TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY COMMERCE

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Social Work 328: Social Welfare Policy
(This is a tentative syllabus)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course is the foundation social welfare policy and services course for social work students. In the course, the student is expected to become acquainted with the social welfare institution and learn to analyze how its policies & services interact with other social forces in responding to social problems at all levels of client systems – from micro to mezzo and macro-level. The primary focus of the course is to emphasize examination of social policies and how they affect all levels of client systems, especially oppressed populations. Attention is given to the role of social welfare policy and policy practice in achieving social justice. Prerequisites: SWK 225, 250 and 275, Psci 220, and Hist 122. Concurrent enrollment in SWK 322 and SWK 325 is required. Restricted to social work majors. 3 semester hours.

GOALS & COMPETENCIES:

1. Prepare BSW graduates for entry-level professional social work practice that reflects generalist social work knowledge and skills. Graduates will be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

 1.1 Apply critical thinking and effective communication (2.1.3)
 1.2 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research
  (2.1.6)
 1.4 Apply knowledge of policy to practice (2.1.8)
 1.5 Apply change strategies with all levels of systems (2.1.10)

2. Enable BSW graduates to practice ethically and apply social work values to promote equality and justice. Graduates will be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

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2.1 Apply social work ethics & principles (2.1.2)
2.2 Engage diversity in practice (2.1.4)
2.3 Promote human rights and social and economic justice (2.1.5)

3. Provide meaningful contexts through which BSW students engage in leadership, service, and professional excellence. Graduates will be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

3.1 Identify and respond as a professional social worker (2.1.1)
3.2 Respond to professional contexts that shape practice, demonstrating qualities of leadership for the profession. (2.1.9)

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
1.   To develop students' understanding and knowledge of the basic organizational structures and services of the major social welfare programs in the U.S.

2.   To develop students' understanding of how social policy and services impact social injustice and inequality, particularly for women and diverse minority groups, thereby increasing students' awareness of how social policy can be effectively used as a mechanism for positive social change.

3.   To increase students' understanding of the organizational context and various processes, including legislative, judicial, and administrative, by which social welfare programs are developed, implemented, and modified over time.

4.   To enable students to develop the skills necessary to critically assess, analyze, and evaluate social and economic policies and programs, particularly as they affect disadvantaged populations, through the application of structured models of research and analysis.

5.   To help students integrate their knowledge of societal values with social work values and ethics and understand how all of these affect social welfare policies and programs.

6.   To develop students' abilities to demonstrate commitment to social work values and ethics when evaluating the effectiveness of social welfare policies with all levels of client systems; and to assist students to integrate their knowledge about societal values with social work values and ethics in order to understand how all of these affect social welfare policies and programs.

7   To develop students' awareness of the political and economic forces impacting social welfare policies and services in America, and assist students to identify the interrelatedness of social work practice with social welfare policies and services as a method to facilitate social justice.

8.   To develop student's abilities to plan change strategies on behalf of clients at all levels of systems in ways that are responsive to relevant issues of oppression and diversity.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER COURSES:

TEXT:
DiNitto, D. M. (2011). Social Welfare: Politics & Public Policy (7th edition). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

ISBN 10: 0-205-79384-3
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GRADING:
In general, a course grade of "C" represents an acceptable level of work. A course grade of "B" represents a substantial effort and achievement, a grade for better than average product and effort. An "A" is awarded only in cases of both outstanding effort and quality in required products.

Grades will be awarded on the following basis:

A = 90% - 100% of possible points
B = 80% - 89% of possible points
C = 70% - 79% of possible points
D = 60% - 69% of possible points
F = 59% or below of possible points

Students are expected to take class exams on the days they are scheduled. If a student is unable to attend class on the day of the exam, the instructor should be contacted in advance of the student's absence. Make-up exams will be provided to students who have a documented official excused absence (following University polity) at a time to be determined by the instructor, but typically prior to the next class5. ****Students without an excused absence will be penalized 10 points from the test grade received****

Exams – 3 @ 100 points   300 points
Policy Paper – due 11/20   100 points

Total possible points   400 points

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

1.   Policy Paper – To be announced

2.   There will be 3 exams across the semester.

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CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

Students are expected to attend class, reflecting responsibility which is inherent in the development as a social work professional. Roll will be taken regularly. 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. Tardiness (or early departure) of more than 15 minutes will count as .5 absence (2 tardies/early departures = 1 absence). 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.

The following penalties for absences (unexcused, or excused, according to university policy) will be administered:

Weekly	Up to 2 absences No penalty	3 absences 1 letter grade drop	4 absences Class grade of "F"	
Bi-weekly	**Up to 3 absences No penalty**	**4 absences 1 letter grade drop**	**5 absences 1 letter grade drop**	**6 absences Class grade of "F"**
Summer 10-week	Up to 1 absence No penalty	2 absences 1 letter grade drop	3 absences Class grade of "F"	

ONLINE OR WEB-ENHANCED CLASSES: Just as students are required to attend face-to-face classes, students are required to log in and participate in online components. To receive credit for attendance online via eCollege, students must log in and complete assignments in a timely manner. Not logging in to eCollege (which can be monitored by the instructor) and completing assignments online during the appropriate time is the equivalent of an absence for each week this occurs.

Final evaluation and grades depend on both presence and participation. Students' grades will be significantly impacted by inadequate participation or lack of required time commitment each week. Students are expected to spend a comparable amount of time in the online learning environment as they would in class (3 hours a week in the classroom). In addition, just as in traditional F2F classrooms, students are expected to spend time reading and studying class materials.

NOTE: PROBLEMS WITH YOUR INTERNET CONNECTION AND/OR COMPUTER ARE NOT CONSIDERED AS REASONS FOR LACK OF PARTICIPATION. You have access to the university's computer labs (in the social work department AND other campus facilities, including the library) as well as local libraries and other access to computers and ISPs.
If you believe that you are unable to fulfill the requirements for the course you should talk with your instructor about the possibility of dropping or withdrawing.

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Class participation has three components: (1) Appropriate interactions with classmates, (2) Attentiveness, and (3) Active involvement in class activities. Evaluation of class participation is based on instructor observation. Students will be given feedback if problems are evident.

POLICY ON DUE DATES:

Promptness in completing assigned tasks and readings is a requirement of this course. ASSIGNMENTS SUBMITTED AFTER THE BEGINNING OF THE CLASS PERIOD ON WHICH THEY ARE DUE WILL AUTOMATICALLY HAVE 5 POINTS DEDUCTED FROM THE GRADE. AN ADDITIONAL POINT PER DAY WILL BE DEDUCTED FOR EACH DAY THEREAFTER. Assignments will NOT be accepted more than one week after the assigned due date and a "0" will be given for the grade. If students do not turn in all required assignments, they will be ineligible for any grade higher than a "C".

POLICY ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Every student is expected to do his/her own work. Law, ethical standards, university policy, and departmental policy demand that students refrain from plagiarism and any form of cheating. Plagiarism is the "Act of appropriating the literacy composition of another, or parts of passages from of his [or her] writings, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as the products of one's own mind." (Black's Law Dictionary, Abridged Fifth Edition, 1983). When using others' words, phrases, or ideas in writing, the original author should be given proper credit.

Cheating may take different forms. These include, but are not limited to, copying others' answers during an exam, using notes or other forms of help during an examination or quiz, except when explicitly permitted by the instructor, giving or receiving help on exams or assignments, or submitting work for one class which has already been submitted for another class for credit. Use of citations from the Internet without paraphrasing content AND proper referencing is regarded as plagiarism. Professors have the right to use electronic review programs (such as Turn It In") to identify plagiarism.

The department does not tolerate plagiarism or cheating. A student found to be engaging in such illegal and unethical conduct may receive a failing grade in the course and may be subjected to further disciplinary proceedings. Any assignment or exam that lacks honesty will be given a grade of "0".

ACCEPTABLE CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR:

"Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to obey all federal, state, and local laws, in addition to the regulations of the University. The standards of Student Conduct including disciplinary rules and procedures are designed to provide and conform to the basic tenets of due process, as developed by institutions of higher education. As such, the University distinguishes these procedures and regulations as an educational and growth

process which is not intended to conform to adversary proceedings as in a court of law. (Student's Guide Book, 2011, p. 35).

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

The Department of Social Work expects all social work students to conduct themselves in an ethical, professional manner. Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession articulates its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards as set forth in the *NASW Code of Ethics* to guide social workers' conduct. The *Code* is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve. Accordingly, we expect social work students to demonstrate courtesy, respect and support for fellow students, instructors, clients, and all other persons.

All students enrolled in BSW or MSW classes are expected to observe the tenets of the NASW Code of Ethics and the Social Work Student Code of Conduct. Our Code of Conduct is reflective of professional and academic expectations – a student who cannot demonstrate appropriate behaviors will not be appropriate for practice in the social work profession. Students who violate these Codes may be asked to meet with appropriate Social Work faculty (instructors or Program Directors). In addition, the department's Academic and Professional Issues (API) Committee is responsible for dealing with student issues when requested by faculty.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library- Room 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

COURSE OUTLINE

     I.   Introduction & Overview of course

     II.   Foundations of Social Welfare Policy

         A. Description

B. History of social welfare

C. Theories & concepts of social welfare

D. Policy analysis (models & process)

III.   Social Welfare Issues & Policy Topics

A. Poverty & cash assistance programs

B. Health care policy

C. Policies affecting children & families

D. Aging policy

E. Civil rights policy

F. Economics & policies related to employment

IV.   Social Welfare Practice

A. Governmental policy-making & the legislative process

B. Information gathering

C. Policy practice

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (Aug 27)	Get acquainted, overview course requirements; Discussion: Overview of social welfare policy; begin discussing influence of politics and rationalism on social welfare policy Text, Introduction
Week 2 (Sept. 3)	Discussion: Legislative policy-making process; social welfare policy evaluation & analysis; overview of models, sources of information & research data Text, Ch. 1 & 2
Week 3 (Sept. 10)	Discussion: Historical overview of social welfare; description of social welfare policy in recent decades Text, Ch. 3
Week 4 (Sept. 17)	Discussion: Ending Poverty Text, Ch. 4

Week 5 (Sept. 24)   ***Exam 1- Chapters 1-4**
                           Discussion: Preventing Poverty, Social Insurance Programs
                           Text, Ch. 5

Week 6 (Oct 1)   Discussion: Disability Policy
                           Text, Ch. 6

                           * Policy Paper - Sections I, II, and III are Due (for my comments and
                           feedback). While you will not receive points for submitting these
                           sections, there will be 10 points deducted from your final paper for not
                           submitting all three sections. This is intended to get your writing on your
                           paper and give you time to incorporate my suggestions for improvement.

Week 7 (Oct. 8)   Ch. 6 Continued

Week 8 (Oct. 15)   Discussion: Policies on Hunger and Nutrition
                           Text, Ch. 7

Week 9 (Oct. 22)   ***Exam 2- Chapters 5-7**
                           Discussion: Policies on Health Care
                           Text, Ch. 8

Week 10 (Oct. 29)   Discussion: Effectiveness of Anti-Poverty Strategies
                           Text, Ch. 9

                           *Policy Paper - Sections IV Due (for my comments and feedback).
                           While you will not receive points for submitting this section, there will
                           be 10 points deducted from your final paper for not submitting all three
                           sections. This is intended to get your writing on your paper and give you
                           time to incorporate my suggestions for improvement.

Week 11 (Nov. 5)   Discussion: Policies for Children, Elderly, and Mentally Ill
                           Text, Ch. 10

Week 12 (Nov. 12)   Discussion: Policies Addressing Racism & Sexism
                           Text, Ch. 11

Week 13 (Nov. 19)   ***<u>SOCIAL POLICY PAPER DUE</u>** (Sections 1 - V plus conclusion)
                           Discussion: Race, Ethnicity and Immigration
                           Text, Ch. 12 & Review for Final Exam

Week 14 (Nov. 26)   **** No Class Nov 26 – Thanksgiving Holiday ****
                           Online Class

Week 15 (Dec. 3)   ***Exam 3- Chapters 8-12**

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Updated version 12.12

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