

Course Syllabus
Social Problems and Programs (SOWK 2201AA)
Seton Hall University
Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work
Social Work Program, Fall 2011
Mondays and Wednesdays; 4:00-5:15PM

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Office hours before and after class and by appointment

Academic Integrity:

Exams and papers are expected to represent the student's own work. Information, ideas, and so forth which are attributable to others require documentation as such. In the event a student is unsure about documentation, please see the instructor at least several days prior to submission. Any exam or paper which misrepresents the work of others as the student's own will be counted as zero in the computation of the student's final grade. There may be additional sanctions for breaches of academic integrity.

Policy on Special Conditions and Accommodations - DSS Syllabus Statement:

It is the policy and practice of Seton Hall University to promote inclusive learning environments. If you have a documented disability you may be eligible for reasonable accommodations in compliance with University policy, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and/or the New Jersey Law against Discrimination. Please note, students are not permitted to negotiate accommodations directly with professors. To request accommodations or assistance, please self-identify with the Office for Disability Support Services (DSS), Duffy Hall, Room 67 at the beginning of the semester. For more information or to register for services, contact DSS at (973) 313-6003 or by email at DSS@shu.edu.

The social work program enthusiastically supports any and all efforts to assure that all members of the Seton Hall community receive opportunity to maximize their academic and other experiences at Seton Hall University.

Pre-requisite: None. This course meets three credits of requirements in the College of Arts and Sciences BA Core Curriculum in Social Sciences. It is a pre-requisite for SOWK 2301, Social Policy Analysis which also meets three credits of social science core requirements and is which is also approved as a course that is officially approved as a infusion course (critical thinking).

This course is required of all students who are majoring in social work. While we recognize that non-social work majors may also be in this course, we stress that both the social work program and The Council on Social Work Education (www.cswe.org) has

very specific competency requirements and this course focuses on those competencies pertinent to social welfare programs and policies and the social problems and injustices that are correlated with these; albeit these are developed further in the social work curriculum. If you want further information concerning competency standards in social work, you can go to the above site and click on accreditation standards. If you are a social work major you should have a copy of the Social Work Program Handbook in which these competencies and the sub-competencies of each are presented in terms of our goals and objectives. If for some reason you do not have this Handbook, please contact the instructor and one will be sent to you or feel free to email Richard Blake, Social Work Program Director at richard.blake@shu.edu and one will be forwarded to you immediately. All majors should have an electronic copy of this comprehensive document and although we make every attempt to assure that students receive this, in the event you don't have it or it was misplaced or the like, please request this as soon as possible. We want to make sure that everyone is as informed as possible concerning our total curriculum. Herein when you see the letters EPAS, this acronym stands for Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards that are promulgated, required, and monitored by The Council on Social Work Education (as may apply to specific components of our explicit curriculum, such as this course) as well as our own historical focus on clearly specifying and monitoring outcomes.

Course Description:

We strongly suggest that you print a hard copy of this syllabus and bring it to each class session. Thus, you will have in front of you exactly where we have been, where we are, and where we are going. At the midpoint of the semester, I will distribute a confidential course/instructor evaluation. This is for my purposes only and serves as a control that we are proceeding as per this syllabus and also allows for suggestions from students. At the end of the semester, students will be asked to confidentially complete an evaluation form specifically designed for social work courses (this will be delivered to the social work program director and reviewed by the program director and the instructor after grades are submitted). In addition, at the end of the semester you will also be completing the University's electronic course/instructor evaluation. Of course, the instructor welcomes comments and suggestions throughout the semester.

This course uses assigned readings, discussion, lecture, and library research to present the history and current operation of social programs and policies. The instructor makes appropriate use of Powerpoint and pertinent presentations may be forwarded to students as may be necessary. We continuously monitor learning progress. The course presents social problems and social programs and policies as responses to these problems; there is particular emphasis regarding people, particularly groups of people, who are oppressed, marginalized, and alienated. A society with persons who are thus, also leads to a logical conclusion that there are those who have created or are otherwise in positions of privilege and power and systems may and do operate such as to continue this. Thus, the philosophical underpinning of instruction and learning, from a theoretical perspective, is both structural/functional and conflict in approach. The course is grounded in humanistic

values and principles. This course, as in all social work courses, emphasizes diversity, social justice, and values. These are explicated further in this syllabus.

This course provides substantial factual information which is developed in depth, both qualitatively and quantitatively, in the subsequent course SOWK 2301.

Evidence of Learning (Basis for Grades):

Mid-term Examination, (to be announced in a timely manner), 75 minutes, 25% of course grade.

Final Examination, (as per University schedule), two hours, 25% of course grade. The final examination is not cumulative and will be confined to course content since the mid-term.

Each exam will require factual information and critical thinking about the relationship of content to course objectives and EPAS requirements. The instructor will provide sufficient review, but consider that each class session is, in fact, review for the assessment of your learning.

The instructor will supply “green/blue books” for the examinations. Both examinations will require short answer as well as brief essay responses. Students will be able to choose from a menu of several questions. All items on exams will be derived from materials covered in the class; no surprises. The instructor will periodically present sample questions and responses throughout the course; there will be limited specific in-class review for the examinations. Exams are not designed to reflect short term memory of limited facts, but rather, knowledge, understanding, and application of material learned with direct implications for respective competency expectations.

Term Paper, due by the beginning of class on the last day of class (not the date of the final examination). The paper is worth 50% of the final course grade. Details of the protocols and requirements for the paper are presented below.

Required Reading (text):

Karger, H. J. & Stoesz, D. (2010). *American social welfare policy: A pluralistic approach*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. ISBN#978-0-205-62708-0

In addition, the social work program has extensive reference material, in addition to that which is readily accessible at the library/library website. Students will find the *Encyclopedia of Social Work and Social Work Speaks* (current editions, available for use in the conference room up until one week before any respective assignment) and other books and materials available. We encourage you to allow us to help you. If you use our reference materials, please be careful with them and we may need to have a two hour time limit at one seating, such that other students have these available. We have multiple copies of the above.

Purpose of Course: Objectives.

For students to further:

comprehend how human needs are systematically met in The United States and other countries;

learn possible ways to link people with systems that provide them with resources, services, and opportunities;

evaluate the extent to which the objectives of intervention plans are achieved (in terms of the stated purposes of social welfare programs and policies and considering any latent consequences – both unintended and, perhaps, deliberate);

promote the effective and humane operation of the systems that provide people with services, resources, and opportunities; and

participate with others in creating new, modified, or improved service systems.

Additional objectives:

For students to enhance their comprehension of:

the history of social programs in The United States, particularly as this relates to contemporary functioning of the social welfare system, with explication of terms and nomenclature;

the relationship of social programs and policies to values, and ideology;

the conceptual frameworks by which social problems, policies and programs are conceptualized and categorized;

the issues of diversity, social justice/injustice, and values;

the auspices, and concomitant implications, under which social programs and policies are implemented;

the actual existence and functioning of respective social programs from functional and conflict perspectives and with special attention to diversity, social justice/injustice, and groups of people who suffer discrimination and oppression; and

social problems and programs in The United States as contrasted with other nations.

Organization of Content (please note that the instructor may use appropriate discretion with regard to time frames noted below, depending upon class progress, and of course, with students fully informed in a timely manner): Please note that we are aware that the majority, if not all students in this class, are not in any internship wherein they can actually apply this material in practice. This course is preparatory for those students who will be expected to implement these competencies as they proceed through the social work curriculum. Meeting of competency requirements is thus measured by examinations and the term paper. Although specific EPAS competencies are identified below, all are designed to meet **EPAS 2.1.1 Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly**. We recognize that this is a 2000 level course, relatively early in the academic career of social work majors as a general rule, however this competency permeates our entire curriculum.

Unit I. Definitions, implications, relationship to values and ideology.
Reading: text, chapter 1.

This unit is designed to assure the appropriate level of competency pertinent to: **EPAS 2.1.2 –Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice**. Students will recognize and learn to manage their personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice. The instructor will assist any student who does not have access to the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (the program has booklets and this is presented in other textbooks. It can also be accessed by www.socialworkers.org and clicking to Code of Ethics. In other words, we have multiple ways to assure that students are informed of social work values and ethics; including distribution of the full Code of Ethics which we have purchased in pamphlet form from the National Association of Social Workers in sufficient quantity.

Unit II. The origins and possible future of social policies and programs.
Reading: text, chapter 1, continued

This unit is designed to assure the appropriate level of competency pertinent to **EPAS 2.1.8 –Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services**. Also, **EPAS 2.1.9 – Respond to contexts that shape practice** (in this instance, social welfare programs and policies as

the context for service delivery). **EPAS 2.1.5 –Advance human rights and social and economic justice.** This is based on an informed position that one cannot be competent in doing this, without understanding basics of “the system”.

Unit III. Government, not-for-profit, for-profit, and informal service delivery;
religion and social welfare policy.
Reading: text, chapters 3, 6, 7, and 8

This unit is designed to continue and further develop the above EPAS competencies.

Unit IV. Discrimination and social stigma
Reading: text, chapter 4

This unit is designed to assure the appropriate level of competency pertinent to **EPAS 2.1.4 –Engage diversity and difference in practice.** More specifically and, considering this is a 2000 level course, students are expected to gain competency in recognizing the extent to which a culture’s (and societal) structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power and recognize and communicate their understanding of their own personal biases and values and the importance of difference in shaping life experiences.

Mid-term Examination: The mid-term and final examinations will cover content from the above (no surprises) but will emphasize the respective competency that is expected.

Unit V. Social programs in relation to specific social problems/issues
poverty
health and mental health
hunger
homelessness
substance abuse
crime, including domestic violence and child endangerment
Reading: text, chapters 5, 11, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 14, and 15

This unit is designed to orient students to but a few of the major social problems in our civilization. This orientation is necessary as a foundation for subsequent practice and thus is designed to focus on **EPAS 2.1.7 – Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment** (we consider social problems and programs as elements of social environment). **EPAS 2.1.9 – Respond to contexts that shape practice.** The existence of these, and other social problems, and our systems for providing services (if existent, and if so at what level in terms a continuum from inadequate to excellent). This is to provide foundation for providing leadership in

promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services.

Unit VI. Social programs: An international perspective

Reading: text, chapter 18

We live in a global society and, considering such, an international perspective on social problems and programs is imperative. In terms of **EPAS 2.1.7 –Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment**, we consider for obvious reasons, a global perspective to be imperative. We note that each year, typically, a special program is held at The United Nations for social work students and this focuses on global issues. The social work program and the College sponsors our social work students to attend this program and you will be notified of this in the spring semester using multiple communication venues.

Final Examination and Submission of Term Paper

Term Paper:

This learning assignment is designed to integrate, specifically, course content with external library and other research conducted by the student.

The paper is to be cited using APA style used by social workers, unless the respective student's major uses a different style. The social work program conducted a tutorial on use of the library last year. Prof. Heer will be conducting a tutorial on Writing for Social Work and using the library for scholarly, refereed, legitimate source material and how to cite this early in the semester and you will be informed of the two times these will be conducted in consideration of respective students schedules. I will inform you of the dates these will be conducted and strongly recommend that you attend one of these sessions. If you are majoring in social work, you must and will write like a social worker. The term paper must be submitted by the due date. Since the instructor is not a full-time faculty member, and since no other person is authorized to receive a term paper from a student, a late paper must be mailed to the instructor Social Work Program and the postmark will be the date submitted. **Late papers (not anticipated) will be penalized one letter grade for each day late.** No one, other than the instructor, is authorized to accept a term paper for a student.

Papers are to be submitted in hard copy only. Be sure to make a copy for yourself.

The content of the paper should be no less than five and no more than eight pages in length. A cover page should identify the student by name, instructor, course name and number, date of submission, and title; number pages.

The paper should have no less than five citations, preferably not more than five years old derived from scholarly, refereed sources or government publications/web sites. Do not use website sources that are not derived from scholarly and/or government search engines (no .com citations; these are not considered valid or reliable in the social work program, with exceptions under consultation with the respective instructor). In addition to these five citations, the paper should reference the text as a sixth source and also class

presentations/discussions led by the instructor as well as any guest speakers and these should appear numerous times throughout the paper. **The paper must directly be related to course content and competency requirements; in other words, it integrates the course with your own library research. Use of library research meets EPAS 2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.** Information presented in class may be written using the first person. At times, and depending upon the competency and objective you are addressing, it is acceptable to write in the first person; we are interested in you. Students are strongly encouraged to speak with the instructor concerning suggested reference material. Papers that do not specifically note class discussions, assigned readings, and similarly will be examined closely for plagiarism in addition to severe grading penalties for not meeting the objectives of the assignment.

Content of Paper (use the following as subheadings in the paper):

Identify and define the social problem under consideration;

Extent of this problem (incidence and prevalence) and any pertinent demographics, particularly with regard to social injustice;

Identify a social program that represents a societal response to this problem, including history and auspice;

Discuss and analyze this program in terms of nature of benefit(s); eligibility, and financing, and how the program is or might be evaluated;

How might this social problem be addressed in a country other than The United States?

This paper must represent students' best efforts in terms of content and cosmetics. Again, integration of the text and class presentations into the paper is critical and the paper should specifically explicate how what you are writing is directly related to the expected EPAS competencies presented above; this requires critical thinking. Thus, this paper is expected to entail several drafts prior to submission and you are encouraged to speak with the instructor about your paper; albeit with bringing in or sending something in hard copy to build upon, rather than just conversation. If you meet with the instructor regarding any aspect of the course, please bring a notepad with you to note the guidance you have been provided.

Final Comment:

It is a privilege to teach this class. The instructor and students are expected to attend all class sessions that will begin and end on time.