

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA  
COLLEGE OF BEHAVIORAL AND COMMUNITY SCIENCES  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

**FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY  
SOW 6235  
SYLLABUS - SPRING 2012**

**INSTRUCTOR:** PROFESSOR SILVIA J. BLANCO, LCSW

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**OFFICE HOURS:** by appointment

**CLASS HOURS:** TUESDAYS, 6-8:50 PM

**CLASSROOM:** A203A

**Nature of the Course:**

This is the first course in the policy sequence. The course provides first year graduate social work students with an introduction to social welfare problems, policies, and programs. The course is taught from a generalist perspective and is intended to be historical and descriptive in its approach. It includes an examination of the antecedents of the present social welfare system and of the current state of social welfare policies and programs in the United States. The emphasis is on social, economic, and political forces that have shaped social welfare policy in this country and of the ideas and underlying social values that have contributed to the development of the system. This course places contemporary trends and issues in longitudinal perspectives, focusing on both continuity and change in past and present development. The course explores the unique features of cultural diversity, race, ethnicity, and the role of women in policy development. Professional social work values and ethics are contrasted with the historical development of social welfare policy in the United States.

**Course Rationale:**

This course is about critical thinking (and critical listening). Social workers at all practice levels need to develop a knowledge base involving the nature of the problems and forces which are fundamental in the creation of social problems. In tandem with social work's "person-in-environment" perspective, it is essential that social work practitioners understand the development of social policies through which society and various social systems attempt to manage, control, minimize, and/or eliminate social problems, their consequences, and their effects. Social workers also need to be aware of their roles and responsibilities and values and ethics in the development and implementation of social policies and programs created in response to social problems.

The generalist perspective of the foundations course stresses a comprehensive approach to problem solving, based upon an eclectic theoretical base. This generalist approach emphasizes a dual role of simultaneously addressing human needs and social issues, with a knowledge of

ecosystems, when problem solving in the pursuit of economic and social justice. The rationale involves using a strengths perspective and a systemic perspective in presenting the course content.

### **Content of the Course:**

The course provides an overview of the historical development, pertinent concepts, and definitions associated with social welfare problems and social policy. The development of programs to remedy poverty and related social problems is examined. Consideration is given to the impact of racism and sexism as direct factors contributing to poverty and other social problems. The roles and responsibilities of social workers in policy and program development, implementation and evaluation will be discussed.

In addition to the content of policies and programs, this course features an examination of cultural diversity and how policies, programs, values, and ethics are related to the needs and problems of particular constituencies, i.e., children, racial and ethnic minorities, women, the elderly, the physically and mentally impaired and disabled, and those whose lifestyles render them subject to discriminatory and oppressive treatment. The course also includes an analysis and review of how social welfare and social work have been and are related to movements, causes, and trends - in such areas as Civil Rights, Women's Rights, the Progressive Movement, and others that have addressed the conditions and problems of oppressed people. The content is presented from the perspective of the oppressed, challenged, and disadvantaged.

### **Theoretical Base:**

The graduate and undergraduate programs of the USF School of Social Work provides a progressive identification with the values and ethics of social work, mastery of the knowledge on which social work practice is based, and the development of practice skills. The unifying themes and theoretical underpinnings of USF's social work curricula are found primarily in explanatory theories (e.g., *ecosystems theory*) and secondarily in change theories (e.g., psychodynamic and cognitive behavioral theories), *operationalized through the empowerment, strengths, and capacity building perspectives of social work practice*.

***Ecosystems theory*** reflects the social work value of enhancing human system functioning and focuses on biological, psychological, emotional, cultural, and social environments holistically. The ***strengths perspective*** emphasizes viewing the range of human differences as normal and acceptable, as opposed to making judgments about peoples' personal characteristics, race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental ability, age, national origin, and level of social and emotional functioning. The ***empowerment perspective*** supports resourcefulness and the development of skills to remove social barriers for individuals, groups, and communities. The ***capacity building perspective*** reinforces the social work profession's mandate to serve the most vulnerable of society, to enhance the caring capacity of society to end discriminatory practices, and to develop and expand resources to those in need. ***Evidence-based practice*** entails the conscientious and judicious use of current best practice in decision-making about interventions at all system levels, integrating relevant scientific information with informed professional judgment and the personal preferences and cultural backgrounds of service consumers in order to practice effectively and ethically.

### **Methods of Instruction:**

The class will be conducted by means of the lecture/discussion instructional method. Other methods to facilitate learning will be used at the discretion of the instructor and may include class exercises, online activities, debates, role-plays, guest lecturers, & student presentations. The value of this class is largely the experience. Class attendance is expected. Class participation includes voicing opinions, facilitating discussion, and speaking knowledgeably regarding the assigned readings. Please advise the instructor of any anticipated absences in advance if possible. There is more to a graduate degree than the content; classroom interaction is the real value of graduate education.

### **Academic Continuity in the Event of Campus Closure:**

In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for USF to suspend normal operations. During this time, USF may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include but are not limited to: Blackboard, Elluminate, Skype, and email messaging and/or an alternate schedule. It's the responsibility of the student to monitor Blackboard site for each class for course specific communication, and the main USF, College, and department websites, emails, and MoBull messages for important general information

### **Course Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Understand the relationship between social welfare policy and professional social work practice;  
*measurement:* analytic paper, synthesis paper, exam
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the development of the social welfare system both historically and with regard to current programs and issues;  
*measurement:* analytic paper, synthesis paper, exam
3. Discuss the conditions that constitute social problems and the impact of these problems on society;  
*measurement:* analytic paper, synthesis paper, exam
4. Understand the special impact of social problems and policies on people of color, women, and special populations, i.e., children, the elderly, physically and mentally disabled, persons with alternative lifestyles, etc.  
*measurement:* analytic paper, synthesis paper, exam
5. Identify and discuss the fundamental forces which contributes to the creation of social problems;  
*measurement:* analytic paper, synthesis paper, exam
6. Identify and discuss the social, economic, and political systems through which social policies are formulated and implemented to address social problems;  
*measurement:* analytic paper, synthesis paper, exam  
Discuss relevant concepts and definitions pertaining to poverty and social welfare policy;  
*measurement:* analytic paper, synthesis paper, exam
8. Exhibit an understanding of social work values and ethics and cultural diversity in relation to social welfare problems, programs, and policies;  
*measurement:* analytic paper, synthesis paper, exam

9. Discuss the roles of social work practitioners in the development, implementation, and evaluation of policy and program development; *measurement*: analytic paper, synthesis paper, exam
10. Exhibit a sound foundational understanding of the process of policy analysis through assignments focused on problems, policies, and programs.  
*measurement*: analytic papers, synthesis paper, exam

### **Basic Expectations:**

Students are expected to cooperate with commonly accepted principles of student behavior. These include but are not limited to the following:

1. Treat faculty and fellow students with courtesy and respect, particularly during disagreements.
2. Attend class and arrive on time. In the event that missing class or being late is truly unavoidable, students are expected to notify the professor in advance, if possible. Repeatedly missing class or being tardy negatively impacts on experiential aspects of learning and *will* negatively affect your grade.
3. Avoid creating disruptions in class through extraneous cross talk, receiving cell phone calls, receiving pages, etc.; failure to abide by these guidelines *will* negatively affect the class and your grade.
4. Come to class prepared to participate in an informed and productive manner. Consistent, irrelevant “sharing” does not constitute a high level of participation. Similarly, part of appropriate participation is being sensitive to the group process and not monopolizing discussion.
5. Timeliness is a basic expectation of interpersonal respect and professionalism. Therefore, work turned in late *will* be graded down and will be assessed at computation of final grade.
6. Written work is expected to be typed or word processed, proof read, and presentable and in APA format.
7. USF respects religious diversity and does not require attendance on days on which such participation is proscribed by the student’s religion. However, it is expected that students will inform the professor in advance, consistent with the university policy about absences for religious observances below.

### **Attendance Policy:**

Students are expected to be on time and prepared to participate when class begins as well as be present throughout the entire class meeting. Classroom exercises, discussions, role plays, guest speakers and other in-class experiential exercises are essential for a student’s professional learning and continued development of self awareness. This form of learning cannot be “made up” once missed. Accordingly, attendance is required at all class meetings. There are no excused absences (except for military leave, jury duty, or religious holidays that are planned in advance). A student is considered absent if he/she arrives more than 30 minutes late to class, leaves 30 or more minutes early or does not come to class. Students are allowed to miss 1 class (if classes meet once per week) or 2 classes (if classes meet twice a week) without penalty. After that, 5% off of the

total grade may be deducted for each missed class. **Students are responsible for any missed material due to absences or lateness.** If a student misses more than 20% of classes or 3 classes, the instructor has the discretion to fail the student.

*Students who experience an unforeseen circumstance such as a serious medical problem which interferes with their attendance or course assignments should notify the instructor immediately. Students and instructors should familiarize themselves with the USF Incomplete policy.*

**Absences due to Religious Observances:**

Students are expected to notify their instructors at the beginning of each academic term if they intend to be absent for a class or announced examination. Students absent for religious reasons, as noticed to the instructor at the beginning of each academic term, will be given reasonable opportunities to make up any work missed. For further information, please refer to:

<http://generalcounsel.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-10-045.pdf>

**Use of Non-Sexist and Professional Language:**

The use of non-sexist and professional language is expected in written assignments and in class discussion. Guidelines regarding non-sexist language are available in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.

**Academic Dishonesty Policy:**

Students attending USF are awarded degrees in recognition of successful completion of coursework in their chosen fields of study. Each individual is expected to earn his/her degree on the basis of personal effort. Consequently, any form of cheating on examinations or plagiarism on assigned papers constitutes unacceptable deceit and dishonesty. Toward that end the University has made *Anti Plagiarism* software available for faculty to use at their discretion. This faculty member will utilize this software based on her judgment that it is warranted. Therefore, students may be requested by the instructor to submit assignments electronically.

Disruption of the classroom or teaching environment is also unacceptable. This cannot be tolerated in the University community and will be punishable, according to the seriousness of the offense, in conformity with this rule. If you have any questions, please refer to:

In the School of Social Work <http://socialwork.usf.edu/>

- Procedures for Alleged Academic Dishonesty or Disruption:  
<http://www.ugs.usf.edu/catalogs/0809/adadap.htm>
- Student Academic Grievance Procedures --  
<http://www.ugs.usf.edu/catalogs/0809/arcsagp.htm>

**Use of Plagiarism Tracking Software (Safe assign):**

The University of South Florida has an account with an automated plagiarism detection service which allows instructors to submit student assignments to be checked for plagiarism. I reserve

the right to submit assignments to this detection system. Assignments are compared automatically with a huge database of journal articles, web articles, and previously submitted papers. The instructor receives a report showing exactly how a student's paper was plagiarized.

**NOTE: TAPES AND NOTES ARE NOT PERMITTED FOR SALE**

**Textbook:**

Popple, P & Leighninger, L. (2011). Fifth Edition. *The Policy Based Profession: An introduction to social welfare policy analysis for social workers.* Allyn and Bacon.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**A. Social Policy Analysis**

Students will select a specific area of interest in a particular policy area and prepare a policy analysis that will relate to a specific population. Students will prepare a social policy analysis utilizing a policy framework provided by the instructor. The paper should include an historical perspective and discuss the contemporary status of the issue. Relevant and current descriptive statistical information should be included to convey the significance of the issue or prevalence of the social problem. The paper should include the headings from the framework but should not be written in bullet or question/answer form. The paper must be 7-10 pages in length, using 12 point font, double spacing, and APA style. A reference page in APA style should be attached. Students should use current articles, books, and book chapters and not only websites. **The paper is worth 30 points and is due Tues. 2/28/ 2012 by 6pm (est) via Blackboard. Students must notify the instructors of a late paper. All late papers will receive 10% off the grade.**

**Possible policy areas include the following:**

Environmental Policy	Social Insurance
Housing	Civil Rights
Health	Criminal Justice
Globalism and Social Policy	Education
Global Peace and Justice	Health Policy
Poverty	Child Welfare
Economic Policy	Education

**Framework for Social Welfare Policy Analysis**

**Social Problem:**

- What is the problem?
- How did it evolve? When did it begin?
- What was the extent of the problem when it began? What is the current status?
- What is the prevalence of the problem in terms of numbers, population, etc.?
- Related social values?

- Underlying causes or factors?

**Policy/Legislation:**

- What is/are relevant public policies developed to address the problem?
- What are the objectives of the policies?
- Who supports the policies?
- Who opposes the policies?
- Are any new policies being proposed?

**Implementation:**

- What is/are some examples of the social programs implemented as a result of the policy?
- Are the programs effective?
- Strengths?
- Weaknesses?

**Affected Populations:**

- Who is touched by the policy and programs?
- What are the positive effects on the population?
- What are the negative effects on the population?

**Intended Impact:**

- What was supposed to be the result?
- Who was supposed to have been affected?
- How was the social problem supposed to have been changed?

**Actual Impact:**

- Costs and benefits?
- Is the social problem changed as a result of the policy?
- If so, how?
- Are there unintended results?

**Recommendations:**

- Is this an effective policy?
- What changes would you recommend to the policy/policies to enhance impact?  
To lessen the gap between the intended impact and actual impact?
- Do new policies need to be considered to address problem and help population?  
What are your ideas?
- What role should social workers engaged in policy practice play?

**B. Synthesis paper**

The synthesis paper provides the student an opportunity to extend beyond the course content and gain a sense of expertise in a selected area relating to social welfare policy. The student will have the opportunity to explore policy-related social issues and/or problems of special interest to them. The topics selected should be an analysis of a specific social problem or issue (see suggested list of topics). Students will select eight articles from any academic peer reviewed journal relative to the selected issue/problem. No more than two articles are to be dated prior to 2005. As much as possible, there should be continuity in the eight articles, that is, every article should contain a similar theme in regards to the issue/problem. Students have the freedom to research any social issue pending approval from the instructor. **Specific clinical conditions or diagnoses are not appropriate issues unless there is a state or national policy that addresses the condition or diagnosis specifically.** The journal articles should be *integrated into a narrative* with each article cited within the text. **The paper is worth 30 points and is due on Tues. April 10, 2012 by 6pm (est) via Blackboard. Students must notify the instructors of a late paper. All late papers will receive 10% off the grade.**

#### **Synthesis Paper Guidelines:**

The paper should be 7-8 pages in length, using 12 point font, double spacing, APA style. No abstract is necessary. The eight articles cited in the paper must be listed in APA style in a separate reference page. The paper must identify a specific current social issue and should include the following information by specific heading:

- 1. Nature and scope of the issue** - definition of the issue; number of people or institutions affected; economic and social consequences of the issue. What are the federal government's policies and programs regarding the issue?
- 2. How are social workers involved in dealing with the issue?** Is the profession of social work directly or indirectly involved? What social agencies directly deal with the issue and what other agencies are affected by it? Identify the state and local agencies that deal with the issue.
- 3. What are some of the current operational or proposed solutions for the issue?** What are some of the impediments to these "solutions" being implemented or working as intended? What are the unintended consequences of the "solutions"? In your opinion, are there other solutions that may work?
- 4. What are your recommendations?** (Your opinion should be at least one page).

Students have the freedom to research any social issue pending approval from the instructor; however **specific clinical conditions or diagnoses are not appropriate issues unless there is a local, regional, state or national policy that addresses the condition or diagnosis specifically.** Examples of some of the issues that might be used include:

Abortion	Managed Care
Adolescent pregnancy	Medicare
Affirmative action	Medicaid
Aging issues	Poverty
AIDS/HIV	Rural poverty
Chemical dependency	Probation, parole, or corrections issues
Child abuse/neglect	Right to die
Domestic violence/Violence	Social Security
Gun Control	Terrorism
Health care reform	Welfare reform
Health care insurance	Women's Issues

**C. Poster/Presentation:** Students will develop a formal poster from their Synthesis paper and present it to the class in a 5-10 minute presentation. The poster should include salient facts from your paper. More details and examples will be provided to students through the semester. **The poster/presentation is worth 10 points and is due on Tues. April 17 or April 24, 2012 (students will be assigned a date). Late posters will not be accepted and will earn a grade of 0.**

**D. Exam:**

The exam will be based on the book, power point slides, online activities, and class exercises /discussions. It will be an open book essay exam which will be online. Students will receive detailed instructions for completion closer to the exam date. **The exam is worth 30 points and will be due on Tues. 3/27/ 2012 by 6pm (est). Late exams will not be accepted and will earn a grade of 0.**

**Grades will be based on the following scale:**

A + = 97-100	B + = 87-89	C + = 77-79	D + = 67-69	
A = 94-96	B = 84-86	C = 74-76	D = 64-66	
A- = 90-93	B- = 80-83	C- = 70-73	D- = 60-63	F = 59↓

**GRADING:**

Social Policy Analysis Paper	30%
Exam	30%
Synthesis Paper	30%
Poster/Presentation	10%

**COURSE CALENDAR**  
**Spring 2012**

- 1/10 Introductions/course overview/syllabus review.  
The Policy-Based Profession  
Defining Social Welfare Policy  
What is Social Policy? What is its relationship to social work practice?  
Brainstorming: Current social welfare problems & issues in America.  
Text, Chapters 1 and 2
- 1/17 The History of Social Welfare- Part I  
Ginsburg Chapter 2
- 1/24 The History of Social Welfare- Part II  
DiNitto Chapter 3  
Text, Chapters 3 and 4
- 1/31 Social and Economic Analysis  
Politics and Social Welfare: The policy making process  
Text, Chapters 5 and 6
- 2/7 **Online**  
Fighting Poverty  
Text, Chapter 7
- 2/14 Aging: Social Security as an Entitlement  
Text, Chapter 8
- 2/21 Mental Health: Managed Care  
Text, Chapter 9
- 2/28 **Online**  
Substance Abuse Policies  
Text, Chapter 10  
**Social Policy Paper due**
- 3/6 Child Welfare: Family Preservation Policy  
Text, Chapter 11
- 3/13 **SPRING BREAK!**

- 3/20 Race, Ethnicity, & Immigration  
DiNitto Chapter 12  
Gender and Sexual Orientation  
DiNitto Chapter 11
- 3/27 **Online**  
Disability  
DiNitto Chapter 6  
**Essay Exam- due by 6 PM.**
- 4/10 Why has the American Welfare System been Reluctant?  
Jansson Chapter 13  
**Synthesis Paper due**
- 4/17 **Poster/ Presentations on Synthesis Paper**
- 4/24 **Poster/Presentations on Synthesis Paper and  
Course evaluations**

## **REFERENCES**

- Abramowitz, M. (1996). *Regulating the lives of women: Social welfare policy from colonial times to the present*. South End Press.
- Axinn, J. & Stern, M. (2007). *Social welfare: A history of the American response to need*. Allyn and Bacon.
- Barusch, A. (2012). 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. *Foundations of social policy: Social justice in human perspective*. Brooks/Cole.
- Berkowitz, M. Johnson, W. F. and Murphy, E. H. (1986). *Public policy toward disability*. Holt, Rinehart, Winson.
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- Bratt, R. Stone, M. E. Hartman, C. (2006). *A right to housing: foundation for a new social agenda*. Temple University Press.
- Choi, N. G. & Snyder, L. J. (1999). Voices of homeless parents: The pain of homelessness and

- shelter life. *Journal of Human Behavior and Social environment*, 2, 3, 55-77.
- DiNitto, D. M. (2011). 7<sup>th</sup> Ed. *Social Welfare: Politics and public policy*. Allyn and Bacon.
- Fellin, P. (1996). Mental health and mental illness: Policies, programs and services.
- Graham, O. (2006). *What's wrong with US immigration policy?* Social contract, 16, 4.
- Harrington, M. (1962). *The other America: Poverty in the University States*. Mc Millan.
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- Karger, H., Midgley, J. & Brown, CB. (Eds.) (2003). *Controversial issues in social policy* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Allyn and Bacon.
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- Millbourne, P. (Ed). (2010) *Welfare reform in rural places. Comparative perspectives*. Emerald Group Publishing.
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- Ozwa, M. & Yoon, H. S. (2007). How economically disadvantaged are American elderly women? In Cane, D. R. & Heaton, T. *Handbook of Families and Poverty*. Sage Publications.
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- Pecora, P. & Whittaker, J. (2009). *The child welfare challenge: policy, practice and research*. Aldine Press.
- Trattner, W. (1998). (6<sup>th</sup> Ed). *From poor law to welfare state*. The Free Press.
- Schiele, J. (2010). *Social welfare policy: Regulation and resistance among people of color*. Sage.

## Assignment Rubrics

### Rubric for Social Welfare Policy Analysis

#### Social Problem: 3 points

Explains a current social problem using current demographics and facts

#### Policy/Legislation: 4 points

Student thoroughly and accurately describes the policies and their objectives, its opponents and supporters

#### Implementation: 4 points

Student discusses social programs generated by policies and understands their strengths and weaknesses

#### Affected Populations: 4 points

Student thoroughly examines *all* populations which are impacted by policies beyond the obvious

#### Intended Impact: 4 points

Student clearly describes who was impacted and how

#### Actual Impact: 4 points

Student presents clear, accurate and well-thought out understanding of costs/benefits and implications of policies

#### Recommendations: 4 points

Student's thorough, well-developed, and logical recommendations based on knowledge presented

#### Writing, Grammar, APA style: 3 points

Student synthesizes information, writes clearly and accurately and uses proper APA style throughout

#### Total= 30

### **Rubric for Synthesis Paper**

#### **Nature and scope of the issue: 6 points**

Student thoroughly presents definition and demographics about the issue and discusses policies and programs regarding the issue

#### **How social workers are involved: 5 points**

Student identifies the state and local agencies handling the issue and how the field of SWK is involved

#### **Current operational or proposed solutions for the issue: 7 points**

Student clearly describes current and proposed solutions and their intended and unintended consequences

#### **Your recommendations: 7 points**

Student's thorough, well-developed, and logical recommendations based on knowledge presented- at least one page in length

#### **Writing, Grammar, APA style: 5 points**

Student synthesizes information, writes clearly and accurately and uses proper APA style throughout

**Total = 30**

### **Rubric for Poster/Presentations**

#### **Poster: 5 points**

Poster is clear, easy to read, contains salient points, and is organized

#### **Presentation: 5 points**

Student speaks audibly and clearly, appears to understand the content and presents salient points in an organized manner

**Total= 10**