

University of Texas at Austin
School of Social Work

Social Work 310
Introduction to Social Welfare
Spring Semester 1993

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COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the nature of social welfare as a social institution and its structural relationship to other major institutions of society.
2. To identify the social, economic, and political forces that have shaped the evolution of modern social welfare in the United States, and to place social welfare in a broad, historical context.
3. To identify and assess the important ideologies, beliefs, and values that have been expressed in social welfare.
4. To explore and analyze major social welfare problems and issues.
5. To explore and analyze major social welfare problems and issues concerning women, minorities, persons with differing political or religious beliefs or lifestyles, and other special populations.
6. To be acquainted with the history, values, current issues, and career opportunities of the social work profession in the social welfare system.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Heffernan, J., Shuttlesworth, G., and Ambrosino, R. (1992). Social Work and Social Welfare: An Introduction, New York: West Publishing Co.

Task Force on Social Work Research (November 1991). Building Social Work Knowledge for Effective Services and Policies: A Plan for Research Development. A Report funded by the National Institute of Mental Health.

CLASS STRUCTURE

Material related to achieving the course objectives will be presented through lectures, class discussion, textbook assignments, audiovisual presentation, field experiences, and guest lecturers. Not all readings will be reviewed by the instructor in class. Exams will be in essay form.

CLASS GRADING AND DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Social Issue Paper*	25 %
Interview Project Presentation	20 %
Exam	25 %
Final Exam	30 %

* Late papers will be penalized 5 points per day.

Social Issue Paper

The student is required to write a 12-15 page paper which focuses on a social issue or problem. It should incorporate the perspective of social work as well as that of other relevant disciplines. The paper should include the following:

Statement of the problem

1. a definition of the problem
2. an historical overview of the problem
3. a description of the number of groups of people affected and how they are affected

A statement of the issues surrounding the problem

1. the underlying assumptions concerning the definition of "the problem" either expressed or implied in the literature (whose problem is it?) (e.g., the view of alcoholism has varied throughout history from a moral to a medical problem)
2. what would be other ways of looking at this issue

A Discussion on Social Work Intervention

1. a short review of the current intervention strategies for dealing with the problem
2. how does our definition(s) of the problem translate to the current intervention strategies
3. recommendations for more effective intervention

Conclusion

Paper should be based upon library research. They must be typed, include references, and follow the style described in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (Third Edition, Washington: APA, 1983). A copy of the manual is on reserve in the Learning Resource Center at the Social Work Building, and handouts summarizing this reference format are available in Room 2.110 of the Social Work Bldg. The grade for the paper will be based on the demonstration of critical thinking, the quality of references used, thoroughness and comprehensiveness of the discussion, organization of the paper, and writing style.

Suggested problem areas for this paper include:

(1) poverty, (2) mental health/mental retardation, (3) discrimination/racism/sexism issues, (4) aging, (5) families, children, and youth, (6) criminal justice, (7) aging, and (8) rural social work. Then, narrow your focus to discuss a specific issue in this problem area, such as (1) preventing teenage alcoholism, (2) insurance coverage for AIDS patients, (3) resocialization of abusive parents, and (4) unemployment among young black youth.

**Interview Project Presentation of a Social Service Provider
(by Pairs of Students)**

The interview project will be conducted in pairs of students (a sign-up sheet will be passed out in the early part of the semester). It will entail interviewing a service provider and observing at the social service agency, including interviews with service recipients. If it is not possible to interview client(s), obtain information concerning the client's point of view from secondary sources, such as relevant newspaper interviews or previous studies on your population of interest. *In order to protect client confidentiality, obtain approval from the agency to observe or talk to clients.* The project may entail more than one visit in order to gain an understanding of the *process* of service provision.

Students are required to give a combined 20 minute report. The report should cover a specific service area, such as children/families, public health, mental health, the elderly, criminal justice or social services to rural areas.

The criteria for grading this project includes comprehensiveness, clarity, and the overall quality of the information obtained. Audiovisual or other aids can be used in the presentation (such as agency hand-outs, etc.). A suggested outline for the reports follows:

Description of the agency

1. name and location of agency (note the accessibility to clients)
2. description of the office environment
3. number and types of professionals employed at the agency

The organization of service delivery

1. basis for the creation of the service (e.g., grassroots, mandated by federal law, etc.)
2. sources of agency funding
3. kinds of services offered
4. types of clients served

The role of social service providers

1. examples of the service provider's professional credentials, experience, and responsibilities
2. examples of the professional's rewarding work experiences
3. impediments to service delivery as viewed by the service provider

The social service recipients

1. client(s) identified by pseudonym, approximate age, gender, and ethnicity
2. how individual became a client of the agency
3. how long the client has been receiving serves and what kinds of services
4. client's opinion about the agencies services
5. client's suggestions for improving services at the agency

CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTSI. Social Work Within the Societal Context**WEEK 1**

Jan 19, 21 Overview of the Class and Introduction
Social Work as a Profession
(Chapter 1)

WEEK 2

Jan 26, 28 Historical Background of Social Welfare
(Chapter 2)

WEEK 3

Feb 2, 4 Theoretical Perspectives for Viewing Social Problems: A
Framework for Social Work Response
(Chapter 3)

WEEK 4

Feb 9, 11 The Needs of Children, Youth, and Families
(Chapter 7)

WEEK 5

Feb 16 Poverty
(Chapter 4)

Feb 18 **PROPOSAL FOR SOCIAL ISSUE PAPER DUE**
(Sign up for individual meeting with instructor to
discuss proposal. Select any of the dates
indicated below with an asterisk. This meeting is
required.)

WEEK 6

***Feb 23** Discrimination and Inequality
(Chapter 17)

Feb 25 **EXAM**

II. The Organization of Social Welfare Service Delivery and Practice:Social Welfare Practitioners Speakers Series**WEEK 7**

***Mar 2** Social Agency Administration
(Chapters 15, 19)

Mar 4 *Susan Berliner, Vice President of Funds Distribution and
Agency Relations. United Way/Capital Area*

WEEK 8

***Mar 9** The Delivery System of Services to Children, Youth, and
Families
(Chapter 8)

Mar 11 *Neomi Cuevas, Child Care Program Specialist. Self-Support
Services, Texas Department of Human Services*

WEEK 9
Mar 15-20 **SPRING BREAK**

WEEK 10
Mar 23 Direct Practice: Social Work with Individuals and Families
 (Chapter 13)

Mar 25 *Kathy McWhorter, CSW-ACP, Coordinator of Social Services.*
Austin Community Nursery Schools

WEEK 11
Mar 30 Research and Practice in Social Work
 (Chapter 13; Social Work Task Force Report, Sec. I, IV, V)

Apr 1 *Laura Lein, Ph.D., Research Scientist, School of Social Work*
and Coordinator, Anthropological Research Group. University
of Texas at Austin

III. Areas of Social Welfare Service Provision: Fields of Practice

WEEK 12
Apr 6, 8 Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Developmental
 Disabilities
 (Chapter 5)
Student presentations (Apr 6)

WEEK 13
Apr 13, 15 Health Care
 (Chapter 6)
Student presentations (Apr 13)

WEEK 14
Apr 20 Aging
 (Chapter 12)
Student presentations (Apr 22)

Apr 22 **SOCIAL ISSUE PAPER DUE**

WEEK 15
Apr 27, 29 Social Services to the Rural Areas
 (Chapter 11)
Student presentations (Apr 27)

WEEK 16
May 4, 6 Criminal Justice
 (Chapter 9)
Student presentations (May 4)

Final Examination (Place and time to be announced.)

CLASS POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

1. It is important for social work practitioners to be punctual in both attendance and in meeting deadlines. Therefore, class attendance is expected, as is handing in assignments on time.
2. Social work practitioners seek critique and use feedback from others to improve themselves. I will work with you throughout the semester and provide you with initial feedback and suggestions for revisions on assignments. Please arrange to meet with me prior to the time the assignment is due.
3. Social work practitioners assume responsibility for themselves. Therefore, it is expected that work handed in will be your own. Scholastic dishonesty, including plagiarism and cheating during examinations, violates social work values and will result in recommendation for dismissal from the University according to University guidelines.
4. Social work practitioners are assertive and function as team members. Therefore, feedback about the course is welcome and the course will be viewed as a joint effort between students and the instructor.
5. Effective oral and written communication is an integral part of social work practice. Therefore, written and oral presentations will be expected to be professional and clearly stated. Grades will be lowered if assignments have not been proofread and contain numerous grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.