

Course Number: SW 323K**Instructor:** Miguel Ferguson**E-mail Address:**miguelf@mail.utexas.edu**TA:** Sarah Diem

sdiem@mail.utexas.edu

Office Number: SSW 3.122b**Office Phone:** 232-5914**Unique Number:** 65200**Semester:** Fall 2006**Meeting Time/Place:** Mon-Weds 11:00-12:15/SSW 2.122**Office Hours:** After class or by appt.

SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMS, POLICIES, AND ISSUES

Course Description

This course is the second course in the social policy curriculum area. Prerequisites include Government 310L and 312L (or their equivalents), an introductory economics course, and admission to the social work major. This course is designed to provide students with the ability to analyze contemporary social welfare policy issues and programs and to understand the relationship between social policy and social work practice. The course focuses on the historical, political, economic, and other social conditions that influence policy development in the United States. Specific policy areas that are discussed are those in which social workers play major roles: income maintenance (with a focus on social insurance and public assistance), health, mental health, child welfare, and aging. Policy issues and programs are addressed as they affect majority groups as well as populations-at-risk (e.g., people of color, people with disabilities, women, GBLTs) with a particular emphasis on social and economic justice. Students learn to use policy analysis tools in order to understand how policy influences practice and planning decisions and how social workers can influence social welfare policy.

Standardized Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Understand significant historical events and persons that influenced the field of social work and social welfare policy;
2. Analyze the connections between the history and contemporary structures of social policy;
3. Understand the impact of economics, politics, and social values on the identification of social problems and policy formation in the United States and the ways that issues of diversity (such as culture, class, gender, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, and age) have been addressed;
4. Apply conceptual frameworks for analyzing the development of social welfare

policy;

5. Define key concepts in social welfare policy (e.g. universal, residual, public assistance, social insurance, cash, in-kind);
6. Understand the major policies that form the foundation of social welfare policy in the U.S.;
7. Apply relevant research frameworks for evaluating the effects of social welfare policy on national, state, and local populations and economically vulnerable sub-groups;
8. Analyze the impact of social welfare policy in terms of social and economic justice and the promotion of social work values;
9. Discuss trends in comparative international social policy;
10. Understand roles social workers play in the formation of social policy and the effects of social policies on social work practice;
11. Exercise policy advocacy skills at the legislative and organizational levels.

Note on safety: As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. 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 practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should also notify instructors regarding any safety concerns.

Note on UT disability policy: Any student with a documented disability (physical or cognitive) who requires academic accommodations should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities area of 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.

Teaching Methods

The method of the course is founded upon student participation. As professional advocates, it is essential for credentialed social workers to be able to articulate ideas clearly and persuasively. All students are encouraged to participate through discussions in class, via e-mail, or with the instructor or teaching assistant during office hours. The format will include lectures, videos, guest presentations, weekly readings, framed discussions, group exercises, and student briefings.

Required Readings

This course does not use a textbook. Rather, course readings are drawn from an extensive assortment of articles, book chapters, essays, and electronic media sources. The semester begins with a brief review of the evolution of social welfare policy in the U.S. Frameworks for understanding the origins of the modern welfare state are then developed. In particular, these frameworks seek to explain the patchwork of services that form the foundation of, as the title of a popular textbook describes, the “reluctant” U.S. welfare state. The course proceeds to examine trends in poverty, inequality, and social welfare across major historical eras, culminating in an examination of contemporary

problems and policies. Since the course is taking place in a presidential election year and while U.S. troops are engaged in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, the impact of U.S. foreign policy and electoral politics will be interwoven throughout the course. Because the past is prologue to the devolution that is currently taking place in the structure of relief and social welfare, by connecting historical efforts with contemporary policy responses we will be better equipped to understand and evaluate current social problems and attempts to address them via policy.

A packet of required readings is available at University Duplicating Service (471-1615) in the Business School. Please call ahead to make sure copies of the reading packet are available.

Course Requirements

There are no in-class midterms or final exams. Students will be graded on a series of proportionally weighted requirements, including:

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|-------|
| A) | Class Participation | (10%) |
| B) | Weekly Quizzes | (25%) |
| C) | Book Exam | (20%) |
| D) | Food Stamps Paper | (20%) |
| E) | Opinion Editorial | (25%) |

⊗ Class Participation

Students will be graded on the quality of their contribution to the collective learning pursuits of the class, including participation in class and group e-mail discussions and/or office visits with the instructor. Since attendance is a key condition of participation, more than two absences will result in a letter grade at *least* one grade below an “A”. Each subsequent absence will reduce the overall participation grade by one letter grade. At the end of the semester students will provide a self-assessment of their participation, to include extra-curricular activities that relate to course topics. Self-assessments will be used to inform the final participation grade.

⊗ Weekly Quizzes

Students will be given three (3) quizzes on a random basis throughout the semester. The quizzes will ask basic questions about class lectures and readings, so it will be important for students to be thoroughly familiar with the readings and lecture material previously discussed in class. Students will be allowed to drop the lowest grade they receive for a total of two quiz scores. Because of this drop policy, **no** make-up quizzes will be given.

⊕ Book Exam

Students will be tested on their knowledge of two books: Nickel and Dimed and Scratch Beginnings. Nickel and Dimed is available in paperback at local bookstores; Scratch Beginnings is available from the instructor. It is suggested that students read Nickel and Dimed first since Scratch Beginnings was written in response to it. The exam will cover primary points about policy made in both books and ask students to analyze strengths,

weaknesses, and similarities/differences between the books. **The exam will be held on October 22.**

** Additional Note: Adam Shepard, author of Scratch Beginnings, will be in Austin at BookPeople on January 29, 2009 to promote his book.*

⊗ **Food Stamps Report**

It is important for social work students to have personal experience with issues that affect low-income clients. You may elect to fulfill one of the following two options:

Option 1 – submit a 5-7 page report on what it was like to live within the budget and rules of the food stamp program for two weeks; or

Option 2 – submit a 5-7 page report that provides a detailed accounting of your food purchases/expenses for two weeks. The report should examine and compare these purchases in light of food stamp budget allowances and regulations. Both options are intended to familiarize students with the food stamp program, and to demonstrate your knowledge of program strengths and weaknesses. The reports may be submitted anytime during weeks 5-12 (Sept 22 – Nov 12). Whatever option you choose to pursue, the paper should include the following:

- 1) Be clear about which option you have chosen (and why);
- 2) Demonstrate an awareness of the rules that apply to the food stamps program;
- 3) Provide information about what it takes to apply for and receive food stamps;
- 4) Describe an appropriate food stamps budget for your household, and defend the appropriateness of the level you have chosen;
- 5) Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the program (conceptually and based on your experience) and recommendations to improve the program based on your analysis;
- 6) Clearly and accurately document your purchases during the two-week period; Summarize your experience (Was it valuable? What was learned? Etc.)

⊗ **Op-Ed/Briefing**

Students must team up with a classmate to develop an Opinion Editorial related to problems, issues, programs, policies and other material covered in class. Students who successfully publish an op-ed in any one of Texas' ten largest daily newspapers will receive an automatic 100% for the assignment. Students who have electronic versions of op-eds published in a large Texas daily will have two points added to the grade received from the instructor. Students will be required to succinctly summarize their Op-Eds in briefings in class during the final week of the course. Subjects selected for this assignment must be pre-approved by the instructor. **More information about this assignment will be given during the third week of class.**

Grades

Grades will be determined as follows:

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
59 and below	F

Course Schedule

Date	Description	Text/Readings
Week 1 8/25	Introduction and overview of the course Rules for being a conscious social worker	<i>No readings assigned</i>
Week 2 9/3	No class on 9/1 due to holiday Highlights of policy history Historical counterfactuals	
Week 3 9/8, 9/10	The Children's Bureau What caused the Great Depression?	Katz , "Introduction" "Georgia Sharecroppers" Barash , "Introduction"
Week 4 9/15, 9/17	Video/lecture: The Great Depression & The New Deal The G.I. Bill	Poole , "Now Mr. President" McElvaine , "Reactions to Hoover" Kiester , "The GI Bill..." Bauer , "Ralph Yarborough's ghost"
Week 5 9/22, 9/24	The War on Poverty and the Great Society From the war on poverty to the war on the poor * On 9/24 we will go to the LBJ library	Coontz , "American families in the 1950s" Moynihan , "Tangle of pathology" Middleton , "LBJ..." Chandler , "Curiously uninvolved"
Week 6 9/29, 10/1	Poverty and inequality in America Inequality: Poverty's kissin' cousin Myths and realities of poverty Class exercise	Sawhill , "Behavioral aspects of poverty" Pukstas , "Assessing the needs" Parish et al , "It's just that"

	Guest lecture: Prof. Art Sakamoto	<i>much harder”</i> Edin et al , “ <i>Peek inside the black box</i> ” Lowenstein , “ <i>Inequality conundrum</i> ”
Week 7 10/6, 10/8	Poverty cont’d The color of policy The Reconquista in Tejas	Karger , “ <i>Poverty tax</i> ” Sherman , <i>Af-Am and latino families..</i> ” Pettit , <i>Mass imprisonment..</i> ” Huntington , “ <i>The Hispanic challenge</i> ”
Week 8 10/13, 10/15	Myths and realities of welfare What’s right with welfare? Trends in family formation	Radey , “ <i>Frontline welfare work</i> ” Dolan et al , “ <i>Getting off TANF</i> ” Marchevsky , “ <i>Dropped from the roles</i> ”
Week 9 10/20, 10/22	Corporate welfare Corporations gonna get your mama Conservative philosophy *Book Exam 10/22	Blanchard , “ <i>Shadow welfare II</i> ” Madland , <i>Tale of two conservatives</i> ” Wolcott , “ <i>Red state Babylon</i> ” Barkan , <i>Alive and not well</i> ”
Week 10 10/27, 10/29	Electoral politics Talkin’ about taxes	Schnakenberg , “ <i>India has an all-women party</i> ” Holt , <i>EITC at 30</i> ” WSJ , “ <i>Their fair share</i> ” Lowenstein , “ <i>Who needs the mortgage % deduction?</i> ”
Week 11 11/3, 11/5	The demographics of aging Social Security: America’s #1 anti-poverty tool	Parrott et al , <i>Aging and social welfare</i> ” Galbraith , “ <i>The parent trap</i> ” Clearinghouse , “ <i>Survivors benefits</i> ” Trenkamp , “ <i>FS and SSI</i> ”
Week 12 11/10, 11/12	Health care in America Guest lecture: David Johnson *Food Stamp paper due	Lein & Angel , <i>Tattered health care...</i> ” Hadley et al , <i>Covering the uninsured</i> ” Rubin , “ <i>Untold health care</i> ”

		<i>story”</i>
Week 13 11/17, 11/19	International perspectives Family values vs. valuing families	Johnson , <i>Sorrows of empire</i> Midgley , <i>perspectives on globalization”</i>
Week 14 11/24	Towards the common good Frameworks for evaluating good social policy *No class on 11/26 due to Thanksgiving Holiday	Bernstein , <i>“Risk-shifting”</i> CAP , <i>“Poverty to prosperity”</i> APSA , <i>“American democracy”</i>
Week 15 12/1, 12/3	*Op-eds due 12/1 Op-ed discussions Course evaluations	No readings assigned

Selected Web Sites on Poverty, Antipoverty Policy, and Welfare Reform

Institute for Research on Poverty (www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp/)
See their own publications as well as their links to other poverty-related sources.
The IRP also publishes FOCUS, an excellent welfare and policy related journal.

Joint Center for Poverty Research (www.jcpr.org/)

The Urban Institute (www.urban.org/index.htm)

Center for Research on Child Well-being (www.wws.princeton.edu:80/~crew)

Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (www.mdrc.org)
The MDRC is a non-profit, nonpartisan social policy research organization. The MDRC leads the field in evaluations of welfare-to-work programs.

The Brookings Institution (www.brook.edu/)

National Center for Children in Poverty (<http://cpmcnet.columbia.edu/dept/nccp/>)

Mathematica Policy Research (www.mathematica-mpr.com/)

The following is a list of advocacy research organizations that provide useful information:

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (www.cbpp.org)

Center for Law and Social Policy (www.clasp.org)

Children's Defense Fund (www.childrensdefense.org/)

The Electronic Policy Network (www.epn.org)
The EPN has extensive links to other liberal research centers and The American Prospect, a bi-monthly journal.

Welfare Information Network (www.welfareinfo.org)

Government sites of interest:

U.S. Census Bureau (www.census.gov/)

Congressional Budget Office (www.cbo.gov)

Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)