policy? How much attention has this problem received historically? How has the problem been handled previously? What is the legislative history of the bill or policy? How has the policy response changed over time? What recent events led to the creation of the proposed policy? When and how did the most recently proposed policy originate in Texas? What are the policies of other states or countries regarding the problem/issue?
  - (d) **A thorough description of the policy.** How is the policy intended to work? What resources or opportunities is the policy expected to provide (e.g., economic opportunity, cash, in-kind services, redistribution of goods and services, empowerment, status, preventive services, education, other)? Who will be covered by the policy and how (e.g., selective entitlement, universal entitlement, means testing, other)? How will the policy be implemented? What are the policy's intended short- and long-term goals and intended outcomes? Under what administrative auspices will the policy be further developed and implemented? What funding is needed? What provisions are made for overseeing, evaluating, and coordinating policy implementation? What criteria will be used to determine the policy's outcomes and effectiveness? How long is the policy expected to exist (i.e., is there a specific requirement for review and continuation)? On what knowledge base or scientific grounding, if any, does the policy rest? Is there empirical evidence that the policy may achieve its intended result?

- (e) **Identification of individuals and groups concerned about the policy issue and their positions on the matter.** Each student is encouraged to interview concerned individuals and groups (including elected officials, legislative assistants, members of citizens' or advocacy groups, human service providers, consumer groups, and others) and to attend meetings of organizations, agencies, and committees where the issue is discussed. Information gleaned from these activities should be incorporated in the analysis section of paper (see point f below) and cited correctly in the references. Do not simply list the individuals and groups concerned and their positions.
- (f) **An analysis of the policy. Parts f, g, and h are the heart of the paper and should comprise at half of the paper. Your analysis should reflect a model of policy analysis studied in this class or found in another source.** Be sure to introduce or provide a brief description of the policy analysis model. Address issues such as the value premises or ideological assumptions that underlie the policy. Are the goals just, democratic, and attainable? Do they contribute to a better quality of life for the target population by promoting social and economic justice, self-determination, self-realization, civil liberties or rights, empowerment, or other benefits, or do they adversely affect the quality of life of the target or other groups? The analysis should drive the way you use the model. The analysis should not be forced to fit the model. Depending on the bill and issue you have chosen, you may wish to rely on particular parts of the model and not others.
- (g) **Your conclusions.** Based on your objective analysis, what conclusions have you reached about the (proposed) policy? Are the goals politically feasible--i.e., is there sufficient support to pass the proposed legislation or to sustain its implementation? Is public sentiment favorable toward the goals? Are the goals of the proposed policy economically feasible--i.e., is sufficient funding available to implement the policy and is it likely that funding will be continued as needed in the future? Are the goals administratively feasible--i.e., are there responsible administrative agencies capable of effectively implementing the policy to achieve its stated goals? Are there alternative policies that might better achieve the goals? Is the policy important enough to justify the expenditure of scarce resources?
- (h) **Your recommendations.** What are your recommendations regarding the proposed policy? Do you recommend it as it is currently stated? Would you suggest modifications? How would you improve it?
- (i) **Ten or more scholarly references and three or more interviews correctly cited.** Include both theoretical and empirical scholarly references and be careful about dubious sources of information (e.g., nonscholarly references on the Internet) for your information. You may ALSO include references from the popular literature (newspapers, magazines) but these do not substitute for the minimum of 10 scholarly references.

THE POLICY ANALYSIS SHOULD BE A BALANCED, UNBIASED, CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE POLICY ISSUE OR PROPOSAL, PRESENTING ACCURATELY AND FAIRLY EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE AS WELL AS THE

POSITIONS OF PROPONENTS AND OPPONENTS. NO MATTER HOW STRONGLY YOU FEEL ABOUT THE POLICY ISSUE, YOU ARE PRESENTING AN OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS TO HELP OTHERS MAKE DECISIONS.

**A one-page description of the proposed topic of your paper and plans for analysis is due no later than the start of class on February 14. If you wish to receive feedback on your paper before submitting the final copy, you may do so no later than the start of class on April 18.**

2. Your editorial should be based on your research for the legislative analysis paper and the conclusions you have drawn from it. To prepare to write the editorial, study the op-ed page of newspapers such as the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Austin American-Statesman*, or your hometown paper and read the paper's instructions for submitting an editorial. Generally, they are about 750-words. If you decide to submit your editorial to a newspaper and it gets published, you can receive 10 extra points toward your final grade or I will treat you to lunch at the UT Club. Further instructions on writing an editorial will be provided.
3. Make a 7- to 10-minute presentation to the class in the form of mock legislative testimony. Take a couple minutes to set the stage by explaining the bill; then use the remaining time to present your testimony. To reinforce the points you make, use a handout such as a written version of your testimony or your editorial. Further instructions for developing and presenting legislative testimony will be provided.

The components of the legislative analysis project will be graded as a whole using the following criteria:

- (1) **COMPLETENESS AND THOROUGHNESS.** Has the writer/presenter sufficiently researched the issue using legislative and library resources, interviews, and other means to gain differing perspectives and thorough knowledge of the issue? Does the paper give the reader the clear impression that the major questions and issues have been fully considered and addressed? **MAXIMUM POINTS=25**
- (2) **ORGANIZATION AND CLARITY.** Are the written products and presentation organized in a logical manner? Has the writer used appropriate transitions between sentences, paragraphs, and sections and have **topical, descriptive headings** been used for sections? Are the sentence structure, syntax, and grammar correct? **HAS THE WRITTEN WORK BEEN CAREFULLY EDITED AND PROOFREAD** with attention to spelling, punctuation, and word choice? Has the material been presented in a way that can be understood by a reader unfamiliar with the issue, as well as someone who is knowledgeable about the issue? **MAXIMUM POINTS=25**
- (3) **REFERENCING.** Does the paper contain a sufficient number of references (a minimum of ten scholarly references and three interviews)? Has referencing been done appropriately and according to the style of the American Psychological Association (4th edition) manual? Are the references appropriately integrated within the text? **MAXIMUM POINTS=25**

- (4) ORIGINALITY AND CREATIVITY. Has the writer/presenter used her/his analytical skills in a way that indicates more than a restatement of what others have said about the issue? Has the writer compared and contrasted the various views on the subject in ways that show that he or she fully understands the issue(s)? Has the writer/presenter suggested relevant points that have not been addressed by others? Are the writer's/presenter's conclusions and recommendations well developed and supported?  
MAXIMUM POINTS=25

### Grading Scale and Calculation of Final Grades

Grades for the historical period presentation, legislative analysis project, and the final course grade will be assigned as follows:

- 94-100=A Work is exceptional with regard to all criteria.  
90-93=A-  
87-89=B+ Work is very good or good with regard to all criteria.  
84-86=B  
80-83=B-  
77-79=C+ Work is adequate with regard to all criteria.  
74-76=C  
70-73=C-  
67-69=D+ Work is inadequate with regard to some criteria.  
64-66=D  
60-63=D-  
50-59=F Work is inadequate with regard to most or all criteria.

### COURSE POLICIES

1. **Attendance and participation:** Your attendance, attention, and participation are expected for all class sessions for the **entire** class period. Unless absolutely necessary, please turn off cell phone ringers and refrain from text messaging and other non-class activities during the class period.
2. **Submission of weekly assignments:** Failure to submit more than one weekly assignment will result in a final course grade reduction of one letter grade for each assignment missed. No credit will be given for assignments submitted after the start (first ten minutes) of class.
3. **Scholastic dishonesty:** While scholastic dishonesty is not anticipated, students should be familiar with The University of Texas at Austin's policy on this subject found in *General Information 2005-2006* (<http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gi05-06/index.html>). Also see the web site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/index.php>). If you do not know how to reference others' work appropriately, now is the time to learn. Be especially careful about giving due credit to other authors in writing your papers. Indent direct quotes of 40 words (about 5 lines) or more; use quotation marks for shorter, direct quotes; and also give due credit for indirect quotes. Failure to do so will result in a grade of **zero**

for the assignment. **Scholastic dishonesty in this class may result in a grade of F for the course and reporting to the Master's Program Director, Dean of the School of Social Work or the school/college in which you are enrolled, and Dean of Graduate Studies.** Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failing the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced.

4. **Use of Blackboard web site:** Web-based, password-protected class sites using Blackboard software are available for all accredited courses taught at The University of Texas. Syllabi, handouts, assignments and other resources are types of information that may be available within these sites. Site activities could include exchanging e-mail, engaging in class discussions and chats, and exchanging files. In addition, class e-mail rosters will be a component of the sites. Students who do not want their names included in these electronic class rosters must restrict their directory information in the Office of the Registrar, Main Building, Room 1. For information on restricting directory information see <http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gi00-01/app/appc09.html>.
5. **Students with disabilities:** Any student with a documented disability (physical or cognitive) who requires academic accommodations should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities in the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259 (voice) or 471-4641 (TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.
6. **Safety:** As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community or attending meetings or events at off-campus locations. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practice related to agency and/or community safety. Students should also notify instructors regarding any safety concerns.

## **EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTOR**

Students will have two opportunities to evaluate the instructor. At mid-term, I will use my own form for obtaining your views on the course to date, and at the end of the term, I will use the official Course Instructor Survey (CIS) of the University of Texas at Austin, School of Social Work. Completion of these evaluations is, of course, voluntary, but they are helpful to the instructor. I am also available during office hours and at other mutually agreeable times to discuss the course with you.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Books, articles, and other references on social welfare policy are massive. Consult UT library resources and references lists at the end of each chapter in the assigned textbook.