

SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY

Social Work 382R
Spring, 2003
Unique #: 63225

Tuesdays 8:30-11:20
Room: 2.132

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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). This is the first of a two-course policy sequence in the MSSW program.

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

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

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 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, research, and community organizing, with the goal of promoting and advocating for social and economic justice through [both] organizational and social change.

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. Since the course is offered during an election year when U.S. troops are engaged in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, the impact of U.S. foreign policy and presidential 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). 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:

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|----|---------------------|-------|
| A) | Class Participation | (10%) |
| B) | Quizzes | (20%) |
| C) | Book Review | (20%) |
| D) | Food Stamps Report | (25%) |
| E) | Op-ed/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.

⊗ Quizzes

Students will be given five (5) quizzes throughout the semester. The quizzes will ask basic questions about class notes and readings over 2-3 weeks, 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 four quiz scores. Because of this drop policy, **no** make-up quizzes will be given. Quizzes will be given on the following dates: February 8 & 22, March 8 & 29, and April 19.

⊗ 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 6-10 (**February 22-March 22**). 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;
- 7) Summarize your experience (was it valuable? What was learned? Etc.)

⊕ **Book Review**

Students must write one paper that critical reviews two books from the following list. The review paper 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 and critically analyze the content of the books and how you respond to the following:

- a) What main points are presented?
- b) How effectively do the books cover the subjects of poverty, social policy, etc? What are their primary strengths and weaknesses?
- c) How well do the books relate to the information that has been discussed in class?
- d) How well do the books relate to each other? Do they contrast, make separate or equivalent points, use different methods, ways of thinking, etc?
- e) Would you recommend the books? 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. To help understand the substance and process involved in writing a thorough review, students may want to become familiar with book reviews included in the Social Service Review and New York Times weekly Review of Books.

Assignment Due Date: The papers are due on Tuesday, April 12.

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) One Nation. Underprivileged: Why American Poverty Affects Us All by Mark Rank
- 2) American Dream: Three Women. Ten Kids, and a Nation's Drive To End Welfare by Jason Deparle
- 3) Letters to a Young Conservative by Dinesh D'Souza
- 4) What's the Matter With Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America by Thomas Frank
- 5) The Working Poor: Invisible in America by David Shipler
- 6) I'll Be Short: Essentials For a Decent Working Society by Robert Reich

⊗ **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 and will not have to complete a briefing presentation in class. The Op-Eds are due on the second to last day of class (**April 26**). However, students interested in submitting their Op-Eds to daily papers should complete them sooner. Students who have not had Op-Eds published will be required to succinctly summarize their Op-Eds in briefings to be conducted in class during the final two weeks 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:

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 1/18	Introduction and overview of the course Rules for being a conscious social worker Video: Influencing State Policy Theories of the welfare state	<i>No readings</i>
Week 2 1/25	The Children's Bureau What caused the Great Depression? Video: The Great Depression The Social Security Act	Loeb, <i>Orientation of the heart</i> Katz, <i>Introduction</i> Abramovitz, <i>Great Depression and the SS Act</i> Wright, <i>Fire and Cloud</i>
Week 3 2/1	What caused the Great Depression? Video: The Great Depression The Social Security Act	Coontz, <i>American families in the 1950s</i> Kiester, <i>The GI Bill...</i> Harrington, <i>The invisible land</i> Moynihan, <i>Tangle of pathology</i>
Week 4 2/8 QUIZ # 1	The War on Poverty and the Great Society Poverty in America * note: class will visit the LBJ library	Davis et al, <i>The color of social policy</i> Muhammad et al, <i>The state of the dream</i> Garcia, <i>My country...</i> Jensen, <i>Morally lazy white middle class</i> Rank, <i>Below the line</i>
Week 5 2/15	Student day at the legislature *No Class*	Rector, <i>myth of widespread American poverty</i> Hilfiker, <i>Stealth attack on the poor</i> Editors, <i>Section I</i>

		Sharp, <i>Supporting or blocking educational progress?</i>
Week 6 2/22 QUIZ # 2	Welfare reform Guest lecture: Dr. Laura Lein Video: Legacy	Macarov, <i>Globalizing poverty</i> Shulman, <i>How low-wage jobs damage us all</i> Turner & Ehlers, <i>The hustle: Welfare and work</i>
Week 7 3/1	Video: cont'd Myths and realities of welfare What's right (and wrong) with welfare? Guest lecture: TBA	<i>Let them eat wedding rings</i> Albelda, <i>Fallacies of welfare-to-work policies</i> Prince & Austin, <i>Overview of innovative programs and practices</i> Abramovitz, <i>Everyone is still on welfare</i>
Week 8 3/8 QUIZ # 3	Corporate welfare Corporations gonna get your mama Talkin' about taxes What's an economy for? Guest lecturer: Prof. Bob Jensen	Phillips, <i>The Enron-Halliburton administration</i> Brouwer, <i>Taxes: Would robbers cheat?</i> Beverly, <i>What social workers need to know...</i> Rosenbaum, <i>If a tax overhaul has winners...</i> Klein, <i>Baghdad year zero</i>
Week 9 3/15	No class – Spring Break	<i>No readings assigned</i>
Week 10 3/22	Conservative social policy Electoral perspectives We're all on welfare now Guest lecture: Jessica Ritter * Food Stamps report due*	Horowitz, <i>A conservative hope</i> Wolf, <i>The magic of the market</i> Ivins, <i>The uncompassionate conservative</i> <i>Democracy dispatches</i>
Week 11 3/29 QUIZ # 4	The demographics of aging Social Security: America's #1 anti-poverty tool Guest lecturer: TBA	Roberts, <i>How we're aging</i> Nat'l Academy, <i>Evaluating issues in privatizing social security</i> Gokhale, <i>The impact of social security reform...</i> Baker & Weisbrot, <i>An honest debate</i>

Week 12 4/5	International perspectives Family values vs. valuing families Free trade vs. Fair trade Presentation: Comparative policy outcomes	Rainwater & Smeeding, <i>Doing poorly</i> Christopher, <i>Single motherhood...</i> Leffler, <i>Bush's foreign policy</i> Roy, <i>A strange kind of freedom</i>
Week 13 4/12	Towards the common good Policy prescriptions for change Video: Influencing State Policy Guest lecture: *Book review due*	Wolf, <i>Globalization in the long run</i> King, <i>Where do we go from here?</i> Schor, <i>A sustainable economy for the 21st century</i>
Week 14 4/19 QUIZ # 5	Frameworks for evaluating good social policy Class exercises	Watts & Schaeffer, <i>Transcending welfare</i> Quigley, <i>The way to end poverty as we know it</i> Stoesz, <i>From social work to human services</i> <i>Are you better off?</i> <i>Universal declaration of human rights</i> Williamson et al, <i>Appendix</i>
Week 15 4/26	Student op-ed briefings *Op-ed due*	Student research
Week 16 5/3	Student policy briefings Last regular class	Student Research
Final exam, if needed	Student Policy Briefings	

Full Citations for Reserve Readings

Week 1

No readings assigned.

Week 2

Loeb, P. R. (2004, November/December). Orientation of the Heart. *Fellowship*, 70, 19-21.

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

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.

Wright, R. (1940). Fire and Cloud, *Uncle Tom's Children* (pp. 157-220). New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Week 3

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.

Kiester, E. (1994). The G.I. Bill may be the best deal ever made by Uncle Sam. *Smithsonian*, 25(8), 128-137.

Harrington, M. (1963). The Invisible Land, *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* (pp. Chapter 1). Baltimore, MD.: Penguin Books.

Moynihan, D. P. (1965). *The Tangle of Pathology*. Chapter 4 in *The Negro Family: The Case For National Action*. Available: <http://www.dol.gov/asp/programs/history/moynchapter4.htm> [2004, December 8].

Week 4

Davis, K., & Iron Cloud-Two Dogs, E. (2004). The Color of Social Policy: Oppression of Indigenous Tribal Populations and Africans in America. In K. Davis & T. Bent-Goodly (Eds.), *The Color of Social Policy* (pp. Chapter 1). Washington D.C.: Council on Social Work Education.

Muhammad, D., Davis, A., Lui, M., & Leondar-Wright, B. (2004). *The State of the Dream: Enduring Disparities in Black and White*. United for a Fair Economy. Available: http://www.faireconomy.org/press/2004/StateoftheDream2004_pr.html [2004, December 8].

Garcia, R. (2004, December 3). My Country, 'Tis a-Drifting. *Texas Observer*, 96, 26-27.

Jensen, R. (2000). The Morally Lazy White Middle Class.

Rank, M. (2004). Below The Line, *One Nation, Underprivileged: Why American Poverty Affects Us All* (pp. Chapter 2). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Week 5

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

Hilfiker, D. (2003). The Stealth Attack on the Poor. *New Labor Forum*, 12(3).

Editors. (2004). Section 1. In *The Wealth Inequality Reader* (pp. 1-21). Cambridge, MA: Dollars & Sense.

Editors. (2004). *Rags to Riches?* Century Foundation. Available: <http://www.tcf.org/4L/4LMain.asp?SubjectID=1&TopicID=0&ArticleID=456> [2004, December 8].

Sharp, S. (2004). Supporting or blocking educational progress? The impact of college policies, programs, and practices on low income single mothers. In V. E. A. Polakow (Ed.), *Shut Out: Low Income Mothers and Higher Education in Post-Welfare America* (pp. Chapter 5). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, Albany.

Week 6

Macarov, D. (2003). Globalizing Poverty, *What the Market Does to People: Privatization, Globalization, and Poverty* (pp. Chapter 5). Atlanta, GA: Clarity Press.

Shulman, B. (2003). How Low-Wage Jobs Damage Us All, *The Betrayal of Work* (pp. 81-100). New York, N.Y.: The New Press.

Turner, S., & Ehlers, T. (2002). The Hustle: Welfare and Work, *Sugar's Life in the Hood* (pp. Chapter 2). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Week 7

Let Them Eat Wedding Rings Report Questions Marriage Promotion in Welfare Reform(2003). Alternatives to Marriage Project. Available: <http://www.unmarried.org/rings.html> [2003, December 1].

Albelda, R. (2002). Fallacies of Welfare-to-Work Policies. In R. Albelda & A. Withorn (Eds.), *Lost Ground: Welfare Reform, Poverty, and Beyond* (pp. 79-94). Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Prince, J., & Austin, M. (2004). Overview of Innovative Programs and Practices. In M. Austin (Ed.), *Changing Welfare Services: Case Studies of Local Welfare Reform Programs* (pp. Chapter 2). Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.

Abramovitz, M. (2001). Everyone is still on welfare: The role of redistribution in social policy. *Social Work*, 46(4), 297-308.

Week 8

Phillips, K. (2004). The Enron-Halliburton Administration, *American Dynasty: Aristocracy, Fortune, and the Politics of Deceit in the House of Bush* (pp. Chapter 5). New York, NY: Viking Press.

Brouwer, S. (2004). Taxes: Would Robbers Cheat?, *Robbing Us Blind: The Return of the Bush Gang and the Mugging of America* (pp. Chapter 6). Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press.

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

Rosenbaum, D. (2004, November 14). If a tax overhaul has winners, it will also have losers. *New York Times*.

Klein, N. (2004, September). Baghdad Year Zero: Pillaging Iraq in pursuit of a neocon utopia. *Harpers Magazine*.

Week 9

No class – Spring Break

Week 10

Horowitz, D. (1998). A Conservative Hope, *The politics of bad faith: The radical assault on America's future* (pp. Chapter 6). New York, NY: The Free Press.

Wolf, M. (2004). The "Magic" of the Market, in *Why Globalization Works* (Chapter 4). New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press.

Ivins, M. (2003). The Uncompassionate Conservative. *Mother Jones*, 45-47.

Dispatches, D. (2004). *Democracy Dispatches* (No. 51). Available: <http://www.demos-usa.org/democracdispatches/dispatches51txt.htm> [2004, December 2004].

Week 11

Roberts, S. (2004). How We're Aging, *Who we are now: The changing face of America in the 21st century* (pp. Chapter 4). New York, NY: Henry Holt.

(2002). *Evaluating Issues in Privatizing Social Security*. Washington D.C.: National Academy of Social Insurance.

Gokhale, J. (2001). *The Impact of Social Security Reform on Low-Income Workers* (No. 23). Washington D.C.: Cato Institute.

Baker, D., & Weisbrot, M. (1999). An Honest Debate, *Social Security: A Phony Crisis* (pp. 149-156). Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press.

Week 12

Rainwater, L., & Smeeding, T. (1995). *Doing Poorly: The Real Income of American Children in a Comparative Perspective* (127). Palo Alto, CA: Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences.

Christopher, K. (2002). Single motherhood, employment, or social assistance: Why are U.S. women poorer than women in other affluent nations? *Journal of Poverty*, 6(2), 61-79.

Leffler, M. (2004). Bush's foreign policy. *Foreign Policy* (144), 22-28.

Roy, A. (2003). *A Strange Kind of Freedom*. The Guardian. Available: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,2763,927849,00.html> [2004, November 29].

Week 13

Wolf, M. (2004). Globalization in the Long Run, *Why Globalization Works* (Chapter 7). New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press.

King, M. L. (1968). The World House, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* (Chapter 5). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Schor, J. (1995). *A Sustainable Economy for the 21st Century*. Unpublished manuscript, Westfield, N.J.

Week 14

Watts, J., & Schaefer, A. (2004). Transcending Welfare: Creating a GI Bill for Working families. In V. Polakow, et al (Ed.), *Shut Out: Low Income Mothers and Higher Education in Post-Welfare America* (pp. Chapter 10). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, Albany.

Quigley, W. (2003). The Way To End Poverty As We Know It, *Ending poverty as we know it: Guaranteeing a right to a job at a living wage* (pp. Chapter 14). Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press.

Stoesz, D. (2002). From Social Work to Human Services. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 29(4), 19-37.

(2004). *Are You Better Off? 2004 Year in Review*. Drum Major Institute. Available: <http://www.drummymajorinstitute.org/plugin/template/dmi/14/2774> [2004, December 8].

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

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

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)

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 for Public Policy Priorities (www.cppp.org)

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.financeprojectinfo.org/win/)

Government sites of interest:

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

Congressional Budget Office (www.cbo.gov)

Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)