

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

Course Number:	SW 382P	Instructor's name: Teaching Assistant	Miguel Ferguson Nancy Stewart
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Semester:	Spring 2000	Office Phone:	232-5914 miguel@mail.utexas.edu
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SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY

I. Course Description

This course examines from an historical perspective the overall structure of the current social welfare system, with a focus on the ways in which the social welfare system differentially affects vulnerable populations. The course will also emphasize the historical development of the social work profession, including the ways in which it responded to the demands of social problems across key periods of social welfare policy transformations. This is the first of a 2-course policy sequence in the MSSW program. In Policy II you will learn about methods for current policy analysis and evaluation, and you will have the opportunity to analyze in-depth a policy of interest to you (e.g., a specific bill passed by the most recent Texas legislature).

II. Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students should:

1. Understand the dominant historical themes that have shaped social welfare policy debates(s), knowledge which is essential for the development of a useful policy orientation toward contemporary issues;
2. Understand how social, economic, demographic and political forces have influenced, for better or worse, the development of social welfare programs;
3. Understand the interrelationships between the social work profession and the institutional setting within which it developed;

4. Be familiar with the changes in the nature of social problems as well as changes in knowledge and understanding of the factors causing these problems;
5. Gain knowledge about the basic structure; laws, and parameters of current social welfare institutions;
6. Acquire knowledge in diverse policy arenas such as income maintenance, social welfare, health, and social services for vulnerable populations;
7. Understand the ways in which social policies differentially affect majority groups, women, and ethnic minorities, and;
8. Become familiar with the roles and responsibilities of social workers in the policy process.

III. 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 during office hours. The format will include lectures, videos, guest presentations, weekly readings, framed discussions, group exercises, and student briefings. Assigned readings are for the week in which they are listed. Students are expected to complete the weekly readings prior to class and be prepared to discuss them.

IV. Required Course Readings

Two books and a selected set of readings are used in this class. We begin the semester by reviewing the evolution of social welfare policy in the U.S. We will then develop frameworks for understanding the origins of the modern welfare state, and, in particular, seek to explain the patchwork of services that form the foundation of the “Exceptional” U.S. welfare state. We then examine the trends in poverty, inequality, and social welfare across major historical eras, culminating in an examination of contemporary reform efforts, issues, and problems. Interwoven throughout the course is the fascinating history of the social work profession and key historical persons who contributed greatly to the profession and to policy formation. Who were the influential men and women who form part of the heritage of our profession? 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.

Texts: Required

Katz, Michael B. (1997). In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America. New York: Basic Books.

Albelda, Randy & Tilly, Chris (1997). Glass Ceilings and Bottomless Pits: Women's Work, Women's Poverty. Boston, MA: South End Press.

Texts: Recommended

DiNitto, Diana (1999). Social Welfare: Politics and Public Policy, 5th edition. Needham Heights, MA. Allyn and Bacon.

Selected Readings:

A packet of supplemental readings will be kept on reserve at the School of Social Work Learning Resource Center (1st floor of the School of Social Work). A copy of the supplemental readings will also be available at Longhorn Copy.

V. Course Requirements

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

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|----|--------------------------|-------|
| A) | Class Participation | (10%) |
| B) | Weekly Quizzes | (20%) |
| C) | Food Stamps Report | (25%) |
| D) | Newspaper Report | (20%) |
| E) | Biography/Issue Briefing | (25%) |

Class Participation

Students will be graded on the quality of their contribution to the collective learning pursuits of the class, including participation in and outside of class, group e-mail discussions, and/or office visits with the instructor. At the end of the semester each student will provide a graded self-assessment of class participation. The instructor will use these in determining the final participation grade for the course.

Weekly Quizzes

Students will be given six (6) quizzes throughout the semester. Students will be allowed to drop the lowest grade they receive for a total of five quiz scores. The quizzes will ask basic questions about class notes and readings, so it will be important for students to read the week's assigned readings *before* each class and to be familiar with material discussed in class the previous week. Quizzes will be administered on a random basis and may be given at any time during the three-hour course period.

Food Stamps Report

It is important that social work students have some 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 which provides a detailed accounting of your food purchases/expenses for two weeks. The report will then 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 during weeks 5-12 (Feb. 21-April 17). More information will be provided about these reports during the second week of class.

Newspaper/Journal Article Review

Describe and review 3 associated newspaper/journal articles that have been written on a topic that is related to subjects covered in class. The review should be 4-5 pages with 12 point font and 1.5 spacing. The review will be evaluated on how well you respond to the following:

- a) A brief abstract (of not more than 100 words) to include the general nature of the articles and the authors' principal points or conclusions;
- b) Reference to the primary problem or policy related issues the authors address;
- c) A summary and evaluation of the key findings and the evidence the authors use to support them;
- d) The relevance of the articles to major points and issues addressed in class; and,
- e) A critical assessment of the authors' main points.

Because this is a short paper, you will need to be concise, making your points clearly and succinctly. Your review should provide a critical analysis of the articles rather than just a general description or summary. In other words, your point of view is more important than merely summarizing the main issues. Please submit a copy of the articles along with your review. The papers are due by Week 10 (*April 3rd*).

Historical Biography/Issue/Policy Presentation

Students must team up with a classmate to develop a presentation based on an investigation and/or evaluation of an important historical or contemporary character and the interaction of that individual with a key issue or policy. Your choice of presentation subject should directly relate to issues and time periods covered in class. Students will be expected to select a topic that has been approved by the instructor and present a 15-20 minute briefing in the final weeks of class. **More information about this assignment will be given during the third week of class.**

⊕ Extra Credit

Students may receive extra credit for attending meetings of the Bertha Capen Reynolds Society (BCRS), a social justice group run by social work students. Meetings are once a month, and are advertised in advance via e-mail. To receive credit, students must attend a meeting and submit a one-half to one page description of and response to the meeting. Students will receive one (1) grade point credit for attending up to three meetings.

Grades

Grades for the course will be determined as follows:

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

Course Evaluation

At midterm students will have the opportunity to anonymously evaluate the course and the instructor. Feedback from this evaluation will be used, to the extent possible, to strengthen the remainder of the course. At the end of the term students will have the opportunity to evaluate the course and the instructor using the official Course Instructor Survey of the UT-Austin. Of course, constructive feedback on the class is welcome throughout the duration of the term.

VI. Class Expectations

1. **Attend class regularly.**
Material necessary for successfully completing the assignments will be taken out of the textbook as well as out of in-class materials, such as lectures, videos, guest speakers, etc.
2. **Turn assignments in on the due dates.**
Late assignments will not be accepted unless prior approval has been obtained from the instructor and/or a catastrophic event has occurred.

3. **Follow the rules of scholastic honesty.**
Assignments which show evidence that they have not been completed directly by the student will not be accepted and may result in automatic failure for the course.
4. **Use feedback from the instructor and other students.**
Comments from the instructor, TA, and other students should be used to strengthen writing skills and prepare students to successfully complete all of the assignments.
6. **Offer feedback.**
Student feedback about the course is welcome and the course will be viewed as a joint effort between students and the instructor. An informal mid-term evaluation will be conducted to identify strengths and weaknesses of the course. These comments will then be used to improve the remainder of the course.
7. **Participate in class and electronic discussions.**
A class e-mail list will be set up during the first week. Students are encouraged to use email to continue class discussions, to challenge ideas presented in class or in the readings, or to inform the class of appropriate events in the school, campus, or community. Although a free exchange of ideas is to be encouraged, differences in values, opinions, and ideas with other students and guest speakers should be respected.
8. **Present written and oral presentations professionally.**
Grades will be lowered if assignments are not completed clearly and thoughtfully. Students should proofread writing samples and minimize grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.
9. **Maintain professional standards at your volunteer placement.**
Treat clients with dignity and respect and abide by confidentiality rules and the code of ethics of the National Association of Social Workers.

Course Schedule

Date	Description	Text/Readings
Week 1 Jan 24	Introduction and overview of the course Rules for being a conscious social worker Assertiveness Training: K.Armenta & J. Avery	* All readings other than Katz and Albelda & Tilly [hereafter, A&T] are on reserve.
Week 2 Jan 31	Our English heritage Theories of the welfare state Poorhouses The Social Gospel Movement	Katz, chap. 1, <i>The origins and failure of the poorhouse</i> Rauschenbusch, <i>The present crisis</i> , pp. 235-271 Bettman, pp. 42-45, 67-81, 148-151
Week 3 Feb 7	Scientific Charity Charity Organization Societies The Progressive Era The Children's Bureau	Katz, chap. 3, <i>The theory and practice of scientific charity</i> Sinclair, chap's 13-14, pp. 125-140 Gordon, <i>Social insurance and public assistance</i>
Week 4 Feb 14	Mothers' Pensions Video/lecture: The New Deal and the Great Depression The War on Poverty	Katz, chap. 5, <i>Saving children</i> Ladd-Taylor, <i>Before the baby comes...</i> Abramovitz, chap 7, <i>The emergence of the modern welfare state</i>
Week 5 Feb 21	Myths and realities of poverty Competing perspectives on poverty Inequality in America Class exercise	Katz, chap. 9, <i>The war on poverty...</i> A&T, chap's 1-2 DHS, <i>The food stamp program in Texas</i> DiNitto, <i>The thrifty food plan...</i> Sklar, <i>Boom times for billionaires</i>
Week 6 Feb 28	Welfare reform PBS video: Welfare as we know it What charity can and cannot do	Ehrenreich, <i>Nickel and dimed...</i> Bane, <i>Welfare as we might know it</i> Dodson, chap. 4, <i>Losses and loathing in the welfare years</i>

Week 7 March 6	PBS video cont'd Myths and realities of welfare What's right with welfare? Comparing welfare with SSI	Katz, chapter 10, <i>The war on welfare</i> A&T, chap. 7 Raphael, <i>Keeping women poor</i> Rector, <i>Why Congress must reform welfare</i>
Week 8 March 13	No class – Spring break	
Week 9 March 20	Affirmative Action Discrimination and Racism Education and employment	A&T, chap. 4 Hacker, <i>Being black in America</i> West, Beyond affirmative action
Week 10 March 27	The demographics of aging Social Security: America's #1 anti-poverty tool Reforming Social Security	DiNitto, chapter 4, <i>The social insurance programs</i> Nygaard, <i>Social security reform</i> Ferrara, <i>Social security is still...</i>
Week 11 April 3	Health care policy in the U.S. The basics of managed care Discrimination in health care Guest lecture: Prof. King Davis	DiNitto, chap 8, <i>Improving health care</i> Steinmo & Watts, <i>It's the institutions stupid!</i>
Week 12 April 10	Comparative perspectives on the U.S. welfare state Family values vs. valuing families Global dimensions of policy Guest lecture: Prof. Robert Jensen	A&T, chaps. 8-9 Wilson, <i>A broader vision</i> <i>Six years of NAFTA...</i> Jensen, <i>Corporate power...</i>
Week 13 April 17	Frameworks for evaluating good social policy Towards the common good	A&T, chap.10 Funciello, <i>Ending poverty as we know it</i> Nader, <i>Billions for corporations...</i>
Week 14 April 24	Student presentations	No readings assigned

Week 15 May 1	Student presentations	No readings assigned
Final exam period, if needed	Student Presentations	

Full Citations for Reserve Readings

Week 1

No reserve readings assigned.

Week 2

Rauschenbusch, Walter (1914). The Present Crisis. Chapter 5 in Christianity and the Social Crisis. New York: The Macmillan Co.

Bettman, Otto. (1974). The Good Old Days: They Were Terrible! New York: Random House.

Week 3

Gordon, Linda. (1992). Social insurance and public assistance: The influence of gender in welfare thought in the United States, 1890-1935. American Historical Review, February, p. 19-54).

Sinclair, Upton. (1906). The Jungle. New York: Bantam Books

Week 4

Abramovitz, M. (1988). The Great Depression and the Social Security Act: The emergence of the modern welfare state. Chapter 7 in Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy from Colonial Times to the Present. Boston, MA: South End Press.

Ladd-Taylor, Molly. (1986). Raising a Baby the Government Way: Mothers' Letters to the Children's Bureau, 1915-1932. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.

Week 5

Sklar, H. (1997). Boom times for billionaires, bust for workers and children. Z Magazine (November), 32-37.

Week 6

Bane, M. J. (1997). Welfare as we might know it. The American Prospect(Jan-Feb.), 47-53.

Dodson, Lisa. (1998). Losses and loathing in the welfare years. Chapter 4 in Don't Call Us Out of Name: The Untold Lives of Women and Girls in Poor America. Boston, MA.: Beacon Press.

Ehrenreich, Barbara. (1999). Nickel and dimed: On (not) getting by in America. Harpers Magazine. January.

Week 7

Rector, R. (1995). Why congress must reform welfare (#1063): Heritage Foundation.

Raphael, Jody. (1999). Keeping women poor: How domestic violence prevents women from leaving welfare and entering the world of work. Chapter 3 in Battered Women, Children, and Welfare Reform: The Ties That Bind. Ruth Brandwein (ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications.

Week 8

Spring Break

Week 9

Hacker, Andrew. (1992). Being black in America. Chapter 3 in Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal. New York: Ballantine Books.

West, C. (1993). Beyond Affirmative Action: Equality and Identity. Chapter 5 in Race Matters. Vintage Books.

Week 10

Ferrara, Peter J. (1999). Social security is still a bad deal for today's workers. The Cato Institute, Nov. 29, SSP. #18.

Nygaard, Jeff. (1999). Social Security reform: The organizing opportunity of a lifetime. Z Magazine, April.

Week 11

Steinmo, S. & Watts, J. (1995). It's the institutions, stupid! Why comprehensive national health insurance always fails in America. Journal of Health Politics, Policy, and Law, Summer, pp. 329-372.

Week 12

Jenson, Robert (1999). Corporate power is the central issue. *Austin-American Statesman*, December 10, A-10.

Wilson, W. J. (1996). A broader vision: Social policy options in cross-national perspective. Chapter 8 in When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor. New York: Random House Inc.

Week 13

Funciello, T. (1993). Ending poverty as we know it. Chapter 9 in Tyranny of Kindness: Dismantling the Welfare State to End Poverty in America (pp. 297-320): Atlantic Monthly Press.

Nader, Ralph. (1996). Billions for corporations, bills for people. Chapter 6 in Corporations Are Gonna Get Your Mama: Globalization and the Downsizing of the American Dream. Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press.

Week 14

No reserve readings assigned.

Week 15

No reserve 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/~crcw)

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)

