

SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY AND SERVICES
Social Work 605
Minnesota State University, Mankato
Department of Social Work

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

This course provides an overview of the historical and contemporary social services system and an exploration of the interconnectedness between social welfare policies, social services and micro and macro social work practice. The course covers three main topic areas. The first area focuses on understanding the social service delivery system, with an emphasis on services for diverse populations, including age, class, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, rural, and sexual orientation, and populations-at-risk experiencing discrimination, inequality, lack of economic opportunity and oppression in the United States. The services will be examined in terms of the problems addressed, the societal and social work values that define issues as “problems”, and the values and political perspectives that determine policy choices made to address problems. Social service delivery systems and policies from other countries will be examined. The second area focuses on understanding the legislative policy-making process. The third area focuses on learning how to analyze social welfare policy from a social work value base and perspective, with an emphasis on social and economic justice. Students will learn and apply a framework for analyzing social welfare policy to a specific policy issue of their choice. The policy analysis will also include examining the social problem and social policy from a rural community context and reviewing the research-based literature on the social problem and effectiveness of policy choices.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- 1) Understand the historical development of social welfare policies and services in the United States (MSW 2.1, 3.2).
- 2) Understand the contemporary social service delivery system in the United States (MSW 2.1, 3.2).
- 3) Understand the social welfare policies which regulate the delivery of social welfare services in the United States in the areas of income maintenance, health care, mental health care, criminal justice, child welfare, housing and homelessness and food security (MSW 2.1, 3.2).
- 4) Understand the contemporary social service delivery system and social welfare policies that promote social and economic justice for populations-at-risk experiencing discrimination, inequality, lack of economic opportunity and oppression; advance human rights for all people, including within a rural community context, and affirm diversity of age, class, culture, disability,

ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, rural context, and sexual orientation (MSW 1.4, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2).

5) Critically examine the social and economic justice, and political factors and value systems that impact how social welfare problems are identified, defined, prioritized, and addressed through social welfare policy (MSW 1.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2).

6) Understand the governmental policy making process and how policy proposals are transformed into social welfare programs (MSW 3.2).

7) Learn and apply a framework for using research-based evidence to understand and analyze social welfare problems and policies from a rural community context and from a social work value base and perspective (MSW 1.1, 2.3, 3.2).

8) Understand the role of social workers in promoting social and economic justice for populations-at-risk experiencing discrimination, inequality, lack of economic opportunity and oppression (MSW 2.1, 2.3, 3.1).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Social Welfare System Paper: Historical Connection to Contemporary Social Services (Designated Assessment Assignment for L. O. 2.1).

Students will research and write a paper focusing on one era in the history of the social welfare system in the U.S., political, social and economic factors influencing the era, role and activities of the social work profession, and connection to contemporary social service delivery and social work practice. Further details will be provided by the instructor. This assignment is worth 30 points (30% of the final grade).

Social Welfare System Presentation. Students will conduct a presentation on one era in the history of the social welfare system in the U.S. Further details will be provided by the instructor. This assignment is worth 10 points (10% of the final grade).

Social Welfare Policy Analysis Paper. (Designated Assessment Assignment for L. O. 3.2).

Students will research, critically analyze, and write a policy analysis paper of a federal, state, or local public policy using the policy analysis framework provided in Karger and Stoesz, Chapter 2. *Social welfare policy research: A framework for policy analysis*. The analysis will include an examination of the degree to which the policy promotes the values of the social work profession, including social and economic justice and dignity and worth of the person. Further details will be provided by the instructor. This assignment is worth 45 points (45% of the final grade). Five points will be awarded for submitting a complete draft of the paper. The final version of the paper is worth 40 points.

D2L On-line Activities & Discussion: Two class sessions will be conducted on-line using D2L. Students will respond to a series of discussion questions pertaining to the required reading and other assigned activities following the guidelines presented by the instructor. This assignment is worth 10 points (10% of the final grade).

In-class Discussion Questions and Participation. Students are required to read all required readings prior to class and actively and meaningfully participate in all in-class discussions and activities. For each in-class session, students are required to post 3 discussion questions on D2L based upon the required readings by each Friday at noon. Additional information will be provided in class. This component of the course is worth 5 points (5% of the final grade).

Pop quizzes may be given if students are not coming prepared to actively participate in class.

SOWK 605 COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

Topic: Introduction to the course

Topic: Understanding the U.S. Social Welfare State, Social Welfare Policy and the Social Work Profession

Week 2

Topic: Understanding the U.S. Social Welfare State, Social Welfare Policy and the Social Work Profession (cont).

Week 3

Topic: Delivering Social Services: Private vs. Public, For-Profit vs. Non Profit, Secular vs. Non-Secular

Week 4

Topic: Connecting History to the Contemporary Social Welfare System and Services

Week 5

Topic: Connecting History to the Contemporary Social Welfare System and Services

Week 6

Topic: Tax Policy, Income and Wealth Distribution

Week 7

Topic: Making & Analyzing Public Policy

Week 8

Topic: Researching your policy analysis paper

Week 9: October 23

Topic: Researching your policy analysis paper

Week 10: October 30

Topic: Diversity, Discrimination & Social Justice

Week 11

Topic: Understanding Poverty and Economic Mobility in America from a Comparative Perspective

Week 12

Topic: Public Assistance Programs and Benefits

Week 13

Topic: Social Insurance Programs and Benefits

Week 14

Thanksgiving Break – No class

Week 15

Topic: Health Care

Week 16

Topic: Introduction to Policy Practice in the Rural Context