

**University of Texas at Austin  
School of Social Work**

**SW 384P1 Policy II**

Unique Number: 55170

Fall, 1993

Instructor: Yolanda C. Padilla, Ph.D., LMSW-AP  
Assistant Professor  
Class Time/Location: Thursdays, 9 a.m.-12 noon/Educational Annex F50  
Office: Social Work Building 3.104D  
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Office Hours: Monday, 9:00-12:00 and by appointment

**OVERVIEW**

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This course on the policy process and its impact on populations at risk is oriented around the theme of poverty policy and the implications of such policy for a range of sub-populations in the United States, and particularly in Texas and the Texas/Mexico border. Students in the course will be encouraged to develop individual projects related to their special interests and/or area of concentration (mental health and chemical dependency services; children and family services/children and family services related to developmental disabilities; gerontological and health services; administration and planning) within the context of poverty policy.

The objective of the course is for the students to:

1. Develop a plan for the analysis of social policy options to a specific social problem;
2. Recognize the uniqueness of the policy process for issues where social work professionals play a major role;
3. Understand the requirements and the limitations of social worker roles in the policy process;
4. Work with other professionals to develop a position paper that advocates a specific policy response.

The course is divided into three sections: (1) a short introductory sequence to policy analysis; (2) a group of sessions on poverty policy and its development; and (3) a series of cases of policies related to defined populations. The course requires frequent short written assignments, a mid-term exam, and a major team project.

**Required Readings**

Patton, Carl V., and David S. Sawicki. 1993 (2nd edition). Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning. Englewood, NJ: Prentice Hall.

A packet of other readings will be on reserve in the Learning Resource Center and at the PCL Library.

## **Course Structure**

Material in the course will be presented through lectures, discussions, videos, and small group work. In general, the first part of each meeting will be devoted to more formal presentation of material, followed by exercises, illustrative videos, and work in small groups. Students will be responsible for materials presented through all these activities. Assigned readings are for the day in which they are listed and students should have read the readings and be prepared to discuss them in class.

The course will be approached from three different perspectives: (1) methods of policy analysis and planning, (2) policy theory, and (3) reviews of a variety policy statements produced by policy centers.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### An Introduction to Policy Analysis

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August 26

Introduction to the course and faculty  
Overall themes of course  
Defining "policy"  
Process of a bill through the legislature

**Readings:**

Haskins, "Congress Writes a Law: Research and Welfare Reform"

September 2

Assessing who is poor  
Meanings assigned to poverty  
Poverty as a "package" variable

**Film:** "A Concern for Community with Ernie Cortez" (from the Benson Collection)

**Readings:**

Patton and Sawicki, Chapter 1 "The Need for Simple Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning"  
Sawhill, "Poverty in the U.S.: Why is it so Persistent?"  
Mayer and Jencks, "Poverty and the Distribution of Material Hardship"  
Van Haitsma, "A Contextual Definition of the Underclass"

### Issues in Policy Analysis

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September 9

Agencies serving the poor  
Use of multiple agencies

**Guest Speaker:** Laura Lein "Case example: San Antonio research"

**Readings:**

Patton and Sawicki, Chapter 2 "The Policy Analysis Process"  
Powell & Powell, "Poverty: The Greatest and Severest Handicapping Condition in Childhood"  
Danziger and Stern, "The Causes and Consequences of Child Poverty in the United States"  
Corbett, "Child Poverty and Welfare Reform: Progress or Paralysis"

**DUE: First short assignment**

September 16

Budgets and destitution among low income women  
Household budgeting  
Research interviews to determine household budgets

**Film:** "Joint Economic Committee Hearing on Poverty in the U.S."

**Readings:**

Patton and Sawicki, Chapter 3 "Crosscutting Methods" and  
Chapter 4 "Verifying, Defining, and Detailing the Problem"  
Jencks and Edin, "The Real Welfare Problem"  
Gruber, "Inequality in the Social Services"

September 23

Policy as an Outcome of Political Conflict  
A Life Cycle Analysis of Hispanic Economic Well-Being

**Readings:**

Patton and Sawicki, Chapter 4 "Verifying, Defining and Detailing the Problem"  
Rochin/Tomas Rivera Policy Studies Center, "Economic Perspectives of the Hispanic Community"  
National Council of La Raza, "State of Hispanic America 1991"  
Romo, "Contrasting Perceptions of Schooling Among the Mexican Origin Population"

**DUE: Second short assignment**

September 30

Poverty policy today: The role of lobbyists

**Guest Speaker:** Patrick Bresette, Center for Public Policy Priorities

**Readings:**

Sandefur and Tienda, Divided Opportunities  
Chapter 1 "Social Policy and the Minority Experience"  
Chapter 2 "Poverty and Minorities"  
Chapter 8 "The Duality in Federal Policy Toward Minority Groups"  
Baca Zinn, "Family, Race, and Poverty in the Eighties"

October 7

**Exam**

**Special Cases in Poverty Policy**

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October 14

Native American populations: reservations and poverty policy  
Implications of quasi-citizenship

**Guest Speaker:** Laura Lein "Case example: research with Native Americans"

**Readings:**

Patton and Sawicki, Chapter 6 "Identifying Alternatives" and  
Chapter 7 "Evaluating Alternative Policies"  
Sandefur, "American Indian Reservations: The First Underclass Areas"

**DUE: Third short assignment**

**Small group meetings on course projects**

October 21

Black Families: Foster Care and Adoption Policies

**Guest Speaker:** Ruth McRoy, Professor of Social Work, UT

**Readings:**

Patton and Sawicki, Chapter 5 "Establishing Evaluation Criteria"

Tidwell, "Research and Practice Issues with Black Families"

Wilson, The Truly Disadvantaged, the Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy

Chapter 1 "Cycles of Deprivation and the Ghetto Underclass Debate"

Chapter 2 "Social Change and Social Dislocation in the Inner City"

Chapter 7 "The Hidden Agenda"

October 28

Families on the border: The Kids Count Project

**Guest Speakers:** Monica Cruz, Center for Public Policy Priorities  
Exiquio Salinas, Texas Department of Human Services

**Readings:**

Patton and Sawicki, Chapter 8 "Displaying Alternatives and Distinguishing Among Them"

Moore, "Is There A Hispanic Underclass?"

Salinas, "Colonia Factbook: A Survey of Living Conditions in Rural Areas in South and West Texas  
Border Counties"

Office of the Governor Policy Council, "Governor's Border Working Group" [A Comprehensive Policy  
Statement for the Texas-Mexico Border]

November 4

Migrant Farm Labor in South Texas

**Guest Speaker:** Luis Plascencia, Tomas Rivera Center

**Readings:**

Patton and Sawicki, Chapter 9 "Monitoring and Evaluating Implemented Policies"

U.S. Commission on Agricultural Workers/Luis Plascencia et.al, "The Winter Vegetable Industry in  
South Texas"

Wilk, "The Occupational Health of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers in the United States," Chapters 1-5

November 11

**Student Presentations**

**DUE: Fourth short assignment**

November 18

**Student Presentations**

November 25

Thanksgiving Holiday - NO CLASS

December 2

**Student Presentations**

**DUE: Course Project**

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

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There will be four short written assignments, each of which counts for 12.5 percent of your final grade (for a total of 50% of the grade). The mid-term exam will count 20% of your final grade. The final project will count 30% of your final grade. The short written assignments and the final paper should be typewritten.

### **Short Assignments**

Each of the short assignments will be between two and three pages.

Assignment 1: At this point in the course, we will have completed an overview of ways of assessing and defining poverty. Select a definition or set of criteria for determining poverty status and critique it. Your critique may include the cost of using such a definition for eligibility, the inherent fairness or lack of fairness of the definition, the degree to which such a definition favors or does not favor one particular subset of the population. Assignment due: **September 9**.

Assignment 2: At this point in the course, we will have opened a discussion of the effectiveness of certain element of our poverty programs. Provide a discussion, with support or critique for a selected element of the United State's current poverty policies and programs. Assignment due: **September 23**.

Assignment 3: At this point in the course, we will have completed discussion of the role of lobbying in the policy process and opened a continuing discussion of the roles played by social workers and other practitioners in the design and political processing of political initiatives. You should select a current poverty-related policy under debate and describe the appropriate roles for practitioner professionals in developing and encouraging the implementation of policy or program. Assignment due: **October 14**

Assignment 4: At this point in the course, we will have completed discussion of a series of several special populations in relation to poverty policy. You should select one of these populations and discuss the implications of possibly differential or discriminatory treatment under our current policies. Assignment due: **November 11**.

### **Course Project**

The course project may be undertaken alone or in teams of up to four people. For this project, you will undertake a piece of analysis of the development of a piece of recent policy with direct relevance to the poverty policy in the context of social work practice. Students will be able to focus on their concentration area (mental health and chemical dependency services; children and family services/children and family services related to developmental disabilities; gerontological and health services; administration and planning) if they wish to do so. The project should be oriented around a specific piece of legislation, rather than a large social or political movement or endeavor. During the first part of the semester, students will receive statements on the content of policy analysis and an initial list of source materials on which to draw on. More instructions on this assignment will be provided at a later date.

## **POLICY ANALYSIS COURSE PROJECT**

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For this project, you will undertake an analysis of a piece of recent policy with direct relevance to poverty policy in the context of social work practice. Students will be able to focus on their concentration area (mental health and chemical dependency services; children and family services/children and family services related to developmental disabilities; gerontological and health services; administration and planning) if they wish to do so. The project should be oriented around a specific piece of legislation, rather than a large social or political movement or endeavor.

The paper should be 12-15 pages, typed, and include a bibliography (using APA style) with an appropriate number of references to adequately cover your topic.

### **Proposal and Opportunity to work in Groups**

You may work individually or in groups. Groups should be limited to four. Provide me with a one page proposal well in advance of your presentation/paper indicating the topic of your project and the name(s) of the students who will constitute your group. For those electing to work in groups, the structure and division of responsibilities of group members is up to the group; but the entire group will receive a single grade.

### **Use of book, Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning**

Refer to the text assigned for this class in conducting the policy analysis project. [See Chapter 2, p. 52-64, for a summary of the basic policy analysis steps covered in the book.] Alternatively, **you may use a policy analysis guide of your choosing** (a book or articles). In any case, include your source(s) in the bibliography. You may also review some of the policy reports put together by policy centers assigned in the readings for ideas on how to write your report.

### **Structure of the paper**

*Next to each section below I have written in italics, sections of the textbook that may be particularly relevant to that section. These are only suggestions.*

1. Develop a problem statement. Present some of the major problems in the field of \_\_\_\_\_? (Verify and detail the problem; for example, what are the factors that contribute to the problem?).

*"Identifying and Gathering Data" (Ch. 3, p. 77-105)  
"Verifying, Defining, and Detailing the Problem" (Ch. 4)*

2. Identify some major policies (legislation/programs) currently in place to address these problems?

*same as for #1*

3. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of these existing policies. Why do you support or oppose these policies? (Use the evidence provided in the literature--I do not expect you to conduct your own cost-benefit analysis, for example.)

*"Establishing Evaluation Criteria" (Ch.5)*

*"Monitoring and Evaluating Implemented Policies" (Ch. 9)*

4. Recommend one or two alternative policies (a specific reform or new program) to deal with the problems in this field. Think primarily in terms of a societal or social change approach as opposed to the individual case treatment approach. However, try to take both into account. Discuss the value of these policy options.

*"Organizing the Report" (Ch. 3, p. 138-140)*

*"Identifying Alternatives" (Ch. 6)*

*"Political Analysis" (Ch. 7, p. 301-313)*

### **Oral Presentations**

The purpose of the oral presentations is to give you an opportunity to present your project and obtain feedback from the rest of the class before you put it in final form. Therefore, you should consider the presentation a form of workshop, rather than a presentation of a final project. Feel free to use any helpful audiovisual aid(s) you like (handouts, poster, easels, etc.). Students who are working individually will have 20 minutes per person. Students who are working on their project as part of a group will have a total of 15 minutes each. The time periods include discussion time. (Reminder: I have set aside three class periods for the oral presentations).

### **Writing the Paper**

Please be sure to include an introduction and conclusion and to divide your paper into clearly labeled sections. If appropriate, you may include diagrams in the paper.