

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

Course Number: SW N392R3

Unique Number: 96215

Semester: Summer 2005 (9 week course)

Meeting Time/Place: M/W 5:30-8:30 / SSW 1.214

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Instructor's Name:

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ADVANCED POLICY: POVERTY AND PUBLIC POLICY (MSSW SELECTIVE)

I. Standardized Course Description

The focus of this course is on poverty among children and families in the United States. The course is designed to provide students with the ability to analyze the current empirical and theoretical perspectives on poverty and critically evaluate antipoverty policies. On a practical level, the purpose of the course is to learn about the needs and problems associated with poverty as well as the major forms of social work interventions available to help families in poverty. Special attention will be given to the implications of poverty and poverty policy for a variety of social work areas and fields of practice, including income maintenance, health, mental health, services to adolescents, and child welfare, among others. In addition, it will address the issues of those most affected by poverty in U.S. society: African Americans, Latino Americans, Native Americans, single-parent women, and children.

II. Standardized Course Objectives

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify contemporary research issues on children and families in poverty;
2. Differentiate between economic hardship and poverty as a pervasive condition;
3. Conceptualize social problems associated with poverty;
4. Understand the consequences of poverty for other areas of social well-being;
5. Be knowledgeable of the basic structure, laws, and parameters of current social welfare institutions;
6. Be knowledgeable of the issues relating to the policy arenas of income maintenance, health, mental health, and social services for vulnerable populations;
7. Evaluate a variety of antipoverty policies, particularly contemporary welfare reform, and their effect on certain population policies;
8. Assess the special problems of service delivery to the poor and the impact of social values on service delivery in the United States:

- Draft for discussion – final revisions to be incorporated. -

9. Be knowledgeable about the significance of poverty policy in society in general, and the implications for social work practice, in particular;
10. Critically analyze the relationship between prevailing assumptions about the nature of poverty and proposed interventions, taking into account issues of values and ethics;
11. Be knowledgeable of the roles and responsibilities of social workers in the social work process.

III. Teaching Methods

As an advanced social work policy practice course in the field of poverty, this is an applied course that will provide an opportunity for students to develop specialized policy practice skills. The focus will be on effectively communicating and advocating on poverty policy issues. Specifically, this will involve learning how to gather, analyze, and present research evidence and how to translate it into amenable policy alternatives within the current political context (in particular the current public discourse on the issue). The course will begin with a conceptualization of poverty, public policy, and policy practice and a revisiting of research on poverty in America and the contemporary social welfare policy response.

The course will be organized around a series of a hands-on modules on poverty policy, which students will use to build a policy practice portfolio (see Appendix A). Resource guides developed by expert policy advocacy organizations will be used as models. In addition, a detailed list of relevant web resources is provided by the instructor (Appendix B). Techniques will include selection of communication strategies to fit particular audiences, analysis and incorporation of public discourse on policy, and argumentation. Peer review and instructor consultation will be used in conducting the hands-on modules. Class will be conducted in the Instructional Technology classroom. The portfolio modules will include the following and will build upon each other:

- Sound bite (Brief policy message): brief concise policy statement containing a primary message and supporting points
- Press release: written as an article to appear in a newspaper, should contain key news points that make it clear why it is newsworthy and provide supportive facts
- Policy brief: brief research report providing clearly stated facts and policy implications
- Process Reflections: short reflection on the process of putting together the policy documents, including the research and data-gathering process and the specific techniques used

IV. Required Readings

See Course Schedule for list of weekly readings.

Resource Guides for Policy Practice Skills

Coleman, H., Rogers, G. & King, J. (2002). Using portfolios to stimulate critical thinking in social work education. *Social Work Education*, 21(5), 582-595.

Crewe, E. & Young, J. (July 2002). *Bridging research and policy: context, evidence and links.*

Public policy advocacy: a grassroots guide. Newark, NJ: The Statewide Parent Advocacy Network.

Von Grebmer, K., Babu, S., Rho, V. & Rubinstein, M. (2005, March). *Communicating food policy research: a guidebook.* Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

V. Course Requirements

Assignments and Grading Policy (See detailed assignment instructions in Appendix A.)

1. Mid-Term Exam (Take-home/Open book)	30%
2. Portfolio	70%
a. Sound Bite	20%
b. Press Release	30%
c. Policy Brief / Oral Presentation	40%
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<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>100%</i>

Grading Criteria

Grades on the policy documents will reflect the extent to which they incorporate the techniques taught in the class and provided in the readings. Attendance and participation in the class is required. The final grade on each assignment will incorporate an assessment of active class participation and acceptable progress on in-class assignments leading to the completion of each assignment. The grading breakdown is: A (assignment exceeds expectations), B (assignment meets requirements), C (assignment meets basic requirements, but lacks depth and critical analysis), D and below (assignment does not meet the requirements). Late assignments will be penalized one letter grade per class period that they are late.

VI. School of Social Work Class Policies

1. Attendance & Late Assignments/Incompletes. Regular class attendance is required every class period for the entire class period. University guidelines do not allow the granting of an “Incomplete” on a course solely on the basis of a student not having enough time to complete the assignments.
2. Scholastic Honesty. Follow the rules of scholastic honesty. Scholastic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will be reported to the Student Judicial Office, according to UT guidelines.
3. Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities. The University of Texas provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-4641 TTY.

VII. Course Schedule (Summer 9-Week Session: June 2 – July 26)

All readings are available on Blackboard under “Assignments,” unless noted otherwise.

Topic of Study, Readings, and Assignments Due

Week 1 – June 6/8

June 6	Introduction to the Course
June 8	<i>Conceptualizations of Poverty, Public Policy, and Policy Practice</i> Spicker, P. (2005). <i>An introduction to social policy</i> . Aberdeen, Scotland: The Robert Gordon University. Read: Social Need, Social Policy. Wyers, N.L. (1991). Policy-practice in social work: models and issues. <i>Journal of Social Work Education</i> , 27(3).

Week 2 - June 13/15

<i>Poverty in America</i> Glennester, H., (2002). United States poverty studies and poverty measurement: The past twenty five years. <i>Social Service Review</i> . 76(1), 83-107. Lichter, D.T. & Crowley (2002) Poverty in America: Beyond welfare reform. <i>Population Bulletin</i> 57(2).	
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Week 3 - June 20/22

<i>Do Social Welfare Policies Reduce Poverty?</i> Morgan, D.R. & Kickham, K. (2001). Children in poverty: Do state policies matter? <i>Social Science Quarterly</i> , 82(3), 478-493. Jorgenson, D. W. (1998). Did we lose the war on poverty? <i>The Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> , 12(1), 79-96. Kenworthy, L. (1999). So social welfare polices reduce poverty? a cross national assessment. <i>Social Forces</i> , 77(3), 1119- 39. Rice, J.K. (2001). Poverty welfare and patriarchy: How macro-level changes in social policy can help low income women. <i>Journal of Social Issues</i> 57(2), 355-374.	
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Week 4 - June 27/29

Public Discourse on Poverty Policy

- Lens, V. (2002). Sound bites, spin and social change: Analyzing news media. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 22(3/4), 39-53.
- Lens, V. (2002). Public voices and public policy: Societal discourse on welfare. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 29(1), 137-154.
- McPhee, D.M. & Bronstein L.R. (2003). The journey from welfare to work: Learning from women living in poverty. *Affilia* 18(1), 34-48.
- Kinder, D.R. & Winter, N. (2001). Exploring the racial divide: Blacks, whites, and opinion on national policy. *American Journal of Political Science*, 45(2), 439-456.

Week 5 - July 4/6

July 4	No class
July 6	Mid-Term Exam (Take-home / Open-book)

Week 6 - July 11/13

Linking Research and Policy

- Young, J. (2004, February). Research and policy: parallel universes? *Opinions* (Overseas Development Institute).
- Crewe, E. & Young, J. (2002). Bridging research and policy: context, evidence and links. Overseas Development Institute (Working Paper No. 173). London.
- Von Grebmer, K. (2004). Converting policy research into policy decisions: The role of communication and the media. In S.C. Babu and A. Gulati, (eds.) *Economic Reforms and Food Security in South Asia: The Role of Trade and Technology*. Binghamton, NY.: Haworth Press.

Week 7 - July 18/20

Public Policy Advocacy

- Lens, V. (2004). *Advocacy and argumentation in the public arena: A guide for social workers*. (Unpublished manuscript), Columbia University School of Social Work.
- Public policy advocacy: a grassroots guide*. Newark, NJ: The Statewide Parent Advocacy Network.
- The NC Justice Center. (n.d.). *Public policy advocacy*.
[Example of public policy advocacy, includes policy briefs]

OPTIONAL:

- Stone, D. (2000). Non-governmental policy transfer: The strategies of independent policy institutes. *Governance: An International Journal of Policy and Administration*, 13(1), 45-62.

Week 8 - July 25

Final Portfolios / Presentations

- Draft for discussion – final revisions to be incorporated. -

Policy Portfolio Schedule

DATE	IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENT	DUE
Week 1 <i>Conceptualizing Poverty, Public Policy, and Policy Practice</i>		
June 6	Priority list of 3 populations of interest affected by poverty	
June 8	Begin to identify data sources (empirical and theoretical)	
Week 2 <i>Poverty in America</i>		
June 13	Continue data search and conduct peer review	List of preliminary data sources
June 15	Continue data search - peer review/instructor consultation	Summary of preliminary data findings (including sources)
Week 3 <i>Do Social Welfare Policies Reduce Poverty?</i>		
June 20	Policy analysis	
June 22		Summary of policy analysis - peer review/ instructor consultation Will hand out Mid-Term Exam
Week 4 <i>Public Discourse on Poverty Policy</i>		
June 27	Media analysis	
June 29		Summary of media analysis - peer review/ instructor consultation
Week 5		
July 4	No class	
July 6	Sound bites	Mid-Term Exam (Take-home/Open-book)
Week 6 <i>Linking Research and Policy</i>		
July 11	Press release – first draft for peer review/instructor consultation	Sound bites – final draft
July 13	Policy Brief - first draft for peer review/instructor consultation	
Week 7 <i>Public Policy Advocacy</i>		
July 18	Policy Brief - finalize peer review/instructor consultation on first draft, continued	Press release – final draft
July 20	Policy Brief - finalize peer review/instructor consultation on first draft, continued	
Week 8		
July 25		Policy Brief – final draft / Presentations Final Portfolios

VIII. Bibliography – New Books on Poverty

- Danziger, S. & Haveman R. (Eds.). (2002). *Understanding poverty*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Eitzen, D. S. & Eitzen Smith K. (2003). *Experiencing poverty: voices from the bottom*. Belmont, CA: Thomson, Wadsworth.
- Figueira-McDonough, J. & Sarri R. C. (Eds.). (2002). *Women at the margins: neglect, punishment, and resistance*. New York: Haworth Press.
- Goetz, E.G. (2003). *Clearing the way: deconcentrating the urban poor*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute.
- Henry, C. M. (2004). *Race, poverty, and domestic policy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Hill, R. P. (2001). *Surviving in a material world: the lived experience of people in poverty*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Iceland, J. (2003). *Poverty in America: a handbook*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
- Luce, S. (2004). *Fighting for a living wage*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Mangum, G. L., Mangum S. L., Sum A., & Levitan S. A. (2003). *The persistence of poverty in the United States*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Munger, F. (2002). *Laboring below the line: the new ethnography of poverty, low-wage work, and survival in the global economy*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Page, B. I. (2000). *What government can do: dealing with poverty and inequality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rank, M. R. (2004). *One nation, underprivileged: why American poverty affects us all*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rodgers, H. R. (2000). *American poverty in a new era of reform*. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe.
- Sachs, J. D. (2005). *The end of poverty: economic possibilities for our time*. New York: Penguin Press, 2005
- Squires, G. D. Edited. (2004) *Why the poor pay more: how to stop predatory lending*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Sullivan, D. H. (2003). *Poverty and inequality in the United States: context, analysis and policy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

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APPENDIX A: GUIDELINES FOR POLICY PORTFOLIO

The policy portfolio will be an in-depth study of a selected poverty policy issue of interest to the student, and will include the following four components. The portfolio should be professionally presented and must include both first drafts with comments and final drafts, for grading purposes. Portfolios containing only final drafts will be heavily penalized, regardless of the quality of the final drafts.

Each of the policy products will build on the previous one, beginning with the sound bite, then the press release, then a detailed policy brief. In addition, all sections will build on in-class analyses of data, policy, and the media and must include the summaries of those sections (see syllabus). The policy documents should reflect the techniques described in the readings, in particular the techniques outlined in “Advocacy and argumentation in the public arena: A guide for social workers” and the media analyses literature reviewed in class.

I. Process Reflections

- 2-3 page single-spaced narrative/reflection on the process of putting together the policy documents, including the research/data-gathering process and the specific techniques that you applied based on what you learned in this class
- Summary of data findings
- Summary of analysis
- Summary of media analysis

II. Sound Bite (Brief Policy Messages)

See *Communicating Food Policy Research: A Guidebook* (pp. 14-17, Appendix A).

III. Press Release

See *Communicating Food Policy Research: A Guidebook* (pp. 89-92, Appendix D).

IV. Policy Brief and Oral Presentation

Each student will create a policy brief (4 pages single-spaced) on the selected poverty topic. In addition, each student will provide an oral class presentation of the policy brief. The presentation should use power point, overheads, or some other form of audio-visual aid, and will include a display of the hard copy of the policy brief.

The purpose of a policy brief is to provide a concise overview of research on a particular topic in order to inform policy development. It should objectively analyze different factors associated with a complex issue in order to help define alternative courses of policy action. The topic should be specific, focused on a particular concern, and indicating the relationship between a problem and an outcome (for example, rather than *drug addiction, cocaine and pregnancy*). The policy brief should include a mix of narrative, two or more relevant tables or figures, bulleted lists of information from existing research, a list of policy recommendations, and a list of references. The design of the policy brief should be professional and modeled after examples

- Draft for discussion – final revisions to be incorporated. -

provided below and should use subheadings, columns, and other features you may choose. It should be well-organized, coherent, clearly presented, and written in your own words.

See also Communicating Food Policy Research: A Guidebook (p 122, and for power point presentations, see pp. 22-50 and 51-57]

General format and content that should be included (label subheadings creatively)

- Title (*be specific*)
- Background and significance of the problem (*e.g., many Latino children lack health insurance, which affects their health and life chances later in life*)
- Context of the issue (*political, legislative, social, economic: e.g., lack of health insurance in Latino children is related to poverty, to legislation that excludes immigrants from benefits*)
- Empirical facts and data on the magnitude of the problem from research studies (*causes, effects, statistical trends, demographic patterns*)
- Interpretation of the research data (*what does it mean for the quality of life for the population affected and/or for society*)
- Policy recommendations and rationale derived from the research presented and specifically targeted to the problem
- References (*10-15, including journal articles, books, and information from relevant research/advocacy organizations*)

Sample policy briefs

Examples of policy briefs can be found in the list of poverty center web sites provided. Below are two examples. Some policy briefs, sometimes referred to as research briefs, report on a single original study and others are based on a review of existing empirical evidence. For this class, the policy brief should be based on a review of existing empirical evidence.

Cocaine & Pregnancy (2002), Drug Policy Alliance Policy Brief,
<http://www.drugpolicy.org/library/research/cocaine.cfm>

Welfare Policies Matter for Children and Youth Lessons for TANF Reauthorization (2002),
Policy Brief, MDRC,
http://www.mdrc.org/Reports2002/NG_PolicyBrief1/NG_PolicyBrief.htm

APPENDIX B: POLICY PRACTICE RESOURCES ON POVERTY

N392R3 Advanced Policy: Poverty and Public Policy
Dr. Yolanda C. Padilla

UT Library Online: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>

Google scholar

Databases & Indexes to Articles: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/indexes/>

PolicyFile

Web-based information resource for the identification of public policy research and analysis.

National Bureau of Economic Research

The NBER disseminates unbiased economic research among public policymakers, business professionals, and the academic community.

Current Urban Documents

Labordoc

Labordoc contains references to a wide range of print and electronic publications, including journal articles, from countries around the world, on all aspects of work and sustainable livelihoods, and the work-related aspects of economic and social development and human rights.

Social Services Abstracts

News and Newspapers

Factiva

LexisNexis

Social Work Database

Information for Practice

News and new scholarship from around the world relevant to social work practice.

<http://www.nyu.edu/socialwork/ip/archives.php>

<http://www.nyu.edu/socialwork/ip/>

Data Sources on Poverty

Institute for the Study of Homelessness and Poverty at the Weingart Center

[QuickData Guide to Internet Statistics](#) (PDF)

<http://www.weingart.org/institute/>

Census

<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty.html>

The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP)

Data Wizards (Facts on states' income distribution, wages, employment, housing costs, and home ownership)

<http://www.nccp.org/wizard/wizard.cgi>

<http://www.nccp.org/wizard/wizard.cgi?action=Z>

Family Resource Simulator (Describe a family and view the benefits that they would receive based on their characteristics.)

<http://www.nccp.org/modeler/modeler.cgi>

Population Reference Bureau

Datafinder

<http://www.prb.org/datafind/datafinder5.htm>

Poverty Mapping

FAO, UNEP and the CGIAR

<http://www.povertymap.net/>

PovertyNet

Provides information on poverty measurement, monitoring, analysis, and on poverty reduction strategies for researchers and practitioners.

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPOVERTY/0,,menuPK:336998~pagePK:149018~piPK:149093~theSitePK:336992,00.html>

Poverty Policy and Research Centers

Inform analysts, policy makers and the media about new research findings of interest and new questions that deserve debate and research.

The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP)

Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University

<http://www.nccp.org/index.html>

The Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP)

University of Wisconsin-Madison

<http://www.irp.wisc.edu/home.htm>

The National Poverty Center (NPC)

Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan

<http://www.npc.umich.edu/>

Joint Center for Poverty Research

The Northwestern University / University of Chicago

<http://www.jcpr.org/>

The Southern Poverty Law Center

<http://www.splcenter.org/index.jsp>

The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation

<http://www.kff.org>

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The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty

<http://www.nlchp.org/about/>

Center on Hunger and Poverty

Institute on Assets and Social Policy (IASP)

The Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University

<http://www.centeronhunger.org/>

The Poverty & Race Research Action Council

<http://www.prrac.org/about.php>

Institute for the Study of Homelessness and Poverty at the Weingart Center

[Recent Research on Homelessness](#) (PDF)

[The Puzzle of the L.A. Economy](#) (PDF)

<http://www.weingart.org/institute/>

The Heritage Foundation

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/Welfare/index.cfm>

The National Center for Policy Analysis

<http://www.ncpa.org/abo/>

American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research

<http://www.aei.org/about/filter.all/default.asp>