

SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY

Social Work 382P
Spring, 2003
Unique #: 61930

Tuesdays 8:30-11:30
Room: 2.132

Instructor: Miguel Ferguson
Phone: 232-5914
E-mail: miguel@mail.utexas.edu
Office #: 3.122b
Office Hours: After class or by appt.

Teaching Assistant: Jim Currier, MSW
Phone:
E-mail: mahalanobis@austin.rr.com
Office #:
Office Hours:

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.

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.

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 of 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.
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, films, 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 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. 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 are the influential men and women who form part of the heritage of the social work 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.

A packet of required readings is available at University Duplicating Service (471-1615). 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) | Quizzes | (20%) |
| C) | Book Review | (20%) |
| D) | Food Stamps Report | (25%) |
| E) | Op-ed/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. 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 the instructor.

⊗ Weekly Quizzes

Students will be given six (6) quizzes throughout the semester. 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. Depending on the results of a class vote, quizzes may be administered on a random or a scheduled basis. Students will be allowed to drop the lowest grade they receive for a total of five quiz scores. Because of this drop policy, no make-up quizzes will be given.

⊕ **Book Review**

Students must write a critical review of one book from the following list. 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 and movie and how you respond to the following:

- a) What main points are presented?
- b) How effectively does the book cover the subject of poverty, social policy, etc? What are the primary strengths and weaknesses?
- c) How well does the book relate to the information that has been discussed in class?
- d) Would you recommend the book? 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.

Assignment Due Date: The papers are due by the beginning of Week 10 (March 18).

Note: Except in the case of emergencies, and then only with the permission of the professor, **late writing assignments will not be accepted without penalty**. Students are expected to turn in all required assignments on the agreed upon due date **at the beginning of class**. Assignments turned in after class starts will be considered late. Late assignments will be assessed point penalties at the rate of four (4) points each day late. If there is an unavoidable and compelling problem, then the student should see the professor and negotiate another due date in advance.

Books:

- 1) The Corner: A Year In the Life of An Inner-City Neighborhood, by David Simon & Edward Burns
- 2) Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America, by Barbara Ehrenreich
- 3) Stupid White Men: And Other Sorry Excuses for the State of the Nation, by Michael Moore
- 4) The Lost Children of Wilder: The Epic Struggle to Change Foster Care, by Nina Bernstein
- 5) Compassionate Conservatism: What it is, What it Does, and How it Can Transform America, by Marvin Olasky

- 6) The Price of Motherhood: Why the Most Important Job in the World is Still the Least Valued, by Ann Crittendon

⊗ **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 during weeks 5-11 (**February 18-April 1**). 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 (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.)

⊗ **Op-Ed/Social Welfare Briefing**

Students must team up with a classmate to develop an op-ed and/or policy briefing 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 who successfully publish an op-ed in a medium to large newspaper will receive an automatic 100% for the assignment and will not have to complete a briefing presentation. Student policy briefings will be conducted in class during the final two weeks of the course. Subjects selected for this assignment must be pre-approved by the instructor. If extra time is needed, 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.**

Grades

Grades will be determined as follows:

92-100	A
91-83	B
82-74	C
73-65	D
64 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 1/14	Introduction and overview of the course Rules for being a conscious social worker Video: Influencing State Policy	<i>No readings</i>
Week 2 1/21	Theories of the welfare state The Children's Bureau Highlights of social work history	Loeb, <i>We don't have to be saints</i> Katz, <i>Introduction</i> Holt, <i>A Plan for "Little Wanderers"</i> Katz, <i>The Origins and Failure of the Poorhouse</i>
Week 3 1/28	What caused the Great Depression? Video: The Great Depression The Social Security Act	Fisher, <i>The Great Depression</i> Abramovitz, <i>Great Depression and the SS Act</i> Bragg, <i>Movers: The foothills</i> Goldberg et al, <i>Aid to Dependent Children is born</i>

Week 4 2/4	The War on Poverty and the Great Society Social Movements in the 60's * note: class will meet at the LBJ library	Coontz, <i>American families in the 1950s</i> Janssen, <i>Domestic policy during the Kennedy Presidency</i> Neubeck & Cazenave, <i>The demise of AFDC...</i>
Week 5 2/11	Student day at the legislature *No Class*	
Week 6 2/18	Poverty and inequality in America Myths and realities of poverty Is inequality immoral? Class exercise	Chute, <i>Faces in the hands</i> Shirk et al, <i>Palmerton, PA</i> Krugman, <i>For richer...</i>
Week 7 2/25	Poverty cont'd Welfare reform Video: Legacy	Haskins & Primus, <i>Welfare reform and poverty</i> Rector, <i>myth of widespread American poverty</i> Cnaan & Boddie, <i>Charitable Choice...</i> <i>CPPP, Food stamp demand on the rise...</i>
Week 8 3/4	Video: cont'd Myths and realities of welfare What's right with welfare?	Weil, <i>Ten things everyone should know...</i> Olasky, <i>Government programs...</i> Cox & Alm, <i>By our own bootstraps</i> Gilens, <i>Racial attitudes...</i> Ehrenreich, <i>Evaluation</i>
Week 9 3/11	No class – Spring Break	<i>No readings assigned</i>
Week 10 3/18	Corporate welfare Corporations gonna get your mama What's an economy for? Guest lecturer: Prof. Bob Jensen *Book review due*	Ivins & DuBose, <i>Life in the oil patch</i> Moore, <i>Dow wow wow</i> Cagan & DeMause, <i>Stealing home</i> Editors, <i>The Great Recusal</i>

Week 11 3/25	Talkin' about taxes We're all on welfare now	Sklar, et al, <i>Shortchanging the minimum wage</i> Beverly, <i>What social workers need to know...</i> Reich, <i>Whose tax cuts?</i>
Week 12 4/1	The demographics of aging Social Security: America's #1 anti-poverty tool Guest lecturer: TBA * Food Stamps report due*	Ball & Bethell, <i>Bridging the centuries</i> Orszag et al, <i>Social security and the tax cut</i> Markides & Black, <i>Race, ethnicity, and aging...</i> Goodman, <i>Don't bet your retirement on it</i>
Week 13 4/8	International perspectives Family values vs. valuing families Free trade vs. Fair trade Presentation: Comparative policy outcomes	Herman, <i>Free trade...</i> Jesuit & Smeeding, <i>Poverty levels in the developed world</i> Williamson et al, <i>Alternative approaches to trade</i>
Week 14 4/15	Towards the common good Frameworks for evaluating good social policy Class exercises	Reich, <i>The long view...</i> Crittendon, <i>The welfare state...</i> United Nations, <i>Universal declaration of human rights</i>
Week 15 4/22	Student policy briefings *Op-ed due*	Student research
Week 16 4/29	Student policy briefings Last regular class	Student Research
Final exam, if needed	Student Policy Briefings	

Full Citations for Reserve Readings

Week 1

Class reading assigned.

Week 2

No readings – MLK Jr. holiday

Week 3

Loeb, P. R. (1999). We Don't Have to Be Saints, in *Soul of a Citizen: Living With Conviction in a Cynical Age* (pp. 34-57). New York: St. Martin's Press.

Katz, W. L. (2001). Introduction. In W. L. Katz & L. R. Lehman (Eds.), in *The Cruel Years: American Voices at the Dawn of the 20th Century* (pp. xii-xliv). New York: Apex Publishing.

Holt, M. I. (1992). A Plan for "Little Wanderers", in *The Orphan Trains: Placing Out in America* (Chapter 2). Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

Katz, M. (1996). The Origins and Failure of the Poorhouse, in *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America*. New York: Basic Books.

Week 4

Fisher, H. (1997). The Great Depression, *Comrades: Tales Of A Brigadista In The Spanish Civil War*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

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

Bragg, R. (2001). Movers, *Eva's Man* (pp. Chapter 9). New York, N.Y.: Knopf.

Goldberg, G., & Collins, S. (2001). Aid to Dependent Children is Born, *Washington's New Poor Law: Welfare Reform and the Roads Not Taken* (pp. Chapter 2). New York, N.Y.: Apex Press.

Week 5

Coontz, S. (1992). "Leave It to Beaver" and "Ozzie and Harriet": American families in the 1950s, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (pp. Chapter 2). New York: Basic Books.

Janssen, B. S. (1993). The Era of Federal Social Services in the New Frontier and the Great Society, *The Reluctant Welfare State: A History of American Social Welfare Policies* (2nd ed., pp. 200-239). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Co.

Neubeck, K., & Cazenave, N. (2001). The Demise of AFDC as a Legacy of White Racial Backlash, *Welfare Racism: Playing the Race Card Against America's Poor* (pp. Chapter 5). New York, N.Y.: Routledge.

Week 6

Chute, C. (2000). Faces in the Hands, *I Was Content and Not Content: The Story of Linda Lord and the Closing of Penobscot Poultry* (pp. 85-94). Carbondale, Il.: Southern Illinois University Press.

Shirk, M., Bennet, N. G., & Aber, J. L. (1999). Palmerton, Pennsylvania, *Lives On The Line: American Families And The Struggle to Make Ends Meet* (pp. Chapter 1). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Krugman, p. (2002, October 20). For Richer: How the permissive capitalism of the boom destroyed American equality. *New York Times Magazine*.

Week 7

Haskins, R., & Primus, W. (2001). *Welfare reform and poverty* (4). Washington D.C.: Brookings Institute.

Rector, R. (1998). *The Myth of Widespread American Poverty* (1221). Washington D.C.: Heritage Foundation.

Cnaan, R. A., & Boddie, S. C. (2002). Charitable choice and faith-based welfare: A call for Social Work. *Journal of the National Association of Social Workers*, 47(3), 225-235.

Hagert, C. (2002). *Food stamp demand on the rise, but over 3 million eligible Texans still do not get benefits* (no. 173). Austin, TX: Center for Public Policy Priorities.

Week 8

Weil, A. (2002). *Ten things everyone should know about welfare reform* (A-52). Washington D.C.: The Urban Institute.

Olasky, M. (2000). Government Programs Cannot Solve Poverty, *Compassionate Conservatism: What it is, What it Does, and How it Can Transform America* (pp. 409-417). Boston: The Free Press.

Cox, M., & Alm, R. (1999). By Our Own Bootstraps, *Myths of Rich and Poor: Why We're Better Off Than We Think* (Chapter 4). New York, N.Y.: Basic Books.

Gilens, M. (1999). Racial Attitudes, the Undeserving Poor, and Opposition to Welfare, *Why Americans Hate Welfare* (Chapter 3). Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press.

Ehrenreich, B. (2001). Evaluation, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America* (pp. 193-221). New York, N.Y.: Henry Holt.

Week 9

No class – Spring Break

Week 10

Ivins, M., & Dubose, L. (2000). Life in the Oil Patch: Bush's Oil-Field Career, *Shrub: The Short But Happy Political Life of George W. Bush* (pp. Chapter 2). New York, N.Y.: Vintage Books.

Moore, M. (2001). *Dow Wow Wow, Stupid White Men...And Other Sorry Excuses for the State of the Nation!* (pp. Chapter 3). New York, N.Y.: Harper-Collins.

Cagan, J., & deMause, N. (1998). *Stealing Home, Field of Schemes: How the Great Stadium Swindle Turns Public Money into Private Profit* (pp. Chapter 2). Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press.

Editors. (2002, February 25). The great recusal. *American Prospect*, 13.

Week 11

Sklar, H., Mykyta, L., & Wefald, S. (2001). Shortchanging the minimum wage, *Raising the Floor: Wages and Policies That Work For All Of Us* (pp. 49-64). New York: Ms. Foundation for Women.

Beverly, S. (2002). What social workers need to know about the Earned Income Tax Credit. *Social Work*, 47(3), 259-266.

Reich, R. (2002). Whose tax cuts? *American Prospect*, 13.

Week 12

Ball, R. M., & Bethell, T. N. (1997). Bridging the Centuries: The Case for Traditional Social Security. In E. R. Kingson & J. H. Schulz (Eds.), *Social Security in the 21st Century* (pp. Chapter 18). New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press.

Orszag, P., Kogan, R., & Greenstein, R. (2002). *Social Security and the tax cut: The 75 year cost of the tax cut is more than twice as large as the long-term deficit in Social Security*. Washington D.C.: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Markides, K., & Black, S. (1996). Race, Ethnicity, and Aging: The Impact of Inequality, *handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences* (4th ed., pp. Chapter 9). New York, N.Y.: Academic Press.

Goodman, E. (2002, July 27). Don't bet your retirement on it. *Austin-American Statesman*, pp. A-14.

Week 13

Herman, E. S. (2001). *Free trade: The sophistry of imperialism*. Z Net on-line [2002, December 4].

Jesuit, D., & Smeeding, T. (2002). *Poverty Levels in the Developed World* (321). Syracuse, N.Y.: Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs.

Williamson, T., Imbroscio, D., & Alperovitz, G. (2002). Alternative Approaches to Trade, *Making a Place for Community: Local Democracy in a Global Era* (pp. Chapter 13). Taylor & Francis Group: New York.

Week 14

Reich, R. (1992). *The Long View: A Decent Working Society, I'll Be Short: Essentials for a Decent Working Society* (pp. Chapter 6). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Crittendon, A. (2001). The Welfare State Versus a Caring State, *The Price of Motherhood* (pp. Chapter 10). New York, N.Y.: Henry Holt.

Universal declaration of human rights. United Nations. Available: <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html> [2002, December 4].

Week 15

No reserve readings assigned.

Week 16

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/~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)