

**SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY**

Social Work 382R  
Spring, 2006  
Unique #: 63015

Wednesdays 2:30-5:20  
Room: 2.118

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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).

**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 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 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). 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 (25%)
- C) Book Review (20%)
- D) Food Stamps Report (25%)
- E) Opinion Editorial (20%)

#### **⊗ 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 that will be used to inform the final participation grade.

#### **⊗ Quizzes**

Students will be given five (5) quizzes throughout the semester. The quizzes will ask basic questions about class lectures and readings, so students should be thoroughly familiar with the readings through that week 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.

#### **⊕ Book Review**

Words Beyond Walls: In an effort to enhance the learning experience of the topics covered in this course, students will interact with members of the “Concerned Lifers” book club in the Monroe Correctional Complex (MCC) located in Monroe, Washington. Members of the MCC Book Club have completed critical reviews of Mark Rank’s One Nation, Underprivileged and Thomas Frank’s What’s the Matter with Kansas? Students must choose one of these books and then respond to the review in a 4-6 page critical narrative. The narrative should analyze the book review on its own merits; Book Club members have been given leeway to include personal reflections and comments about prison life in the course of their review. The narrative should be written in an engaging style, analyze the strengths and limits of the inmate book review, and advance your own ideas about the book’s major concepts. Overall, your critique should demonstrate your mastery of the book’s content and

the prisoner's review and your ability to provide constructive feedback. The review should be 12-point font and 1.5 spaced.

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 or the prisoner review.

**Assignment Due Date:** The papers are due on Wednesday, March 1.

**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) What's the Matter With Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America by Thomas Frank

⊗ **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 (**February 15-April 5**). 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.)

⊗ **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. [Otherwise, Op-Eds will be graded by the instructor and TA] All students will be required to succinctly summarize their Op-Eds in informal 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:

100 - 94 =A	93 - 90 =A-	
89 - 87 =B+	86 - 84 =B	83 - 80 =B-
79 - 77 = C+	76 - 74 =C	73 - 70 =C-

**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**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Text/Readings</b>
Week 1 1/18	Introduction and overview of the course Rules for being a conscious social worker Video: Influencing State Policy	<i>No readings</i>
Week 2 1/25	Theories of the welfare state The Children’s Bureau Highlights of social work history	<b>Scokpol, <i>Social Policies in 19<sup>th</sup> century America</i></b> <b>Reisch &amp; Andrews, <i>Social Work: A radical profession?</i></b> <b>LeCroy, <i>Passion for justice</i></b>

Week 3 2/1	What caused the Great Depression? Video: The Great Depression The Social Security Act	<b>McElvaine</b> , <i>Reactions to Hoover</i> <b>Abramovitz</b> , <i>Great Depression and the SS Act</i> <b>Coontz</b> , <i>American families in the 1950s</i> <b>Kiester</b> , <i>The GI Bill...</i>
Week 4 2/8	The War on Poverty and the Great Society Social Movements in the 60's  * note: class will visit the LBJ library  <b>Quiz #1</b>	<b>Matusow</b> , <i>War on Poverty I</i> <b>Neubeck &amp; Cazenave</b> , <i>The demise of AFDC...</i> <b>Jansson</b> , <i>Johnson's social welfare legacy</i> <b>Chandler</b> , <i>Curiously uninvolved</i>
Week 5 2/15	The color of social policy Demographic trends in Texas Texas Poverty	<b>Muhammad et al</b> , <i>The state of the dream</i> <b>Dyson</b> , <i>An Afristocrat in winter</i> <b>Huntington</b> , <i>The Hispanic challenge</i> <b>Jensen</b> , <i>Morally lazy white middle class</i> <b>CPPP</b> , <i>Texas Poverty</i>
Week 6 2/22	Poverty and inequality in America Myths and realities of poverty Is inequality immoral? Class exercise  <b>Quiz #2</b>	<b>Rector</b> , <i>myth of widespread American poverty</i> <b>Curley</b> , <i>Theories of urban poverty</i> <b>Franklin</b> , <i>The legitimization of inequality</i> <b>Shapiro</b> , <i>New IRS data...</i>
Week 7 3/1	Poverty cont'd Welfare reform Video: Legacy  <b>*Book Review Due*</b>	<b>Harris</b> , <i>Who supports welfare reform?</i> <b>Lindhorst &amp; Mancoske</b> , <i>Race, gender, and class...</i> <b>Teitler et al</b> , <i>Sources of support, child care, and hardship</i>
Week 8 3/8	Video: cont'd Myths and realities of welfare What's right with welfare?	<b>Bartkowski</b> , <i>Charitable choice</i> <b>Huston &amp; Melz</b> , <i>The case for (promoting) marriage</i>

	<b>Quiz #3</b>	<b>Popenoe</b> , <i>American family decline</i> <b>Stacey</b> , <i>Good riddance to “the family”</i>
Week 9 3/15	<b>No class – Spring Break</b>	
Week 10 3/22	Corporate welfare Corporations gonna get your mama What’s an economy for? Guest lecturer: Prof. Bob Jensen	<b>Brouwer</b> , <i>Taxes: Would robbers cheat?</i> <b>Brunori</b> , <i>Property tax under seige</i> <b>Beverly</b> , <i>What social workers need to know...</i> <b>CPPP</b> , <i>Latest tax shift...</i> <b>Pettitt &amp; Western</b> , <i>Mass imprisonment</i>
Week 11 3/29	Talkin’ about taxes We’re all on welfare now  <b>Quiz #4</b>	<b>Bader et al</b> , <i>Shadow welfare</i> <b>Green</b> , <i>The cost of money</i> <b>Horowitz</b> , <i>A conservative hope</i> <b>Buchanan</b> , <i>Conservative impersonators</i> <b>Ivins</b> , <i>The uncompassionate conservative</i>
Week 12 4/5	The demographics of aging Social Security: America’s #1 anti-poverty tool Guest lecturer: <b>TBA</b>  <b>* Food Stamps report due*</b>	<b>Roberts</b> , <i>How we’re aging</i> <b>Clark</b> , <i>Economic well-being of older Americans</i> <b>Cauthen</b> , <i>Whose security?</i> <b>Nat’l Academy</b> , <i>Evaluating issues in privatizing social security</i>
Week 13 4/12	International perspectives Family values vs. valuing families Free trade vs. Fair trade Presentation: Comparative policy outcomes	<b>Christopher et al</b> , <i>The gender gap...</i> <b>Wilensky</b> , <i>The American welfare mess...</i> <b>Johnson</b> , <i>Sorrows of empire</i>
Week 14 4/19	Towards the common good Frameworks for evaluating good social policy Class exercises	<b>Hawkins</b> , <i>From self-sufficiency...</i> <b>Ehrlich &amp; Ehrlich</b> , <i>Sustainable governance in America</i>

	<b>Quiz #5</b>	<b>Hofer, <i>Getting involved</i></b>
Week 15 4/26	Student op-ed briefings  <b>*Op-ed due*</b>	No readings assigned
Week 16 5/3	Student policy briefings Last regular class	No readings assigned
Final exam, if needed	Student Policy Briefings	

## **Full Citations for Reserve Readings**

### **Week 1**

Scokpol, T. (1992). Patronage Democracy and Distributive Policies in the Nineteenth Century, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (pp. 87-101). Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press.

Reisch, M., & Andrews, J. (2001). Social Work: A Radical Profession?, *The Road Not Taken: A History of Radical Social Work in the United States* (Chapter 1). Philadelphia: Brunner-Routledge.

LeCroy, C. (2002). Passion for Justice, *The Call to Social Work: Life Stories* (Chapter 3). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

### **Week 2**

McElvaine, R. S. (1983). Reactions to Hoover and Economic Breakdown. In R. McElvaine (Ed.), *Down and Out in the Great Depression: Letters from the Forgotten Man* (Chapter 1). Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina 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.

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* (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.

### **Week 3**

Matusow, A. J. (1984). War on Poverty I: The Failure of the Welfare State, *The Unraveling of America: The History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (pp. 217-242). New York: Harper & Row.

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* (Chapter 5). New York, N.Y.: Routledge.

Janssen, B. S. (2001). Johnson's Social Welfare Legacy, *The Reluctant Welfare State* (4th ed., pp. 248-252). Belmont, CA.: Wadsworth.

Chandler, S. (2004). "Curiously uninvolved": Social work and protest against the War in Vietnam. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 31(4), 3-20.

#### **Week 4**

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](http://www.faireconomy.org/press/2004/StateoftheDream2004_pr.html) [2006, January 2].

Dyson, M. E. (2005). An Afristocrat in Winter, *Is Bill Cosby Right? (Or Has the Black Middle Class Lost Its Mind?)* (Introduction). New York: Basic Civitas Books.

Huntington, S. (2004). The Hispanic Challenge. *Foreign Policy* (141), 30-45.

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

*Texas Poverty: An Overview* (2002). Center for Public Policy Priorities [2002, July].

#### **Week 5**

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

Curley, A. (2005). Theories of urban poverty and implications for public housing policy. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 32(2), 97-119.

Franklin, R. (2005). The Legitimization of Inequality. In J. Lardner & D. Smith (Eds.), *Inequality Matters: The Growing Economic Divide in America and Its Poisonous Consequences* (pp. 237-246). New York, N.Y.: The New Press.

Shapiro, I. (2005). *New IRS Data Show Income Inequality Is Again On The Rise*. Washington D.C.: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

#### **Week 6**

Harris, C. (2002). Who supports welfare reform and why? *Race, Gender & Class*, 9(1), 96-114.

Lindhorst, T., & Mancoske, R. (2003). Race, gender, and class inequities in welfare reform. *Race, Gender & Class*, 10(2), 27-40.

Teitler, J., Reichman, N., & Nepomnyaschy, L. (2004). Sources of support, child care, and hardship among unwed mothers. *Social Service Review*, 78(1), 125-149.

#### **Week 7**

Bartkowski, J., & Regis, H. (2003). Charitable Choice: Promise and Peril in the Post-Welfare Era, *Charitable Choice: Religion, Race, and Poverty in the Post-Welfare Era* (Chapter 8). New York: New York University Press.

Huston, T., & Melz, H. (2004). The case for (promoting) marriage: The devil is in the details. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66(November), 943-958.

Popenoe, D. (1993). American family decline, 1960-1990: A review and appraisal. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 55(3), 527-555.

Stacey, J. (1993). Good riddance to "The Family": A response to David Popenoe. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 55(3), 545-547.

## **Week 8**

\*No class – Spring Break\*

## **Week 9**

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

Brunori, D. (2003). The Property Tax Under Siege, *Local Tax Policy: A Federalist Perspective* (Chapter 5). Washington D.C.: Urban Institute Press.

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

CPPP, (2005). *Latest tax-shift bill is same old story: Raise sales and cigarette taxes to cut property taxes, make little change in business taxes, generate no new money for schools*. CPPP. Available: [www.cppp.org](http://www.cppp.org) [2006, January 2].

Pettit, B., & Western, B. (2004). Mass Imprisonment and the Life Course: Race and Class Inequality in U.S. Incarceration. *American Sociological Review*, 69 (April), 151-169.

## **Week 10**

Bader, E., Huff, D., & Reynolds, L. (2003). Shadow Welfare: A welfare cadillac for corporate America. *The Social Policy Journal*, 2(4), 39-51.

Green, M. (2004). The Cost of Money. In J. Skolnick & E. Currie (Eds.), *Crisis in American Institutions* (Chapter 2). Boston, MA.: Pearson Education.

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

Buchanan, P. (2004). Conservative Impersonators, *Where The Right Went Wrong: How Neo-Conservatives Subverted The Reagan Revolution and Hijacked the Bush Presidency* (Chapter 7). New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press.

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

### **Week 11**

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

Clark, R., Burkhauser, R., Moon, M., Quinn, J., & Smeeding, T. (2004). The Economic Well-Being of Older Americans, *The Economics of an Aging Society* (Chapter 3, 34-83). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Cauthen, N. (2005). *Whose Security? What Social Security Means to Children and Families*. New York, N.Y.: National Center for Children in Poverty.

National Academy of Science (1998). *Evaluating Issues in Privatizing Social Security: Report of the Panel on Privatization of Social Security*.: National Academy of Social Security.

### **Week 12**

Christopher, K., Smeeding, T., & Phillips, K. (2002). The gender gap in poverty in modern nations: Single motherhood, the market, and the state. *Sociological Perspectives*, 45(3), 219-242.

Wilensky, H. (2002). The American Welfare Mess in Comparative Perspective, *Rich Democracies: Political Economy, Public Policy, and Performance* (Chapter 8). Berkeley, CA.: University of California Press.

Johnson, C. (2004). The Sorrows of Empire, *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic* (Chapter 10). New York: Metropolitan Books.

### **Week 13**

Hawkins, R. (2005). From self-sufficiency to personal and family sustainability: A new paradigm for social policy. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 32(4), 77-92.

Ehrlich, P., & Ehrlich, A. (2004). Sustainable Governance in America, *One with Nineveh: Politics, Consumption, and the Human Future* (Chapter 10). Washington D.C.: Island Press.

Hoefler, R. (2006). Getting Involved, *Advocacy Practice for Social Justice* (Chapter 3). Chicago, IL.: Lyceum 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/](http://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/](http://www.jcpr.org/))

The Urban Institute ([www.urban.org/](http://www.urban.org/))

Center for Research on Child Well-being (<http://crcw.princeton.edu/>)

Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation ([www.mdrc.org](http://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/](http://www.brook.edu/))

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

Mathematica Policy Research ([www.mathematica-mpr.com/](http://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](http://www.cbpp.org))

Center for Law and Social Policy ([www.clasp.org](http://www.clasp.org))

Children's Defense Fund ([www.childrensdefense.org/](http://www.childrensdefense.org/))

The Electronic Policy Network ([www.movingideas.org/](http://www.movingideas.org/))

The EPN has extensive links to other liberal research centers and The American Prospect, a bi-monthly journal.

Center for Public Policy Priorities ([www.cppp.org](http://www.cppp.org))

*Government sites of interest:*

U.S. Census Bureau ([www.census.gov/](http://www.census.gov/))

Congressional Budget Office ([www.cbo.gov](http://www.cbo.gov))

Bureau of Labor Statistics ([www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov))