

Spring 2011

**Seton Hall University  
Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work  
Social Work Program**

**Course:** Social Policy Analysis SOWK 2301

**Section:** AA 12621 AA

**Room:** A+S 106

**Class Days/Time:** MW 4:00-5:15 PM

**Final Exam Date and Time:** Tuesday; May 11, 2011; 2:30 - 4:30 PM

**Instructor:** Alonda Alloway-Higgins, MSW

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**Office Hours:** Available by appointment

**Social Policy Analysis Syllabus**

**Course Description:**

This course presents the critical points of analysis and understanding of the operationalization of social welfare policy in The United States. **The focus is critical thinking**, using a logical conceptual framework for knowledge enhancement and change in the interests of social and economic justice. The course examines significant variables associated with social policies, programs, and organizations and how these may help or deter optimal human functioning. The course emphasizes social problems and the resultant people and groups who are vulnerable, and/or oppressed. It examines how the interplay of economics, politics, professionalism, and social values shape social welfare policy and service delivery. The course is grounded in the values and principles of social work. The teaching style of this course will be collaborative learning. Various teaching methods will include lectures and discussions, reading assignments, power point presentations, organized debates, group work/presentations, videos, current event analysis, and guest speakers. The instructor strongly recommends that students print this syllabus and bring it to class each day.

This course meets a college social science core requirement and is approved as a **critical thinking infused course in the University**.

Although this course is required of social work majors, minors, and students who are otherwise interested in this topic are welcome. Even though this may produce a “mix” of students, the course will focus heavily, but not exclusively, on **Council on Social Work Education, Educational Policy 2.1.2 insofar as applying strategies of**

**ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions to guide professional practice – (this course applies this competency to policy practice ethical reasoning).** It is also designed to **meet Educational Policy 2.1.3 in being able to use critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments (distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge and practice wisdom).** By analyzing social policies, the course will also meet **Educational Policy 2.1.4 by learning and thus recognizing the extent to which structures (social policies) and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, create or enhance privilege and power.** Students will also gain competency by learning how **to learn about policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services: Educational Policy Statement 2.1.8.** These learning and understanding competencies, for those who major in social work, will be developed and applied in subsequent theory, practice, and internship learning experiences.

**Pre-requisite:** SOWK 2201 (Social Problems and Programs)

**Required Texts/Reading:**

Chambers, D.E. & Wedel, K.R. (2005). *Social policy and social programs: A method for the practical public policy analyst (4<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. Boston: Pearson.

Karger, H.J, Midgley, J, Kindle, P. & Brown, C.B. (2007). *Controversial issues in social policy (3<sup>rd</sup> ed)*. Boston: Pearson.

National Association of Social Workers (NASW) *Code of Ethics*.

[www.socialworkers.org](http://www.socialworkers.org) then scroll to NASW Office of Ethics and Professional Review, then scroll to View the Code of Ethics as approved by the delegate assembly of NASW in 1996 and revised by the 2008 Delegate Assembly. This should then be printed for future reference.

**Please Note: The social work program curriculum is integrated and cumulative. We are very aware of the costs of books. Nevertheless, we very strongly recommend that you retain all social work course books and cognate required course texts for reference in subsequent courses in the curriculum.**

**Recommended Readings:**

*The encyclopedia of social work (20<sup>th</sup> ed.)* (2008). Washington DC: NASW Press.

*Social work speaks (8<sup>th</sup> ed.)* (2009-2012). Washington DC: NASW Press.

Barker, R.L. (2003). *The social work dictionary*. Washington, DC: NASW Press.

**Please Note: The above recommended readings are on reserve in program offices for limited in office use. They also will be either required or recommended in other courses. Recommend using these as early as possible in the semester.**

## **Course Organization:**

### **Unit I. Implications of Social Problems**

**Course Objective I (2.1.2) and 2.1.4:** For students to: understand the implications of social problem definition; causes and consequences of social problems; how ideology and social values shape social policies; and how social policies result in “gainers and losers”.

#### **Learning Outcome I:**

Students will be able to explain and illustrate the implications of social problems and how they are defined; their causes and consequences; how ideology and values shape social policies; and how social policies result in “gainers and losers”.

**Assessment/Evidence of Learning: see below for details regarding percentages of grade**

Mid-term Examination  
Class Debates  
Term Paper  
Group Presentation

**Reading Assignment:** Chambers & Wedel, Chapter 1

### **Unit II. Types of Benefits, Eligibility, Financing of Social Welfare Programs as the operationalization of social policy:**

**Course Objective II. (2.1.4 and 2.1.8)** For students to:

Understand the various types of benefits, eligibility requirements, and financing possibilities to support social policies and the implications of these in terms of advancing social and economic well-being, as well as the potential for enhancing power and privilege for some and oppressing and marginalizing others.

#### **Learning Outcomes Unit II.**

Students will be able to identify, explain, and critically analyze types of benefits, eligibility requirements, and financing in terms of their implications for advancing social and economic well-being.

Students will be able to articulate manifest and possible latent consequences of social policy benefits, eligibility, and financing and the

implications of manifest and latent in terms of advancing social and economic well-being for some and marginalization and oppression for others.

**Assessment/Evidence of Learning:**

mid-term examination

**Note:** the mid-term examination will be held at the conclusion of Unit II. It will consist of short answer questions and several questions requiring informed presentation based on class lectures/discussions and assigned readings. The mid-term is worth **40%** of the course grade and will be held, and grades distributed before the last day to drop a course.

class debates

term paper

group presentation

**Reading Assignment:**

Chambers & Wedel, Chapters 5, 6, 8 and pages 64-65 of Chapter 4

Note: During the class meeting immediately following the mid-term, the instructor will distribute a formative evaluation (brief handwritten response) asking students to confidentially complete an evaluation of the course in terms of meeting the course objectives and instructional methodologies. These will be kept by and used by the instructor to make any needed adjustments as indicated by student feedback.

**Unit III. Analysis of Service Delivery Systems and Social Policy and Program Design.**

**Course Objectives III. (2.1.3 and 2.1.4):** For students to:

Understand criteria for evaluating service delivery systems;

Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments by understanding the implications of the operations, locations, and administrative structures of service delivery systems in terms of responsiveness to diversity of clients served.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Students will be able to identify criteria for evaluating service delivery systems;

Students will be able to identify the implications of how service delivery systems are organized in terms of professionalism, responsiveness to community needs and resources, and responsiveness to diversity.

**Assessment/Evidence of Learning:**

Term paper  
Group presentation

**Reading Assignment:**

Chambers & Wedel, Chapter 7

**Unit IV. Pro-Con Debates (2.1.2 and 2.1.3) Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments** (in this course, judgments about social policy).

*Controversial Issues in Social Policy* (see above regarding texts) contains a series of debates about social policy in terms of the nature of the problem, eligibility, benefits, financing, organizational structures and other issues. These debates about social policy argue for and against an array of public issues pertinent to social problems. In preparation for this assignment, the instructor will discuss the **NASW Code of Ethics** and students are responsible for bring a printed copy of this to class.

The instructor will divide the class into small groups, assign chapters, and assign who will take the “pro” and who will take the “con” and each mini-group will summarize the major points presented by the respective author and then, using course concepts, analyze and present the argument. These will be in class presentations and each group will be given a group grade (**20% of final course grade**) and members of respective groups are expected to organize themselves to be prepared for discussion.

All students will be informed of what debates are taking place and are responsible for reading the pro’s and con’s of each issue such that there can be informed class discussion at the end of each debate/presentation.

Debates and subsequent discussions must present applicability of the issue to the **NASW Code of Ethics**.

**Group Presentation/Evidence of Learning (20% of final grade)**

In this assessment, students will be assigned to a group consisting of five members to present on a relevant social issue of your team’s choosing. Your team will come up with a policy and evaluation that will address the issue and fulfill the required of

the group term paper (see below). Each member must participate equally in both the oral presentation and the term paper.

### **Term Paper Assessment/Evidence of Learning (20% of final course grade).**

This assignment is designed to provide the basis of assessment/evidence of learning as the course content applies to a specific policy and will cover all course content from above.

The paper is due by the date of the final examination. Students should bring a hard copy of the exam and also submit an electronic attachment to an email to the instructor and identify the attachment as follows: last name first name course number final paper (for example: SmithJohnSOWK2301finalpaper). In this way, the instructor will make instructional comments and grade using “track changes” and thus, students will not only receive their grade, but more important, the paper and instructor comments will serve as yet another means of instruction. There will be brief, student led, discussion of the term papers during this final exam period.

Late papers will receive a one full grade reduction for each calendar late. No other person is authorized to accept this assignment.

The paper is to be written in the third person and be both descriptive and analytical, the former providing the basis for the latter. The paper should use nomenclature and concepts developed and learned in the course.

The group paper is to be approximately 15 pages (not counting the cover page or reference page). It should be typed double spaced, Times New Roman #12 font with bibliographic references to both the assigned readings and to at least four scholarly references. This paper is not an exercise in massive description, but rather analysis of information. If the student is using a brochure or website information about a program, this should be cited, however does not count toward the four scholarly sources. Keep in mind that information from brochures or from an organization website may be more advertising than factual; not to worry, use what you are given to analyze. Do not use any .com citations, Google, and the like. Use library scholarly sources. During the semester one member of the full time faculty will present a brief tutorial on use of the library for obtaining valid, reliable information using the Walsh Library electronically. Of course, the program also has a wealth of information on reserve in program offices and the instructor is always willing to make suggestions. **There is no bibliography attached to this syllabus; students are expected to secure information on their own, with help from the instructor as warranted.** The paper is to be cited, both on the reference page and within the document itself, using APA style. We recognize that many students may be unfamiliar with this for a variety of reasons and a tutorial on how to use APA will be conducted during the semester for all social work majors after the midpoint of the semester and this will be announced in terms of date and location and what students should bring. Nevertheless, we realize that students may have limited experience with this and may also be in majors that do not require this (thus, these majors may use the

citation style used by their respective discipline). The point is that social workers have a particular way of writing and citing and it would be irresponsible of us to not help social workers learn to write like social workers. These tutorials will be held each semester; both for “new” majors and to help social work majors continue to develop their writing skills as social workers.

This paper is specifically designed to present critical thinking and analysis based on course material. In other words, it is not the “what” that is important, but rather, the “so what”.

#### Content Outline for Paper:

The paper should have a title and have sub-headings. The sub-headings should correspond with the Units of this course, with the exception of debate materials. It is anticipated that most citations will pertain to the nature of the social problem. Then the student will present a social policy (program that provides something to people) and analyze it in terms of eligibility, type of benefit, financing, and organizational auspice; keeping in mind the respective learning outcome for each unit. Thus the factual information will be briefly presented, followed by analysis of the implications of these types of policy elements are based on course content. The paper must conclude with the student selecting the three most applicable NASW Code of Ethics principles that apply to working in this program.

It is strongly recommended that students do not wait until “the last minute” to work on this paper. Work can be done on this paper as we proceed through each unit and the instructor is always available for in-person or email consultation (except for the last two weeks of class prior to the final exam period).

#### **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](mailto:DSS@shu.edu). The social work program enthusiastically supports the intent and mandate of legislation/policy providing optimal learning environments for all students.

#### **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.

**Final Comments:** Thank you for the privilege of teaching this course and being part of your professional development.

The University has an electronic system of course and instructor evaluation and you are strongly encouraged to use this. In addition, at the conclusion of this course, on the date scheduled for the final, you will be asked to complete a handwritten, confidential summative evaluation of this course and instructor. These will be collected by a student and placed in a sealed envelope and placed in the mailbox of the Social Work Program Director, Dr. Richard Blake. The University Faculty Guide mandates evaluation of faculty and this is one additional method used. The intent of this feedback is to use student feedback so as to continuously improve instruction, learning, and competency.