

SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY

Social Work 382P
Spring, 2001
Unique #: 60495

Mon/Wed 5:00—8:00
Room: 2.118

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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).

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.

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.

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

Three 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, as the course text describes, the “reluctant” 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 problems and policies. 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.

Anelauskas, Valdas (1999). Discovering America As It Is, Atlanta, GA., Clarity Press, Inc.

Jansson, Bruce S. (2000). The Reluctant Welfare State: American Social Welfare Policies – Past, Present, and Future, 4th edition, Belmont, Cal. Wadsworth.

Schor, Juliet (1998). A Sustainable Economy for the 21st Century, New York, Seven Stories Press.

A packet of other required readings will be available at Longhorn Copy.

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 Response Papers | (20%) |
| C) | Book/Video Review | (20%) |
| D) | Food Stamps Report | (25%) |
| E) | Policy 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 class and group e-mail discussions and/or office visits with the instructor/TA. At the end of the semester students will provide a self-assessment of their participation to the instructor.

Weekly Response Papers

Students will be graded on the submission of nine (9) one to two page, 1.5 spaced, **typed** response papers to each week's scheduled readings. Each response should include a brief summary of the central issues and your response to any of the author's (or authors') main points. With multiple readings, the response papers should be synthetic; that is, highlight the main points and your response to the readings taken as a whole. In your papers, feel free to ask questions about issues that are confusing you, about theory or methods, implications, etc. The purpose of the response papers is to motivate you to read the weekly material critically and allow you an opportunity to think through the readings. The papers will be due at the beginning of class (Monday) each week. Students may turn in no more than one response per week.

Book/Video Review

Students must write a review of one book and one movie selection from the following list. The book and movie must come from the same policy era. The review should be 5-7 pages, 12-point font and 1.5 spaced. The grade for the assignment will be based on how clearly you describe the content of the book/movie and how you respond to the following:

- a) What main points are presented?
- b) How effectively do the book and film cover the subject of poverty, social policy, etc? Why/why not?
- c) How well do the book and video relate to each other and to the information that has been discussed in class?
- d) Would you recommend the book and video? Why/why not?

Because this is a short paper, you will need to be concise, making your points clearly and succinctly. Please note that your critical point of view is more important than merely summarizing the main issues and activities of the book and film.

Assignment Due Date: Please notify me of the book and movie you plan to review by the 4th week of class (Monday, February 5). The papers are due by the beginning of Week 9 (March 26).

The following is a selection of titles that has been arranged according to three pivotal eras of social policy and chosen on the basis of relevance to the poverty/social policy domain we will be discussing in class. *You may also review other selections not included in the following list with the approval of the instructor.*

Progressive Era – Great Depression

<u>Book Title</u>	<u>Movie Title</u>
The Jungle/King Coal (Upton Sinclair)	The Orphan Train
The Orphan Trains: Placing Out in America (Marilyn Irvin Holt)	Entertaining Angels: The Dorothy Day Story
How The Other Half Lives (Jacob Riis)	Grapes of Wrath
Twenty Years at Hull House (Jane Addams)	Matewan
Grapes of Wrath (John Steinbeck)	King of the Hill

Post WWII – Reagan

<u>Book Title</u>	<u>Movie Title</u>
The Unraveling of America (Allen Matusow)	Malcolm X
The Autobiography of Malcolm X (Malcolm X)	El Norte
The Other America (Michael Harrington)	Norma Rae
Free to Choose (Milton Friedman)	9 to 5
For the Common Good (H. Daly & J. Cobb)	Harvest of Shame (VIDCASS 5120 Benson Collection LAC-Z)

Post Reagan – Present

<u>Book Title</u>	<u>Movie Title</u>
All Over but the Shoutin’ (Rick Bragg) or Bastard Out of Carolina (Dorothy Allison)	Roger and Me/The Big One
The Bell Curve (R. Hernstein & C. Murray)	Hoop Dreams
The Visible Poor (Joel Blau)	La Ciudad
So You Think I Drive a Cadillac? (Karen Seccombe)	The Saint of Ft. Washington
Lives On The Line (Martha Shirk et al)	South Central
There’s Nothing in the Middle of the Road But Yellow Lines and Dead Armadillos (Jim Hightower)	Manufacturing Consent

Food Stamps Report

It is important that social work students 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 during weeks 5-12 (**February 19-April 16**). 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 (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;
- 7) Summarize your experience (was it valuable? What was learned? Etc.)

Social Welfare Briefing

Students must team up with a classmate to develop a presentation or briefing paper based on the investigation and evaluation of a particular social welfare policy or program as it relates to problems, issues, programs, and other material covered in class. Students may choose to either present their briefing in class during the final two weeks of the course or submit a 5-7 page briefing paper to the instructor and fellow class members. Subjects selected for this assignment must be pre-approved by the instructor. The briefings may also take place during the three-hour period scheduled for the course final. **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 Social Welfare Action Alliance, (formerly known as the Bertha Capen Reynolds Society), a social justice education/action group run by social work students. 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 each meeting attended (up to a three grade-point maximum).

Grades

Grades will be determined as follows:

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

Course Evaluation

At mid-term 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 School of Social Work at the UT-Austin. Of course, constructive feedback on the class is welcome throughout the duration of the term.

Course Schedule

Date	Description	Text/Readings
Week 1 1/22	Introduction and overview of the course Rules for being a conscious social worker Theories of the welfare state	<i>No readings</i>
Week 2 1/29	Highlights of social work history The Children's Bureau Social Gospel Movement	Bettman, pp. 42-45, 67-81, 148-151 Good Girl Work, chap's 2,3 &6 Jansson, chap 6
Week 3 2/5	What caused the Great Depression? Video: The New Deal and the Great Depression	Jansson, chap's 7-8 Ladd-Taylor, <i>Before the baby comes...</i> Terkel, <i>Hard Times...</i>
Week 4 2/12	The War on Poverty and the Great Society Social Movements in the 60's * note: class will meet at the LBJ library	Jansson, chap. 9 Matusow, chap. 7, <i>Civil Rights: Triumph and Retreat</i>
Week 5 2/19	Poverty and inequality in America Myths and realities of poverty Is inequality immoral? Class exercise	Anelauskas, ch. 2 Ehrenreich, <i>Nickel and dime...</i> Sklar, <i>Boom times for billionaires</i>
Week 6 2/26	Poverty cont'd Welfare reform PBS video: Welfare as we know it	Anelauskas, ch. 1 & 3 Dodson, <i>Losses and loathing in the welfare years...</i> Jansson, chap. 11
Week 7 3/5	Myths and realities of welfare What's right with welfare?	Anelauskas, chap's 10-11 Rector, <i>Why Congress must</i>

	What charity can and cannot do	<i>reform welfare</i> Chute, <i>Faces in the Hands</i>
Week 8 3/19	Corporate welfare Corporations gonna get your mama What's an economy for? Guest lecturer: Prof. Bob Jensen	Anelauskas, ch. 8 Hightower, <i>Getting a leg up on corporations</i> Nader, <i>Billions for corporations...</i> Lipman, <i>Senate passes legislation...</i> Jensen, <i>Corporate power...</i>
Week 9 3/26	The demographics of aging Social Security: America's #1 anti-poverty tool	Brandstrader, <i>From baby boom to geezer glut</i> DiNitto, chap. 4 * Book/movie review due
Week 10 4/2	Health care policy in the U.S. Inequalities in health care Managed care or managed costs? Guest lecture: Prof. King Davis	DiNitto, chap. 8 Jansson, pgs 365-368, 381-382 Steinmo & Watts, <i>It's the institutions stupid!</i>
Week 11 4/9	International perspectives Family values vs. valuing families Free trade vs. Fair trade	Anelauskas, ch. 13 & pp. 112-115, 156-161, 189-191 America, <i>Fighting against sweatshop abuses</i> Morris, <i>Free Trade...</i> Moore, <i>Nafta's Great!</i>
Week 12 4/16	Towards the common good Frameworks for evaluating good social policy	Jansson, chap's 13-14 Schor, <i>A sustainable economy...</i> * Food stamps report due
Week 13 4/23	Student Policy Briefings	Jansson, <i>Ethical, analytic, and political rationales for engaging in policy advocacy</i> Loeb, <i>We don't have to be saints</i> Schneider & Lester, Chap. 2

Week 14 4/30	Student policy briefings Last regular class day	No readings assigned
Final exam, if needed	Student Policy Briefings	

Full Citations for Reserve Readings

Week 1

No reserve readings assigned.

Week 2

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

Gourley, Catherine. (1999). Good Girl Work: Factories, Sweatshops, and How Women Changed Their Role in the American Workforce. Brookfield, CT.: Millbrook Press.

Week 3

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

Terkel, Studs. (1986). Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression. New York: Pantheon Books.

Week 4

Matusow, Allen J. (1984). Civil Rights: Triumph and Retreat. Chapter 7 in The Unraveling of America: The History of Liberalism in the 1960s. New York: Harper & Row.

Week 5

Ehrenreich, B. (1999). "Nickel and dimes: On (not) getting by in America." Harpers Magazine (January).

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

Week 6

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

Week 7

Chute, Carolyn. (2000). Faces in the Hands. In I Was Content and Not Content: The Story of Linda Lord and the Closing of Penobscot Poultry. Carbondale, Il.: Southern Illinois University Press.

Rector, R. (1995). Why Congress Must Reform Welfare. Washington D.C., Heritage Foundation.

Week 8

Hightower, J. (1997). Getting a Leg Up On Corporations. There's Nothing In The Middle of the Road But Yellow Stripes and Dead Armadillos. New York, Harper Perrenial: 28-39.

Jensen, R. (1999). Corporate power is the central issue. Austin-American Statesman. Austin, TX: A-10.

Lipman, L. (2000). Senate passes legislation to phase out estate taxes. Austin-American Statesman. Austin, TX: A-17.

Nader, R. (1996). Billions for Corporations, Bills for People. Corporation Are Gonna Get Your Mama: Globalization and the Downsizing of the American Dream. K. Danaher. Monroe, ME, Common Courage Press: 69-72.

Week 9

Brandstrater, J.R. (2000). *From baby boom to geezer glut* [internet listing]. Scientific American 2000 [cited 12/28/2000 2000]. Available from <http://sciam.com>.

DiNitto, Diana. (2000). Preventing Poverty: The Social Insurance Programs. Chapter 4 in Social Welfare: Politics and Public Policy. 5th ed. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Week 10

DiNitto, Diana. (2000). Improving Health care: Treating the Nation's Ills. Chapter 8 in Social Welfare: Politics and Public Policy. 5th ed. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

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

Week 11

Fighting against sweatshop abuses (2000). America. **182**: 7-12.

Moore, M. (1997). NAFTA's Great! Let's Move Washington to Tijuana. Downsize This! Random Threats From An Unarmed American. New York, Harper Books: 275-281.

Morris, D. (1996). Free Trade: The Great Destroyer. The Case Against The Global Economy And For A Turn To The Local. J. Mander and E. Goldsmith. San Francisco, Sierra Club Books: Chapter 19, 218-228.

Week 12

No reserve readings assigned.

Week 13

Jansson, Bruce S. (1999). *Ethical, Analytic, and Political Rationales for Engaging in Policy Advocacy*. Chapter 2 in Becoming an Effective Advocate: From Policy Practice to Social Justice. Pacific Grove, Cal.: Brooks/Cole Publishing.

Loeb, Paul R. (1999). *We Don't Have to Be Saints*. In Soul of a Citizen: Living With Conviction in a Cynical Age. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Schneider, Robert L., and Lori Lester. (2001). *Advocacy: A New Definition*. Chapter 2 in Social Work Advocacy: A New Framework for Action. Stamford, CT.: Brooks/Cole Publishing.

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)

